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Gov. Healey to speak at Annual Meeting

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

After finishing an eventful first year as governor, Maura Healey will address local officials from across the state during the Opening Session of the <u>MMA Annual</u> <u>Meeting & Trade Show</u> on Jan. 19 in Boston.

Healey's appearance comes a couple days after her first annual State of the Commonwealth address and a few days before her state budget plan is due to be filed with the Legislature — and while municipal leaders await details about her local aid proposals for fiscal 2025.

Healey is also expected to address some of her stated priorities, such as housing creation and addressing climate change, as well as the state-local partnership and current fiscal conditions.

Over the past year, the Healey-Driscoll administration has been working to address housing and economic development needs, climate change, an influx of migrants and an emergency shelter crisis, infrastructure concerns, and the need for operational and safety upgrades at the

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Gov. Maura Healey speaks to local leaders during the 2023 MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show last January. She will return for this year's meeting on Jan. 19.

MBTA, to name a few.

Accomplishments include separating the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development into two distinct offices and creating a housing secretariat; naming the state's first-ever climate chief; launching the first "green bank" in the country dedicated to affordable housing; unveiling a \$4.1 billion housing bond bill to increase housing production and promote housing affordability; launching the ResilientCoasts initiative to address impacts of climate change; and unveiling an economic development plan in early December.

During her MMA Annual Meeting address last January, just days into her tenure as governor, Healey outlined her priorities and pledged that she and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, the former mayor of Salem, would work closely with cities and towns.

"We do want to do great things," she said. "I just want to begin with a recognition that I know things are challenging out there right now. Our job in government is to be great partners with all of you, as we work through those challenges."

Healey emphasized the critical need to address the state's housing shortage and urged local leaders to work with her on

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MMA Annual Meeting approaches

By John Ouellette

In just a couple weeks, more than 1,200 municipal officials from across the state will gather in Boston for the 45th <u>MMA</u> <u>Annual Meeting & Trade Show</u> on Jan. 19 and 20.

If you haven't registered yet to join them, you can do so now online — it only takes a couple minutes! (The early registration deadline is Jan. 10.)

Here are some of the great features this dynamic, timely and engaging conference, which is a forum for learning and a celebration of the innovations and best practices in community governance:

• <u>Compelling and inspiring</u> <u>speakers</u>

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Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, left, and Samantha Squailia, who became the new mayor of Fitchburg this month, await the start of the MMA Annual Meeting's Opening Session last January.

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.

Executive Committee

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Executive Director's Report

MMA Board identifies priorities for 2024

The MMA will always serve as the leading advocate fighting for municipal and school aid, and thus it is a given that our agenda for 2024 will prioritize a state revenue-sharing policy to increase Unrestricted General Government Aid by at least the same percentage growth rate as state tax revenues, and secure full funding of the Student Opportunity Act.

Beyond these "staple" issues, the MMA's Board of Directors met in October — as it does each fall — to discuss, reaffirm and establish organizational priorities for the year ahead.

The following are three key, large-scale priorities highlighted by the board:

Municipal Infrastructure: The needs are extraordinary, and meeting them is more challenging than ever, given the resource limitations imposed by Proposition 2¹/₂, the crumbling state of our roads and bridges, environmental systems, and public safety and municipal buildings, and the rampant inflation in construction materials and labor. Municipal infrastructure is more broadly defined than in the past, moving beyond "horizontal" (roads, bridges and pipes) to include "vertical" (buildings and facilities).

The MMA's goals include winning permanent increases in Chapter 90 funding for local roads (aiming beyond our current \$330 million-a-year target),



By Adam Chapdelaine

securing sustained increases in funding for environmental systems, including drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and climate resiliency, and launching a new state-funded program to address municipal building needs, modeled after the Massachusetts School Building Authority program, which would support local priorities such as public safety

buildings, senior centers, community centers, and city and town halls.

Municipal Workforce Recruitment and Training: The tight labor market, combined with an aging workforce and a too-small talent pipeline, is creating significant problems for every community. Specialty positions that require expertise and training are extremely difficult to fill, including municipal finance roles, procurement officers, civil engineers, management positions and even roles that have been historically easier to fill, such as police officers and teachers. An additional dimension is the imperative for cities and towns to advance diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in their workforces, to better represent their neighborhoods and attract the broadest range of talent, as DEI is an increasingly important priority for the rising generation of workers.

Building on our successful MMA-Suffolk leadership certificate and finance seminar programs, and our MassTown

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Deputy Communications Communications & Director John Ouellette Candace Pierce **Associate Editor** Publisher Jennifer Kavanaugh **Digital Communications** Design Specialist Meredith Gabrilska

Massachusetts Municipal Association

Twitter and Facebook: @massmunicipal

617-426-7272 · www.mma.org

Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association

3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108

Membership Director Adam Chapdelaine Full Circle Design

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

Sens. Warren, Markey to speak at MMA Annual Meeting

By John Ouellette

The state's two U.S. senators, Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, will address local officials from across Massachusetts during the <u>MMA Annual Meeting &</u> <u>Trade Show</u> at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston on Saturday, Jan. 20.

The senators have consistently joined the two-day conference to engage with local elected and appointed leaders, and have collaborated closely with the MMA and local officials throughout their careers. They will speak during the MMA's Annual Business Meeting on Saturday morning.

Warren and Markey are expected to discuss major federal initiatives to help cities and towns, particularly the American Rescue Plan Act, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the Inflation Reduction Act, which provide generational opportunities to shore up



Sen. Elizabeth Warren

Sen. Ed Markey

infrastructure and local services.

Both senators, along with the rest of the Massachusetts congressional delegation, were strong proponents of the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act to help the country emerge from the COVID pandemic and to address the critical issue of climate change. They also supported important legislation to substantially increase flexibility in how ARPA funds can be spent by municipalities.

Sen. Warren was elected to the Senate in 2012 and re-elected in 2018. In the Senate, where she is vice chair of the Senate Democratic Caucus, she has focused on consumer protection, equitable economic opportunity, and the social safety net. A former law professor, she served as special advisor for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau under President Barack Obama.

Sen. Markey has been a member of Congress since 1976 and a senator since 2013. Throughout his public service career, he has focused on issues including energy policy, environmental protection, telecommunications, transportation, infrastructure, public safety, privacy and consumer protection. He has been a leading voice in Congress on the issue of climate change.

Municipal finance changes included in FY23 supplemental budget law

By Jackie Lavender Bird

The <u>closeout fiscal 2023 supplemental</u> <u>budget</u> signed into law on Dec. 4 included a number of changes to modernize and streamline certain municipal finance rules.

The MMA had long advocated for the municipal finance changes, which are now in effect.

The changes, itemized in outside sections of the law, are as follows:

- Section 8 allows for a simple majority vote of the local legislative body, rather than a two-thirds vote, to draw down special purpose stabilization funds. A two-thirds vote is still required to establish both types of stabilization funds — general and special purpose but the threshold has been lowered for drawing from special purpose funds.
- Section 9 allows municipal departments to repair property damages under \$150,000 before the related insurance claim comes through, without seeking appropriation, with the expectation that appropriate accounts will be reimbursed when the insurance claim is paid. The municipality would be required to fund the deficit if the insurance claim is not received within a certain period.
- Section 9 also creates a "general fund revenue exception." Under state law

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

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

- Section 197 allows cities and towns that have created a dedicated stabilization fund for statewide opioid settlement receipts to consolidate all monies previously received for this purpose into the special revenue fund, with clarifying language for how to proceed.
- Section 10 establishes a new Section 53k under Chapter 44, Section 53 to allow municipalities to create a special revenue fund (rather than using the general revenue fund) for funds coming to the municipality for a specific purpose. Municipalities often enter into host or mitigation agreements with developers or other entities to address the impacts of new development, and receive payments to mitigate these impacts. Section 10 allows communities to separately account for these payments and spend them for the dedicated purpose without further appropriation.
- Section 205 allows a city or town to amortize over fiscal 2025 through 2027 the amount of its fiscal 2024 major disaster-related deficit.

The Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services has issued further clarifications about these changes in two municipal bulletins: <u>BUL-2023-7</u> and <u>BUL-2023-8</u>. ●

Fiscal experts see uncertain budget outlook for FY25

By Jackie Lavender Bird

In light of state tax collections falling slightly below benchmarks for fiscal 2023 — a trend that's continuing in the first part of fiscal 2024 — fiscal experts concur that the Commonwealth's fiscal outlook is uncertain for the remainder of the year and for fiscal 2025.

During the annual consensus revenue hearing convened on Dec. 4 by the House and Senate Ways and Means committees and the governor's budget office, the Department of Revenue and other fiscal experts and economists offered cautious outlooks for the economy and state revenues over the second half of fiscal 2024 and for fiscal 2025.

The Department of Revenue reported that year-to-date collections for the current fiscal year totaled approximately \$14.1 billion, which is \$146 million, or 1%, higher than collections in the same period of fiscal 2023, but \$627 million, or 4.3%, below the year-to-date benchmark.

At the hearing, Department of Revenue Commissioner Geoffrey Snyder said he expects tax revenue growth in fiscal 2025 of between 1.7% and 3.2%. He added that his projection does not include revenue from the state's so-called millionaires surtax, revenue from which is exceeding expectations. The fiscal 2024 state budget spends \$1 billion in anticipated surtax revenue, but those collections are now expected to reach between \$1.5 billion and \$2 billion for the fiscal year.

The Department of Revenue estimates that fiscal 2025 surtax revenue will be between \$1.7 billion and \$2.1 billion. Revenue for the surtax — assessed on annual personal incomes above \$1 million — must be used to fund public education and public transportation programs.

Additional outlooks for next year presented at the consensus revenue hearing were heavily qualified with discussions of uncertainty due to the ongoing emergency shelter crisis, global conflicts, inflationary pressures, and the fiscal impact of the recently enacted tax relief package, along with the positive outlook for surtax revenue.

The annual revenue hearing marks the start of the state budget season and is important for municipal officials because it provides insights into the



Department of Revenue Commissioner Geoffrey Snyder gives his forecast for the remainder of fiscal 2024 and fiscal 2025 to legislators during the Dec. 4 consensus revenue hearing at the State House.

direction of the economy and anticipated state revenues available to fund municipal and school aid programs next year, particularly Unrestricted General Government Aid.

Legislative leaders and the administration are expected to reach agreement on a tax revenue forecast for fiscal 2025 in the coming weeks. The forecast will be used in the governor's budget recommendation, due to be filed by Jan. 24, as well as the House and Senate budget plans that are customarily released in April and May, respectively.

Priorities for 2nd year of session take shape for Legislature, MMA

By Dave Koffman

On Beacon Hill, last year kicked off with a new governor entering office, followed by significant agenda-setting by the administration as well as House and Senate leadership.

Legislative highlights in 2023 included a large re-capitalization through a <u>general</u> <u>governmental bond bill, investments</u> <u>and remote meeting extensions</u> through supplemental budgets, increases in <u>local</u> <u>road funding</u> (via a bond bill and the use of new state surtax revenue), a strong <u>fiscal 2024 state budget</u> with important increases in local aid, a comprehensive <u>tax reform package</u>, and recent <u>municipal finance changes</u>.

Priorities are now taking shape for 2024, with just under seven months until the end of formal sessions in the 193rd General Court.

As the Commonwealth moves further from the "crisis" mindset of the COVID pandemic, the economy continues to feel lasting inflationary pressures and a growing concern over the <u>trajectory of</u> <u>state revenues</u>, which continue to grow but at well-below-benchmark levels (and well below the rapid growth of fiscal 2021 and 2022). These fiscal pressures are particularly being felt in municipalities, which operate with tightly capped property tax revenues, despite growing costs and challenges. (Further complicating this will be the looming obligation deadline for funds provided by the federal government through the American Rescue Plan Act.)

Additionally, 2024 will continue to see legislative impacts from the growing needs under the state's emergency shelter program. The <u>recent closeout</u> <u>supplemental budget</u> provided an important infusion of funding for the program, supporting many incurred costs at the state and local level. Ongoing and future financial implications of the program — especially with more modest state revenue growth — will be an important consideration for state budget conversations.

Amid these challenges, the Legislature is poised to tackle many priorities before the August recess. The next major development will be the fiscal 2025 state budget process. Gov. Maura Healey is expected to release her budget recommendation, known as House 2, in late January, with the Legislature planning to finalize a bill by the start of the fiscal year in July. The progress of state tax collections will be critical as the budget process unfolds in the House and Senate.

The MMA will continue to advocate for an adequate increase to Unrestricted General Government Aid to support key services for the state's 351 cities and towns. Municipalities will continue to lean on predictable and adequate state revenue sharing to support essential municipal services and maintain local

■ LEGISLATIVE SESSION continued on 27

DEI will be a theme of MMA Annual Meeting

By John Ouellette

The topic of diversity, equity and inclusion will be featured throughout the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show in January, from the opening keynote to the final workshop.

Eddie Glaude Jr., a New York Times bestselling author, Princeton University professor and political commentator whose work has helped people better understand the dynamics of race, democracy and religion in America, will be the keynote speaker during the Opening Session on Jan. 19.

An MSNBC commentator and author of several books, including "Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own," Glaude engages Americans in an honest dialogue about the country's racial past and present.

At the Annual Meeting, he will discuss how America's promise of equality has rung hollow for Black Americans, even six decades after the civil rights movement. But the promise of equality still lives, he says, if people work together and create the conditions to think more carefully and systematically about the issues confronting America. The country needs a moral reckoning, he says, for a new America to emerge.





Eddie Glaude Jr.

Bird Guess

A DEI workshop, "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: The Significance for Municipalities," will be repeated during each of the conference's three workshop sessions.

Diversity, equity and inclusion is an emerging field in municipal spaces, and many cities and towns are at different stages in their journey, ranging from "where do we start" to implementing DEI into their policies, practices and organizational culture.

The Annual Meeting workshop will:

- Discuss how this important work impacts communities
- Explore core DEI foundations
- Recommend best practices based on a municipality's level of need

The workshop will be led by Pittsfield

Chief Diversity Officer Michael Obasohan and Sharon Select Board Chair Kiana Pierre-Louis, who is the assistant dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Northeastern University.

Racial Equity Group CEO Bird Guess, who's working with the MMA to develop a strategic DEI plan for the organization, will also be available to meet members during the conference. He'll be spending some time in the MMA's Trade Show booth and will speak during the Annual Business Meeting of the Massachusetts Select Board Association.

Racial Equity Group worked with the MMA on its recent Municipal DEI Survey to identify the extent to which municipalities have emphasized DEI in municipal practices, policies and culture. Racial Equity Group will use the results to identify the resources and education needed to support municipal members engaged in this work, according to their level of need, and establish benchmarks for success.

The Racial Equity Group is also conducting a series of member focus groups, which will serve as another mechanism for gathering information about DEI work being conducted at the local level.

MBTA rapid transit communities adopt zoning changes for compliance

By Ali DiMatteo

All 12 of the state's designated "rapid transit communities" under the <u>MBTA</u> <u>communities law</u> met their deadline to adopt local zoning changes that they will use to apply for compliance.

The 12 communities — Braintree, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Milton, Newton, Quincy, Revere and Somerville — had a deadline of Dec. 31, 2023, to adopt zoning changes to encourage the development of multifamily housing near transit stations.

Enacted as part of the <u>2020 economic</u> <u>development law</u>, Section 3A of Chapter 40A (the Zoning Act) requires 177 MBTA communities to have at least one zoning district of reasonable size near a transit station in which multifamily housing is permitted as of right — and to meet other criteria set forth in the statute. Failure to comply would mean a loss of eligibility for funding from a number of the state's funding programs, including MassWorks, the Local Capital Projects Fund and Community Planning Grants.

In an effort to increase flexibility, <u>revi-</u> <u>sions were made to the law last August</u> allowing for mixed-use development districts.

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities has not yet certified the zoning plans of the first group of 12 communities, but officials expect to do so in the coming weeks. The law only requires zoning changes, not the construction of units, but a total of more than 83,000 homes could be created under the changes made in the 12 communities.

Communities identified as either "commuter rail" or "adjacent" — of which there are 130 — have a deadline of Dec. 31, 2024, to adopt zoning changes



The city of Newton, whose Green Line stations include Newton Centre, was one of 12 rapid transit communities that adopted zoning changes by the year-end deadline under the MBTA communities law.

under the law. The remaining 35 MBTA communities, classified as "adjacent small towns," have a deadline of Dec. 31, 2025.

More than a dozen of these remaining communities have already passed their zoning changes.

MMA to present fiscal policy, climate resolutions

Local leaders from across Massachusetts will consider two resolutions during the MMA's Annual Business Meeting on Jan. 20 in Boston — one on the state-local fiscal partnership and one on climate challenges.

<u>MMA members will also hear from Lt.</u> <u>Gov. Kim Driscoll</u>.

The proposed "Resolution Supporting an Enduring Fiscal Partnership Between Cities and Towns and the Commonwealth in Fiscal 2025 and Beyond" was drafted by the MMA Fiscal Policy Committee this fall, and the proposed "Resolution Supporting a Local-State-Federal Partnership to Address Climate Change, Enhance Resilience, and Bolster Adaptation Initiatives" was drafted by the Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment.

Both drafts were approved by the MMA Board of Directors on Nov. 14.

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

The climate resolution identifies the many impacts communities face as severe weather events become more frequent, and supports key actions to strengthen and expand existing resiliency programs, strengthen decarbonization efforts, and adapt to the changing climate.

The MMA published the resolutions online in late November and welcomed member comments by email through Dec. 29 in order to review any input before the Annual Business Meeting.

The MMA's Annual Business Meeting is a key component of the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show, which is held each January in Boston. The policy discussions at the business meeting help to guide the advocacy work of the MMA in the year ahead.

Voting at the business meeting

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

Individuals eligible to vote at the meeting are:

• In the case of a city, its chief executive or a councillor designated in writing by the chief executive, or



Members vote on a resolution during the MMA Annual Business Meeting last January.

 In the case of a town, the chair of the select board or town council, or another select board member or councillor designated in writing by the chair, or the manager designated in writing by such chair.

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

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

Proposed Resolution Supporting an Enduring Fiscal Partnership Between Cities and Towns and the Commonwealth in Fiscal 2025 and Beyond

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

Whereas, cities and towns are highly reliant on the tightly capped property tax to fund local budgets and capital programs, and this heavy reliance on the property tax severely limits the ability of cities and towns to respond to new challenges and opportunities, as well as adequately support necessary essential services for the public; and

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

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

Whereas, state law limits the allowable growth in

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municipal revenues to a level that is far below the region's rate of inflation, exacerbated by significant non-discretionary cost drivers, which continue to grow at an unprecedented magnitude during the Proposition 2½ era; and

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

Therefore, it is hereby resolved that the members of the Massachusetts Municipal Association support the following essential policy positions to ensure a strong partnership between cities and towns and the Commonwealth in fiscal 2025 and beyond:

In the Area of Municipal and School Aid

 In fiscal 2025, unrestricted municipal aid should grow by at least the same rate as the growth in state tax collections, and be distributed without earmarks, conditions, or restrictions to all cities and towns, so that local officials and residents can adequately fund public safety, public works, and all basic municipal and school services while avoiding an overreliance on the property tax;

 All State Lottery proceeds, and the revenue from expanded gaming that is statutorily dedicated to pay for municipal services, should be used to support the Commonwealth's commitment to unrestricted municipal aid;

• Chapter 70 school aid should be increased in fiscal 2025 consistent with the Commonwealth's constitutional obligation to ensure adequate funding in all schools, at a minimum following the updated spending standard and original phase-in schedule adopted in the 2019 Student Opportunity Act, with each city, town, and school district receiving a minimum increase of \$100 per student;

RESOLUTIONS continued on 7

RESOLUTIONS

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

• The Governor and the Legislature should amend charter school finance law, to bring transparency and accountability to the law by limiting charter school tuition assessments placed on local government and providing a means for direct state appropriation of additional tuition payments to charter schools, funded in the state budget;

 Pending passage of charter school finance reform legislation, the full amount of the schedule in the Student Opportunity Act to fund charter school mitigation payments should be appropriated for fiscal 2025 and so that each district is reimbursed in full according to the schedule in the Student Opportunity Act;

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

• Pending a comprehensive review of the way payments-in-lieu of taxes for state-owned land impact municipalities differently, the full amount of the Commonwealth's obligations to the program for payments-in-lieu-of-taxes for state-owned land, including a hold-harmless provision, should be included in the fiscal 2025 budget;

 Full funding of the Commonwealth's obligations to reimburse the costs of regional school transportation, regular school transportation, out-of-district vocational transportation, and the transportation of homeless students under the McKinney-Vento unfunded mandate, should be included in the fiscal 2025 budget;

The Governor and the Legislature should fund supplemental education and transportation initiatives through the voter-approved surtax, including at least \$100 million in aid supporting the construction and maintenance of municipal roadways;

 Full funding of the Commonwealth's obligations and commitments to Chapter 40S "smart growth" reimbursements, regional and municipal libraries, anti-gang grants, innovation and regionalization grants, and other effective municipal and school aid programs should be included in the fiscal 2025 budget;

• The Governor and the Legislature should hold municipalities harmless related to the emergency shelter crisis, through full funding for, but not limited to, education, supplies, transportation, case management, and impacts to local room excise occupancy taxes; and

In the Area of Capital Budgeting

• The Governor and the Legislature should work together early in 2024 to ensure enactment of a multi-year transportation bond bill that provides at least \$350 million annually for Chapter 90 local road projects, indexed to grow to match construction inflation, with a notice of allocations for fiscal 2025 by March 1, 2024, with separate authorizations for the Municipal Pavement Program, Municipal Small Bridge Program, Complete Streets Program, as well as municipal grants for infrastructure focused on the enhancement of mass transit, funding that increases access to mass transit and commuter rail stations, grants to municipalities and regional transit authorities to support fleet electrification, and a supplemental municipal road formula program to for rural communities;

 The Governor and the Legislature should strengthen the Massachusetts School Building Authority and Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners grants by adjusting reimbursements to reflect the actual costs of construction;

 The state's fiscal 2025 capital plan should include funding for MassWorks, HousingWorks, and all grant programs through the Community One Stop for Growth, to help pay for important local infrastructure projects, including housing, economic development, and road safety programs;

• The state's fiscal 2025 capital plan should include additional funding, not limited to loans, for water infrastructure projects, including basic drinking water capital and water contamination mitigation (PFAS), wastewater capital and Combined Sewer Overflow mitigation, and stormwater management;

• The Governor and the Legislature should support programs in the fiscal 2025 state budget and capital plan to help cities and towns assess and respond to challenges related to climate change, including the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program, Coastal Resilience Grant Program, Green Communities Program, Green School Works and others;

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

• The Governor and the Legislature should deploy remaining federal American Rescue Plan Act funding and future state bonding authorizations for water, sewer, environmental, broadband, and housing infrastructure so that communities can leverage these funds to address critical local needs;

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

• The Governor and the Legislature should work with cities and towns to identify the scope of investment needed to ensure that municipal buildings critical to

the delivery of essential public services are safe and modern, and enact a state funding mechanism and program to provide the resources needed to implement these improvements across the state; and

In the Area of Local Taxing Authority and Other Revenues

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

 Cities and towns should be granted increased local-option flexibility to implement targeted property tax relief programs including for seniors and low-income homeowners, and to adjust the relative property tax burden for residential and commercial and industrial properties; and

In the Area of Long-Term Liabilities and Sustainability

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

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

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

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

It is further resolved that a copy of these resolutions shall be provided to the Governor and Members of the Massachusetts General Court.

RESOLUTIONS continued on 19

Administration seeks solutions, funding for shelters

By Ali DiMatteo

The Healey-Driscoll administration continues to look for additional funding to address the state's growing emergency shelter needs.

Despite an additional \$250 million for emergency shelters included in the recently signed fiscal 2023 supplemental budget, the administration is projecting a shortfall of \$224 million for the current fiscal year, while projecting that an additional \$915 million, over current spending levels, will be needed in fiscal 2025 to meet the system's demands.

In biweekly reports to the Legislature, the first of which was issued on <u>Dec. 18</u>, Administration and Finance Secretary Matthew Gorzkowitz and Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus share data about those in the system, while making the case for future needs.

As of Jan. 3, the <u>Emergency Assistance</u> <u>Placement dashboard</u> showed that there were 7,511 families enrolled in the system. According to the administration's <u>Jan. 1 report</u> to the Legislature, 3,525 of the families entered as migrants, refugees or asylum seekers, and 391 families were awaiting placement. Families were placed in temporary shelters in 100 Massachusetts cities and towns.

Because most families live in a shelter for more than one year, the state is looking to take a two-year approach.

"That means that even with the system's capacity level established, deficiency needs for [Emergency Assistance] are a two fiscal year problem, requiring a solution that spans FY24 and FY25" the Dec. 18 report states.

The report proposes using the state's transitional escrow account to fund the deficiency. The account was created in 2021 with \$1.5 billion in surplus revenue and now has a balance of approximately \$700 million.

The report indicates that the administration plans to file a supplemental budget to move the account's remaining balance into an Emergency Housing and Community Trust Fund. The administration proposes spending the money on the following priorities:

- Up to \$150 million to support housing production and preservation
- Funding 2024 shelter operational and related costs and continuing 2025 shelter costs
- Additional housing production and preservation

The report estimates there will be a shortfall of approximately \$260 million in fiscal 2025 after the account is depleted, but proposes flexibility to address costs in case circumstances changes, such as additional federal supports, work



Emergency Assistance Director Lt. Gen. Scott Rice provides an update to municipal leaders about the state's emergency shelter situation on Jan. 3 during the MMA's biweekly briefing with state officials on the issue.

authorizations or increasing exits.

The report also outlines a need for \$148 million for shelter support services, such as case management, health services, child care and workforce readiness; \$67 million to support school districts and unhoused K-12 students, including special education services and English learner supports; and \$10 million for specialized immigration and refugee health and community supports.

The state has seen a steep increase in migration in the past year, with the number of families in the system growing by more than 60% since Gov. Maura Healey took office last January. One hundred communities across the state are now hosting families in shelters, hotels and other temporary placements. ●

Special legislative panel to consider Civil Service reform proposal

By Dave Koffman

A Special Legislative Commission to Study and Examine the Civil Service Law reconvened on Dec. 12 to hear an initial reform proposal from its co-chairs and staff at the Civil Service Commission.

The <u>Civil Service presentation</u> focused on a proposed new "hybrid" pathway, which civil service departments could use to identify applicants for municipal police and fire positions outside of the existing entry-level process through the state's Human Resources Division.

The hybrid pathway would allow civil service cities and towns to opt-in through a multi-year memorandum of understanding with the HRD. The MOU would include "anti-nepotism and anti-favoritism" language. The hybrid pathway would allow for the following:

- Cities and towns could make up to 50% of entry-level police and fire appointments outside of the traditional civil service exam process, drawing from a locally generated pool of prospective candidates.
- Cities and towns could consider prospective "hybrid" candidates immediately, regardless of whether they have taken a civil service examination and without the need for a certification from the HRD.
- Prospective candidates would go through the same, pre-existing review process, including a pre-conditional offer background check and postconditional offer medical and physical abilities tests.

- Once all conditions are met, the HRD would authorize a candidate's employment in the same manner as traditional civil service candidates, subject to completion of a prescribed course of study at an approved police or fire academy, if not already completed.
- Civil service communities could appoint incumbent police officers from non-civil service communities through this process for entry-level positions only, but those candidates would be considered original appointments, and would not retain any seniority.

The special legislative commission, which is scheduled to meet again on Jan. 10, was established by Chapter 253 of the Acts of 2020, known as the

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CIVIL SERVICE continued on 27

Governor signs economic development plan

By John Ouellette

Gov. Maura Healey on Dec. 12 signed the administration's first economic development plan, which aligns its economic development priorities, funding and legislative initiatives within three main areas of focus: investing in the fundamentals to enable economic growth; retaining and attracting talent; and supporting businesses.

The plan will likely provide a foundation for an economic development bill expected to be filed by the governor early in 2024.

At an unveiling event on Dec. 6, Gov. Maura Healey said the plan — <u>Team</u> <u>Massachusetts: Leading Future</u> <u>Generations</u> — outlines a strategy to "put us on a path to future success by powering short- and long-term economic growth, retaining and attracting the world's best talent, and supporting our businesses," particularly in sectors like climate technology, life sciences and advanced manufacturing.

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said the plan prioritizes affordability for residents and growing the economy in every region. Economic Development Secretary Yvonne Hao said the administration aspires to ensure that "our state is the best place for people to start and grow their careers and for companies to start and scale, all while being a great place to live."

The plan prioritizes supporting three areas of focus with specific initiatives:

Fundamentals: Addressing housing and transportation challenges, and investing in infrastructure and competitiveness,



Gov. Maura Healey signs the administration's economic development plan, "Team Massachusetts: Leading Future Generations," at the State House on Dec. 12, as Secretary of Economic Development Yvonne Hao, left, Senate President Karen Spilka, center, and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll look on. (Photo courtesy Charlotte Hysen/Governor's Press Office)

including a focus on rural communities by creating a rural designation

Talent: Launching programs to retain and attract talent, including college graduates, immigrants, non-college graduates, and trades/professions

Sectors: Streamlining access to state resources for businesses, advancing leadership in life sciences, health care, advanced manufacturing, robotics and artificial intelligence, and catalyzing new leadership in climate technology as well as tourism and culture.

Healey said more than 1,300 stakeholders, industry leaders, elected officials, and members of the public participated in the plan's creation. To inform the process, the administration and the Executive Office of Economic Development formed an <u>Economic Development Planning</u> <u>Council</u> in May comprising public and private sector leaders and representatives of key industries, and held regional engagement sessions across Massachusetts. Discussions addressed five areas: business climate, community and neighborhood development, key clusters and innovation, workforce and talent, and equity and opportunity.

A public hearing on the economic development plan before the Legislature is required by statute, and Hao testified on the plan before the Legislature's Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies at the State House on Dec. 6.

"The majority of our economy is aligned around industries that are growing," she told the committee. "Health care is growing, life sciences is growing, climate tech is growing, advanced manufacturing is growing, AI is growing, robotics are growing. So we have a ton of tailwinds in growth sectors, and so we just need to make sure that we continue to lengthen our lead and continue to invest and continue to implement all of these initiatives here."

State law requires the creation of a new economic development plan, and approval by the governor, within the first year of a new administration or term.

The Economic Development Planning Council will organize an annual economic development summit to discuss updates to the plan, progress on initiatives, and concerns.

\$100M road, bridge supplemental funding available to municipalities

By Adrienne Núñez

On Dec. 15, the administration announced that \$100 million for municipal roads and bridges approved in the fiscal 2024 state budget is now available to cities and towns.

The allocation is funded through a voter-approved surtax on annual incomes above \$1 million, which must be spent on transportation and education programs.

Program funding has been added to municipal Chapter 90 accounts and may be used for projects that are eligible

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under Chapter 90, including construction, preservation, and improvement of municipal roads and bridges. The apportionment is automatically incorporated into each municipality's existing Chapter 90 contract with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, with no further action required by the municipality.

MassDOT has sent letters to each municipality certifying its apportionment for the current fiscal year. Allocations are distributed based on two formulas: \$50 million is distributed based on the existing Chapter 90 program formula, which takes into account population, road miles and employment; and \$50 million is distributed based on road miles alone.

Apportionments for each community are listed on the MassDOT <u>website</u>.

The \$100 million in supplemental funding comes in addition to \$200 million for the Chapter 90 program and a new \$25 million rural roads program approved for fiscal 2024. Details about disbursements for the rural roads program are still being determined. ●

FY23 closeout budget signed into law

By Jackie Lavender Bird

The House and Senate on Dec. 4 enacted a closeout fiscal 2023 supplemental budget that was quickly signed into law by Gov. Maura Healey.

The compromise bill had been released on Nov. 30 by a legislative conference committee that was tasked with ironing out differences between versions passed by the House and Senate last month.

The legislation includes \$250 million to address the emergency shelter crisis, with \$50 million set aside for an overflow shelter site and \$75 million targeted for school funding relief related to the shelter crisis. The law requires the administration to report on its spending of the shelter funds every two weeks.

In addition to the shelter crisis funding, the law includes \$75 million to address extraordinary cost increases for special education in eligible school districts, in response to a decision made last October by the Operational Services Division allowing out-of-district special education private schools to increase tuition by 14% in fiscal 2024. The law also includes a section to address costs associated with administering early voting and mail-in voting, providing \$5 million for grants from a reserve account to be issued by the secretary of state. The law also schedules the state's 2024 primary election on Sept. 3.

The law includes \$15 million for disaster relief for municipalities affected by storms and natural disasters in 2023. It also authorizes municipalities to amortize, over fiscal 2025 through 2027, costs incurred as a result of recent natural disasters,

an important mechanism for impacted communities.

The law includes several of the <u>municipal finance changes</u> that were included in a <u>supplemental budget bill filed by</u> the governor in March, a top priority



The closeout fiscal 2023 supplemental budget enacted last month includes \$250 million to address the emergency shelter crisis, with \$50 million set aside for an overflow shelter site, and \$75 million targeted for school funding relief related to the shelter crisis.

of the MMA. Of note, the bill would provide important clarity on the process for spending and accounting for opioid settlement funds.

The bulk of the spending in the bill, \$2.12 billion, is for MassHealth fee-forservice payments.

MMA, Suffolk University launch Municipal Human Resources Seminar

By Kate Evarts

The MMA and Suffolk University are announcing an expansion of their professional development partnership with the launch of a new Municipal Human Resources Seminar that will begin in April.

The Municipal Human Resources Seminar will review human resources management, policies and practices specific to Massachusetts cities and towns. Key topics will include hiring and onboarding, benefits administration, policy development, collective bargaining, and employee reviews and evaluations. Students will also review relevant labor laws and best practices in municipal human resources management.

The seminar is designed for municipal employees interested in furthering their career in municipal human resources, employees who are new to municipal human resources, and employees who work in a municipal function with human-resources-adjacent tasks.



Denise Casey

Katie McCue

"On behalf of the MMHR Board, we are very excited about the launch of the new Human Resources Seminar," said North Andover Deputy Town Manager Denise Casey, an MMHR past president and long-time board member. "This program will provide municipal leaders with practical, hands-on experience from practitioners in the field."

The MMA has partnered with Suffolk University since 2011 to offer continuing education programs designed exclusively for municipal employees to further their careers in local government. More than 500 local officials have graduated from the <u>MMA-Suffolk Certificate in</u> <u>Local Government Leadership and</u> <u>Management</u> program, and more than 300 municipal staff have completed the <u>MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance</u> <u>Management Seminar</u> since it began in 2019.

"We are thrilled that our trusted partners at Suffolk University are partnering with us on another program for our members," said MMA Deputy Executive Director Katie McCue. "This program will add so much value and skill-building for municipal human resources professionals."

The Municipal Human Resources Seminar will be held via Zoom over the course of five Thursdays, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dates for the inaugural seminar are April 4, April 18, April 25, May 2, and May 16. The cost of the seminar is \$875.

The application for the 2024 seminar is <u>available online</u> as a fillable PDF. Applications are due by Feb. 15 to seminars@mma.org. This is a competitive application process; applicants will be informed of their status by early March.

MMA webinar reviews new cannabis regulations

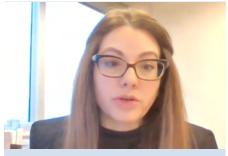
By Lily Rancatore

An <u>MMA webinar on Dec. 11</u> with attorney Nicole Costanzo of KP Law discussed the Cannabis Control Commission's <u>re-</u> <u>cently promulgated regulations</u> and their impact on host communities.

Costanzo began by reviewing how host community agreements — both new and pre-existing ones — will be affected by the new regulations when they take effect on March 1, 2024. In the spring, the CCC will review host community agreements, or HCAs, to determine compliance with the new regulatory requirements and social equity mandates.

Under the new regulations, HCAs must satisfy certain "minimum acceptable requirements." For instance, no host community may impose an unreasonable condition or a term that is "unreasonably impracticable" in an HCA. HCAs must also include a statement of all stipulated responsibilities between a host community and a marijuana establishment.

Regarding a host community's assessment of community impact fees, HCAs must include "clear, specific terms," such as the certified business name of the licensee, the specific type of marijuana operations



Attorney Nicole Costanzo of KP Law discusses updated cannabis regulations during a Dec. 11 MMA webinar.

permitted, and the duration of the HCA.

Several terms, conditions and clauses are now prohibited in an HCA, including provisions that require upfront payments or impose legal, overtime, administrative, or any costs other than a community impact fee.

"No host community may rely on other written instruments, contracts, or agreements to impose terms or conditions on a license applicant, marijuana establishment, or medical marijuana treatment center outside of an HCA," Costanzo said. "A contractual financial obligation, other than a [community impact fee], that is explicitly or implicitly a factor considered in or included as a condition of an HCA is unenforceable."

The recent regulations allow host communities to discontinue relations, although marijuana establishments may submit a request for equitable relief to the CCC. If the CCC grants or denies equitable relief to a marijuana establishment, it will provide notice of its decision to a marijuana establishment and a host community.

Costanzo concluded by reviewing the mandatory practices to promote and encourage full equity participation. Host communities must publicize certain information in conspicuous locations, explain the reasoning for the approval or denial of an application, and develop an equity plan to promote and encourage full participation.

MMA Legislative Analyst Ali DiMatteo moderated 25 minutes of questions and answers, which addressed inquiries about cannabis cafes, retail operation limits, charitable funding provisions, and amending bylaws to limit licenses.

<u>View the webinar</u>

MMA webinar discusses flag flying practices and policies

By Lily Rancatore

An <u>MMA webinar on Jan. 3</u> reviewed recommended policies and best practices for handling requests from third parties to fly flags on municipal property.

Attorney Mark Reich of KP Law began by making the important distinction between government speech and private speech in a public forum. Government speech is controlled by the government itself, and does not include the expression of opinions by members of the public.

In a May 2022 decision in Shurtleff v. City of Boston, concerning the city's refusal to raise a "Christian flag" outside of City Hall, the U.S. Supreme Court focused on the question of whether raising the flag was an act of government speech or private expression.

Reich said the key takeaway from Shurtleff is the importance of giving thoughtful consideration to any formal policies or informal practices allowing nongovernmental entities to fly flags on public flagpoles, and documenting them. Once a forum — such as a flagpole — becomes open to the public, he said, the extent to which a municipality can restrict requests relies upon an implemented policy.

Municipalities may implement policies that specify some degree of control over flagpoles as public forums. Without a policy, municipalities could be forced to allow flags to fly that do not align with the community's beliefs. It's problematic to deny flag requests without a policy in place, as the municipality could unintentionally engage in content-based discrimination that violates the First Amendment, Reich said.

He said it may be particularly important for municipalities to consider adopting a policy if they have allowed individual expression flags in the past, given that such requests could increase.

Reich described the differences between a basic and detailed policy, encouraging attendees to consult their town counsel as they consider written guidelines.

and documenting them. Once a forum A basic flag flying policy could solely list

what flags are to be flown (e.g., federal, Commonwealth, municipal, POW/MIA, or flags representing armed services) and include a statement about municipal flagpoles being limited to government speech. A more detailed policy would also indicate which additional types of flags may be flown, as determined by the municipality.

If a municipality has more than one flagpole, it may consider designating one of them as a public forum. Reich recommended posting a sign at these poles, indicating that the ideas and opinions represented are public speech and not necessarily the views of the municipality itself.

MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman moderated 35 minutes of questions and answers, which addressed inquiries about the timing of policy implementation, public displays on banners and bulletin boards, flying the POW/MIA flag, and flagpoles on public school property.

• View the webinar

MMA hosts 2nd annual POST webinar

By Lily Rancatore

An <u>MMA webinar on Dec. 12</u> reviewed the responsibilities of the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission, the latest agency milestones, and common themes of policing reforms.

POST Communications Director Cindy Campbell reviewed the commission's mandate to certify officers and law enforcement agencies across the Commonwealth. The primary responsibility of the <u>POST Commission</u> is to develop certification standards for officers and agencies in partnership with the Municipal Police Training Committee.

Campbell discussed certification updates, including the recent certification of <u>School Resource Officers</u>. POST collaborated with MPTC in the formulation and deployment of the school resource officers application and certification, she said. School resource officers are required to complete annual training provided by the MPTC.

POST began certifying SROs in October of this year, Campbell said. To date, 427 individuals have completed the required training and obtained an SRO certification.

POST deployed a new agency portal this past May. Certification information is entered in the portal, as well as information about officers who need to be recertified. Soon, the new platform will have functionality for submitting complaints and other reports due to POST.

POST Commission Executive Director

Enrique Zuniga outlined certification requirements and information that must be submitted to POST when making appeals or seeking recertifications.

Officers must complete necessary work requirements, in-service training, CPR or First Aid certificates, and education before being granted full certification. If an officer does not meet the certification requirements within the specified timeframe, the Division of Certification may decline to grant certification. Following such a decision, officers may submit a written petition to the commission requesting a review within 21 days.

Zuniga discussed future certification policy matters, including the upcoming recertification process for officers with last names beginning with A through H, which will begin in July 2024. Physical and psychological fitness will also be ascertained by the commission going forward; officers will receive fitness evaluations as an ongoing state requirement.

Regarding the disciplinary process for noncompliant officers, Zuniga said the commission will investigate complaints submitted by police personnel or by the public using an <u>online form</u>. Complaints that allege bias, excessive force or a lack of professionalism, among other issues, fall under the commission's jurisdiction, she said. Law enforcement agencies can submit disciplinary records and certification documents to POST within 90 days of an incident.



Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission Executive Director Enrique Zuniga, top left, and Communications Director Cindy Campbell, top right, review the responsibilities of the POST Commission, the latest agency milestones, and common themes of policing reforms during a Dec. 12 MMA webinar. MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman moderated.

POST published historical disciplinary records earlier in 2023, and has subsequently issued updates. These records include sustained complaints and data on officers who have resigned or retired to avoid discipline. This information is updated regularly via <u>the commission's database</u>.

MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman moderated 15 minutes of questions and answers, which addressed inquiries about the <u>Massachusetts</u> <u>Police Accreditation Commission</u>, the difference between "certification" and "accreditation," revocation proceedings, and sustained complaints regarding retention of disciplinary records.

• <u>View the webinar</u>

Going to MMA's Annual Meeting? There's an app for that

By Meredith Gabrilska

Attendees of the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show this month can use the event's free mobile app to make the most of their conference experience.

Now in its sixth iteration, this year's app will be provided by a new vendor and is expected to provide a better user experience.

The app, available for all smartphones and tablet devices, is the primary resource for planning and navigating the Annual Meeting. Users will find schedule details, workshop listings, speaker profiles, exhibitor information, an interactive map of the Trade Show floor, and much more. Attendees can use the app to personalize their meeting schedule, network with other attendees, and receive up-to-theminute updates and alerts.

A guide to accessing the app will be emailed to Annual Meeting registrants in the next week or so. The app features a login process that ensures that only Annual Meeting attendees are using it.

Advance registration for Annual Meeting is advised, so attendees have time to explore the app and take advantage of its many features.

Assistance will be available at the Annual Meeting to answer questions and help on-site registrants.



New MSA Handbook to be unveiled at Business Meeting

By Anneke Craig

The Massachusetts Select Board Association will unveil the new edition of the Handbook for Massachusetts Select Board Members during its Annual Business Meeting on Jan. 20 in Boston.

The 2024 edition of the handbook will be published online on www.mma.org in January and will include extensive content updates to reflect changes to laws, regulations and policies, as well as emerging best practices. The new edition features new chapters on climate change, and diversity, equity and inclusion.

The new format — a microsite within the MMA website — will allow users to easily navigate and search the content, while allowing for content updates to be made as needed on a rolling basis.

Three members of the MSA Handbook Committee — Williamstown Select Board Member and MSA President Andy Hogeland, former Norwell Select Board Member Alison Demong, and former Natick Select Board Member Joshua Ostroff (now the director of





Andy Hogeland

Alison Demong

transportation planning in Newton) will demonstrate the new handbook and answer questions.

The MSA handbook, which goes back many decades, was last updated in 2014.

Following the handbook demonstration, Bird Guess, the CEO of Racial Equity Group, will discuss DEI opportunities for select boards.

Guess has been working with the MMA's DEI Committee since September to develop a strategic plan for the advancement of municipal DEI efforts. His presentation will include a discussion of best practices for select boards to gauge

Joshua Ostroff

their municipality's needs and to initiate DEI work.

The MSA business meeting will include a report from the **MSA** Nominating Committee and a subsequent vote on officers and a District 5 repre-

sentative for the 2024 MSA Board of Directors.

The MSA Annual Business Meeting will be held from 8:15 to 9:15 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 20, during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston.

All select board members in

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

Utilities submit drafts of electric sector modernization plans

By Adrienne Núñez and Josie Ahlberg

The state's investor-owned electric distribution companies — Eversource, National Grid and Unitil — have submitted drafts of their electric sector modernization plans.

These comprehensive plans are meant to ensure that the state's electric infrastructure is able to handle increased demand due to further electrification of vehicles, heating systems, and other technologies.

The plans include an overview of all approved, reviewed, or under consideration distribution system investments and alternatives; distribution system improvements to increase system reliability and resiliency in the face of weather- and disaster-related risks; distribution system improvements to facilitate transportation and building electrification; forecasts considering five- and 10-year horizons; and an assessment of demand through 2050.

Eversource's draft electric sector modernization plan identifies a need to construct 14 new substations and upgrade



The state's investor-owned electric distribution companies have submitted comprehensive plans in an effort to ensure that the state's electric infrastructure is able to handle increased demand.

12 others over the course of 10 years, with upgrades to six bulk substations, as well as plans to construct five new substations in the first five years of the plan (2025-2029).

National Grid's draft plan articulates planned investments that include the upgrade and expansion of 18 existing substations and the construction of 28 new substations over the 10-year

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period, with upgrades to 10 existing substations and construction of three new substations in the first five years.

Unitil's draft plan calls for upgrades to its Lunenburg substation and a new South Lunenburg substation, which would introduce a second supply system in its service area.

The ESMPs were submitted on Nov. 3 to the <u>Grid Modernization Advisory</u> Council, which is charged with reviewing and providing recommendations on the plans.

Electricity distributors received input from the general public and key stakeholders through two stakeholder focus groups, public comment by email, and advisory council meetings. Comments on the drafts were accepted through Dec. 10.

The MMA participated in the utility-led stakeholder sessions and submitted written comments.

The distribution companies are now revising their plans based on input.

ELECTRIC SECTOR continued on 31



MMA Trade Show to highlight municipal solutions

By Karen LaPointe

Trade Show exhibitors are looking forward to meeting local officials during the 45th MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston in January.

The MMA's annual Trade Show will feature 220-plus exhibitors — including more than 30 first-timers — offering the latest products and services for the cities and towns of Massachusetts. The Trade Show offers opportunities to connect with companies, associations and government agencies in a lively exhibit hall.

Visit the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show website for the complete, updated list of exhibitors for 2024.

The Trade Show will be open on Friday, Jan. 19, from 11:15 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Saturday, Jan. 20, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The Trade Show will also feature a series of six educational Learning Labs on Friday, Jan. 19. These 30-minute sessions provide opportunities to hear from experts on a variety of topics. Details will be available soon on the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show website.

The exhibit hall will also feature MIIA's state-of-the-art driving simulator, which offers a safe environment for drivers to experience and react to a variety of conditions typical to emergency response situations.

Companies, nonprofits and government agencies interested in exhibiting can find Trade Show details on the MMA website. If you know of a company or nonprofit that would benefit from exhibiting at the MMA Trade Show, contact Karen LaPointe at 617-426-7272, ext. 154, or klapointe@mma.org.



The MMA Trade Show gives members a chance to interact with exhibitors about products and services that could benefit their communities.

Trade Show to feature 6 Learning Lab workshops

By Karen LaPointe

One highlight of the MMA's annual Trade Show at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston is the series of educational Learning Labs, which will be held in the exhibit hall on Friday, Jan. 19.

These 30-minute sessions provide opportunities to hear from experts on a variety of topics.

The following are the six Learning Labs for 2024:

11:30 a.m.-Noon

 Sustainability Advisory Services for Municipalities — Presented by Constellation

MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show at

the Hynes Convention Center in Boston.

ness coach and author, will share tips for de-escalating a challenging encounter or meeting, and strategies to help council

Featured speaker Jerry Posner, a well-

The Massachusetts Municipal

 The 5 Keys to Creating Strategic Plans That Work — Presented by ClearGov

12:10-12:40 p.m.

- Working with Your Local Cultural Council — Presented by Mass Cultural Council
- Internet for All in Your Community Presented by Massachusetts **Broadband** Institute

12:50-1:20 p.m.

 Managing Pension and OPEB Costs: The Dual Nature of Section 115 Trusts — Presented by Public Agency **Retirement Services**

 How to Navigate Animal Issues in your City or Town — Presented by MSPCA Angell

Visit the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show website for complete information about the Learning Labs.

For more questions about the MMA Trade Show, contact Karen LaPointe at 617-426-7272, ext. 154, or klapointe@mma.org. ●

MMCA to hold Annual Business Meeting on Jan. 20

members remain calm in the face of any Councillors' Association will hold its situation. Annual Business Meeting on Saturday, The MMCA will also hold its annual Jan. 20, 8:15-9:15 a.m., during the

election of officers.

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



Jerry Posner

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Administration announces \$25M for dam removal

At an event in Pittsfield on Dec. 1, the Healey-Driscoll administration announced an investment of \$25 million to remove eight aging dams in central and western Massachusetts, including the abandoned, high-hazard Bel Air Dam in Pittsfield.

The administration said the removal of hazardous and aging dams will restore fish and other wildlife habitat, increase biodiversity, improve water quality, promote climate resiliency, and make communities safer.

"This summer, we saw firsthand the catastrophic impacts of severe flooding and the stress and pressure it puts on our dams," Gov. Maura Healey said in a prepared statement. "This is a lifesaving investment that will protect our residents' and communities' safety and security."

Communities face significant financial burdens in removing or repairing dams, and the funding will ease the strain on local budgets. Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said the funding helps cities and towns "proactively prepare for future weather events."

The projects are funded through the American Rescue Plan Act. Of the \$25 million, \$20 million will support the



The Healey-Driscoll administration said it will invest \$25 million to remove eight aging dams in central and western Massachusetts.

removal of Bel Air Dam, and \$5 million will go toward the removal of the following seven dams in areas managed by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife: Thousand Acre Reservoir Dam in Athol, Cusky Pond Dam in New Braintree, Salmon Pond Dam in Brookfield, Patrill Hollow Pond Dam in Hardwick, Schoolhouse Pond Dam and Arnold Pond Dam in Sutton, and Weston Brook Dam in Windsor.

Joining Pittsfield Mayor Linda Tyer for the announcement were Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper, Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Brian Arrigo, Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Tom O'Shea and Office of Dam Safety Director Bill Salomaa.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation and Department of Fish and Game are working to examine the safety of the state's dams for repair or removal based on expected precipitation as the climate crisis brings more extreme rain and flooding.

The Office of Dam Safety maintains records of dams statewide and ensures compliance with regulations pertaining to dam inspections, maintenance, operation, and repairs. Dam owners are responsible for registering their dams, notifying ODS of a property transfer, and inspecting and maintaining dams in safe operating condition. In the case of high- and significant-hazard potential dams, owners are also required to develop an emergency action plan to be used if there is an incident of failure, overtopping, or damage to a dam.

The Division of Ecological Restoration makes grant and loan funding available for dam repairs, breaching, or removal under the <u>Dam and Seawall Repair or</u> <u>Removal Program</u> and the DER Priority Projects Program.

First-time Annual Meeting attendees get special welcome

The MMA will hold a special orientation session for first-time attendees of its Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Friday, Jan. 19, from 8 to 9 a.m.

The session will provide an informal opportunity to learn from MMA members about the best strategies for making the most of the Annual Meeting experience. Select board members, city and town councillors, town managers and human resources professionals will be on hand, along with MMA staff, to welcome attendees and answer questions. Firsttime attendees can also get answers to questions about the MMA's Annual Meeting app. If you are planning to attend the MMA Annual Meeting for the first time, or have any questions about the event or the first-time attendee session, contact MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker at dbaker@ mma.org or 617-426-7272, ext. 105.

MMA to host webinar on performance appraisals and goal setting

A free MMA webinar on Jan. 9 will review the objectives of a performance appraisal system and offer practical tips for setting "SMART" goals to start the year off right.

Joellen Cademartori, CEO of GovHR, will share strategies for reviewing and completing appraisal forms and setting measurable goals that can be used to quantify progress. She will also discuss how appointed and elected officials alike can prepare for performance appraisals.

SMART goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based.

The hour-long webinar will begin at noon. <u>Online registration is available</u>.

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



Joellen Cademartori

Annual Meeting to feature interview skills session

During the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show, the MMA will offer a special session on Saturday, Jan. 20, titled "Polishing Your Interview Skills."

A panel of executive recruiters will offer tips to improve your



Cademartori

interview skills. Panelists will include:

 Mary Aicardi, human resources practice leader at the Collins Center for



Bernard Lynch

Leon Gaumond

Public Management at UMass Boston

Joellen Cademartori, CEO of GovHR

ees will have the opportunity to ask questions.

The session will be held from 8:15 to 9:15 a.m. All Annual Meeting attendees are welcome.

• Bernard Lynch, managing principal of

Weston Town Manager Leon Gaumond

A mock interview will highlight the do's

and don'ts of interviewing, and attend-

Community Paradigm Associates

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

MMA booth is opportunity to discuss policy issues

USA

Local officials will be able to talk about the important issues facing cities and towns with MMA staff and representatives from MMA member groups at the MMA's Trade Show booth during the Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Jan. 19 and 20.

MMA Legislative Division staff will be available to discuss a variety of policy issues, as well as the MMA's policy committees, the business meeting resolutions, legislation for the coming year, and other priorities.

The MMA booth will also have information about MMA programs and events, such as the spring Legislative Breakfast Meetings, and member group information.

Details about the 2024-2025 MMA-Suffolk University Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management Program and the MMA-Suffolk Municipal **Finance Management** Seminar will be available, along with information about the new Municipal Human Resources program.

Consult the MMA Annual Meeting website or mobile app for the full MMA Trade Show booth schedule.

– Daniel Yi



Daniel Yi, a project and research assistant at the MMA, greets visitors to the MMA booth during the 2023 Trade Show.

Applications due Jan. 11 for school bus fleet electrification grants

By Adrienne Núñez

The Accelerating Clean Transportation School Bus program is accepting applications through Jan. 11 for the 2023 School Bus Fleet Deployment program.

Administered by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, the grant program offers up to \$2.5 million in flexible funding for school bus depot upgrades and the purchase of electric school buses and charging infrastructure.

The MassCEC request for proposals seeks applications from any of the following:

- Massachusetts public school districts as sole applicants
- Public school districts partnered with a private school bus transportation

- contract
- Private school bus transportation contractors partnered with Massachusetts public school districts under the Fleet Deployment Program

Participating fleets will also have the opportunity to work with the MassCEC's consultant team to address gaps in technical knowledge related to school bus fleet electrification, including coordination with stakeholders, equipment selection, procurement and project implementation.

An informational webinar is available online, and questions may be sent to CleanTransportation@MassCEC.com.

In addition to the Fleet Deployment program, Accelerating Clean



The application period for the 2023 School Bus Fleet Deployment program is open through Jan. 11.

Transportation, or ACT, also offers advisory services, for which applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Nonprofit Locally based Member driven

Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association www.emiia.org | 617.426.7272

Serving Massachusetts' communities since 1982

Climate change drives municipal planning challenges

By Jennifer Ranz

With changing weather patterns creating a growing challenge for communities, multiple sessions during this year's <u>MMA Annual Meeting</u> will focus on the impacts of climate change, as well as what municipalities can do to maintain buildings and prevent costly damages.

Experts will cover climate science, building resiliency, and risk mitigation — underscoring the critical importance of these issues as municipalities plan for 2024 and beyond.

Saturday keynote <u>Gina McCarthy</u>, who served as the nation's first national climate advisor, will highlight strategies to drive public engagement by focusing on added opportunities such as job creation and improving health outcomes.

During a MIIA-led workshop, Megan Hart, managing director of Aon's Catastrophe Risk Analytics Group, will cover the science behind changing weather patterns, and participate in a panel discussion on what municipal leaders can do to mitigate property losses and financial impact. Massachusetts' first-ever climate chief, <u>Melissa Hoffer</u>, will speak about her wide-ranging experience working in public service during the Women Elected Municipal Leadership Luncheon.

Statewide focus on climate

Last October, the Healey administration released its <u>ResilientMass Plan</u>, which identified the most significant climate risks the Commonwealth is facing, and what actions are being taken to address them.

The plan cited extreme weather patterns, including inland flooding, high heat, coastal flooding and erosion, and wildfires, as the highest risks to prioritize for statewide action. Severe weather events caused <u>tens of millions</u> of dollars in damage to homes, businesses and crops statewide during 2023 — and infrastructure such as transit service, utilities and coastal ports are also at risk.

Stephen Batchelder, vice president of Claims Operations and Risk Management at MIIA, said changing weather patterns continue to have a direct impact on municipal property damage — and associated insurance claims — across the Commonwealth.

"We are seeing more claims for water losses than ever before, whether from roof leaks, weather-related flooding, or from extreme temperature changes causing pipe freeze-ups," he said. "These water losses are critical to prevent, as they can lead to costly secondary damage including mold."

While many think of floods as a coastal problem, incidences of costly inland flooding are now much more common. This spike in extreme weather conditions, coupled with the <u>rising cost of</u> <u>catastrophe reinsurance</u>, could have an adverse impact on property insurance costs (and availability) not only in Massachusetts but across the country. In 2023, there were 25 weather/climate disaster events in the U.S. with <u>damages</u> <u>exceeding \$1 billion</u>, an increase from an average of 18 events per year during the previous five years.

■ MIIA continued on 32

Boost employee health with a focus on small changes

By Jennifer Ranz

Setting big, transformative "New Year, New Me" resolutions — such as extreme weight loss or fitness goals — is a common practice, but experts ranging from the U.S. surgeon general to the American Heart Association say that aiming for <u>smaller</u>, <u>more manage-</u> <u>able goals</u> can ultimately be more beneficial and longer-lasting.

Pursuing small changes can help eliminate the "on and off" switch that is common among dieters and exercisers, where people feel they must always be either "on" or "off" a diet or program. MIIA Wellness Manager Courtney Hernandez says setting small, attainable goals helps to create healthy habits that last. Instead of aiming to "eat healthy" all the time, for example, choose a goal such as eating three servings of vegetables per day.

"Don't make goal-setting and healthy habit formation too hard on yourself," Hernandez said. "That can be demotivating, and you can't stick with it. Make your goals attainable for yourself and very specific. Then, at the end of the week, you can feel good checking off the list — that you accomplished what you set out to do."

Through its Well Aware program for municipalities, the MIIA Health Benefits Trust is offering subscribers and their spouses a series of free, online workshops during the first several months of 2024 covering specific strategies for building healthy habits and eliminating unhealthy ones. In addition, resources on physical and mental well-being, including healthy recipes and mindfulness meditations, are available in the <u>Well Aware section</u> of MIIA's website.

"Self-care looks different for everyone," Hernandez said. "For some it means daily exercise, while for others it means fitting in a 10-minute meditation break during the workday to relieve stress."

Generally speaking, she said, "Any employee, municipal or otherwise, is going to be happier and more productive if they're taking care of themselves."

MMHR holiday meeting discusses conflict management

By Anneke Craig

The Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources holiday meeting on Dec. 7 featured registered dietitian Heidi Roth discussing healthy eating during the holidays and Jon Wortmann addressing conflict management.

Roth, owner of Heidi Roth Nutrition, shared strategies to avoid overeating during holiday festivities and to prioritize healthy habits, including how to choose a more balanced plate and practicing mindfulness. She also offered tips for modifying favorite recipes to make them healthier. Her session was accompanied by a virtual recipe swap, where members shared favorite recipes with colleagues.

Wortmann, principal of Novel Communication LLC, presented the workshop "Who Are You? Who Are They? How to Unstick Your Brain and Relationships." He coached participants on using a series of quick assessments to understand their personality, communication style, conflict style, motivations and values — as well as those of others — in order to navigate conflicts in the workplace and reach resolutions.

Wortmann was assisted by a panel of three MMHR members: Pittsfield Human Resources Director Michael Taylor, South Hadley Assistant Town Administrator and Human Resources Director Chuck Romboletti, and Shrewsbury Human Resources Director Kristina Ordung. Wortmann began by assessing each panelist's stress level when it came to a recent workplace conflict they had experienced.

"Your alarm ... is trying to protect you," he said. "So when it sends this spike of adrenaline around the person that drives you crazy, it's because that relationship isn't right."

The panelists then worked through each assessment in real time. Together, the assessments provided a framework that municipal human resources professionals can use to better understand themselves and their employees.

"The thing that's so important as people professionals, as HR leaders, is that we're not just compliance experts," Wortmann said. "In the new world of



Jon Wortmann, principal of Novel Communication LLC, coaches human resources professionals on conflict management during the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources holiday meeting on Dec. 7.

HR, you are relationship experts. ... You have to understand people's points of view, the things that are most important to them, and the way they think."

• View the recording of the meeting

MMA seeks members for its five policy committees

Local officials are invited to fill a limited number of positions available on the MMA's five policy committees for 2024.

More than 100 local officials from communities across Massachusetts serve on MMA policy committees, which advise the MMA Board of Directors, MMA staff and MMA members on legislative, regulatory and public policy issues.

- Online application form
- Deadline: Jan. 25

The committees also draft resolutions for the MMA's Annual Business Meeting, municipal best practices for the MMA's Best Practices series, and bills (biannually) for the MMA's legislative package.

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

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

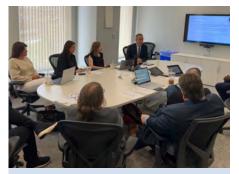
Each committee has 23 members, including mayors, select board members, councillors, city and town managers/administrators, and finance committee members, plus four presidential appointees and four technical appointees.

The MMA president names the chair and members of the committee, subject to approval by the MMA Board of Directors.

Those with the interest and time to serve on a policy committee are asked to <u>fill out</u> <u>the application form on the MMA website</u> by Jan. 25. The form provides space to list areas of interest and expertise so that a good match can be made between volunteers and the work of the committees.

About the policy committees

• **Fiscal Policy Committee:** This committee considers all municipal finance issues. Legislation that has a fiscal impact is referred to this committee from other committees as well. This committee also develops a policy framework for local government



Enrique Zuniga, executive director of the state's Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (back corner, by the window), gives an update on POST's work during the June 23 meeting of the MMA Policy Committee on Personnel and Labor Relations. The MMA's five policy committees are seeking new members for 2024.

financing in the future.

• **Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment:** This committee formulates policy in the following areas: water quality, water supply, air quality,

■ POLICY COMMITTEES continued on 37

Proposed Resolution Supporting a Local-State-Federal Partnership to Address Climate Change, Enhance Resilience, and Bolster Adaptation Initiatives

RESOLUTIONS

Continued from page 7

Whereas, climate change threatens the environment, public health and public safety of communities in Massachusetts, and has already seriously impacted many of the Commonwealth's neighborhoods, residents, infrastructure, transportation systems, and economies as extreme weather events, sea level rise, coastal erosion, powerful storms, drought, and flooding become more frequent and severe; and

Whereas, human activity directly and indirectly contributes to the warming of the global atmosphere, and the 2022 Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment has projected that our summers will soon be characterized by an increased number of hotter days on average, and extreme heat poses significant risks to human health; and

Whereas, the Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050 (2050 CECP) puts forward specific actions to reduce carbon emissions in several sectors to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 to ensure national and international climate goals are met; and

Whereas, local leaders and staff are integral environmental stewards of Massachusetts communities, embracing new technologies and best practices, preserving land and natural resources, supplying safe, clean drinking water as well as wastewater and stormwater management, and protecting ecosystems from harm: and

Whereas, in recent years, local governments reported more property insurance losses specifically linked to increases in storms with high winds, lightning strikes, power surges, damaging flooding, and sudden and torrential rainfalls; and

Whereas, communities are demanding local action on climate adaptation measures, and rely on local, state and federal leadership on resilience initiatives and mitigation programs to meet those demands; and

Whereas, innovative actions and responses to the climate crisis by local leaders offer many opportunities for physical and financial benefits to their communities, and ensure that environmental and climate justice principles are taken into account; and

Therefore, it is hereby resolved that the members of the Massachusetts Municipal Association support the following essential policy positions to ensure a strong local, state, and federal partnership to address climate change, enhance resilience, and bolster climate adaptation initiatives:

 The state should uphold its commitment to support the 351 communities of the Commonwealth through the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program, and should commit to funding the program with at least \$100 million per year to significantly increase its capacity to support climate resiliency projects at the local level; and

The state should continue to support and expand

.....

municipal efforts in energy efficiency, decarbonization, and renewable energy projects through dedicated funding, including the Green Communities Program and Climate Leader Communities Program; and

• The state should prioritize the Recommendations of the Climate Chief to respond to the climate crisis in an intersectional, cross-disciplinary manner; and

• The state should provide support for workforce development in key sectors – including public works, water and sewer, engineering, planning and design, sustainability and energy management – to adequately staff municipal governments as they work to make local government operations resilient and prepare to respond to future climate emergencies in real time; and

 The state should evaluate and implement the necessary strategies to decarbonize the energy sector while overcoming barriers to entry, ensuring an equitable and diverse workforce, and should incorporate the perspectives of environmental and climate justice and other priority populations in energy decisions; and

 The state should safeguard and support the ability of municipal leaders to make decisions, avoid preemption of local control, and incentivize responsible, sustainable development; and Municipalities should routinely review local planning and zoning bylaws and ordinances for opportunities to increase resilience in their communities, including through the specialized energy code and Zero-Emission-Vehicle-First policies; and

• The state and federal government should provide liability protections for municipal governments in the wake of weather-related incidents and aging infrastructure; and

 The state should further collaborate with municipal partners to provide data, resources and support to communities to ensure adequate preparation for extreme weather events and assist in cleanup efforts; and

 The state, as well as its 351 cities and towns, should continue to utilize federal funding to support existing programs and build new opportunities to reach local, state, federal, and international climate goals as soon as possible.

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



Managers get in holiday spirit

Members of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association gather for a holiday meeting on Dec. 14 in Salem. Pictured are, back row, left to right: Maynard Town Administrator Greg Johnson; retired manager John Petrin; East Bridgewater Town Administrator Charlie Seelig; Middleton Assistant Town Administrator Jackie Bresnahan; and Needham Assistant Town Manager Katie King; and bottom row, left to right: Westwood Assistant Town Administrator Molly Fitzpatrick Kean; Danvers Town Manager Steve Bartha; Fairhaven Town Administrator Angie Lopes Ellison; and Holliston Town Administrator Travis Ahern.



MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show January 19 and 20, 2024 • Hynes Convention Center, Boston

Turning Passion Into Action

NETWORKING

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





TRADE SHOW

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

WORKSHOPS

Workshops cover the latest developments affecting local government, on topics including:

- Al in Local Government:
 Enhancing Services
 and Empowering
 Communities
- Are You Paying Too Much for Trash and Recycling Services?
- Beacon Hill Basics: How to be Your Municipality's Best Advocate
- Briefs on Briefs: Updates on Municipal Laws
- Cleaning and Greening Up Municipal Buildings and Fleets
- Climate's Impact on the Municipal Property Market
- Crash Course in Responding to Grievances and Navigating Arbitration
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI): The Significance for Municipalities (Note: This workshop recurs in each time slot.)

- Equitable Engagement: Best Practices and Blind Spots
- Fiscal and Economic Outlook
- From 9-5 to 24/7: Building Thriving Business Districts
- Housing Converts
- The Latest in Labor Law
- Municipal Cybersecurity Update
- Practice Resilience: Be Happier at Work
- Unemployment: What Your Municipality Needs to Know
- Unlocking Federal Funds
- Using Data to Tell Your Story
- What To Expect When You're Not Expecting Weather!

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For complete MMA Annual Meeting information, visit www.mma.org. And follow #MassMuni24 on X/Twitter and massmunicipal on Facebook. Join more than 1,200 local leaders at this inspiring, can't-miss event devoted to learning, problem solving and idea sharing!

SPEAKERS



Opening Keynote: Eddie Glaude Jr.

The bestselling author, Princeton professor and political commentator helps students, readers and viewers better understand the dynamics of race and democracy in America.



Saturday Keynote: Gina McCarthy

The White House's first-ever climate advisor is also a former EPA administrator and one of the country's most prominent voices on climate change and the environment.



Opening Session: Gov. Maura Healey

The governor will address local leaders just a few days before she's due to file her fiscal 2025 state budget plan.



Business Meeting: Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll

A year into the Healey-Driscoll administration, the lieutenant governor will discuss a range of topics related to the state-local partnership.



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WEMO Luncheon: Melissa Hoffer

The Commonwealth's first-ever climate chief is the first person to hold such a state-level position anywhere in the nation.



Headshot Station

Attendees can sign up on-site to get free professional headshots taken.



Make the most of your MMA Annual Meeting experience with our official app. Registrants will receive an email to access.

REGISTER TODAY! Visit www.mma.org/register

Applications due Jan. 15 for finance seminar

By Katie McCue

The MMA and Suffolk University are offering three Municipal Finance Management Seminar programs in 2024, and the application deadline for the spring session is Jan. 15.

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

The seminars will be held via Zoom over the course of five Fridays, with start dates as follows:

- Winter 2024: Jan. 5
- Spring 2024: March 1
- Fall 2024: Oct. 18

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

The application for the 2024 seminars is <u>available online</u> as a fillable PDF. Applicants can choose which seminar they would like to be considered for, and will be informed of their status at the end of the application period.

Spring information sessions

The MMA and Suffolk University will hold an information session for their Municipal Fellowship Program on Feb. The finance seminar provides an overview of municipal finance in Massachusetts, including the operational aspects of finance structure, systems and processes in cities and towns.

8 at 10 a.m. For more information, visit <u>www.mma.org/events</u>, or <u>click here for</u> <u>Zoom registration</u>.

The Municipal Fellowship Program was launched in 2021 by Suffolk University in partnership with the MMA to offer significant support to exceptional municipal managers and professionals to attend Suffolk's master's in public administration program at its Sawyer School of Business.

The fellowship program will provide a scholarship of up to \$28,000 while the recipient's municipality commits to continuing their salary and position while they attend the graduate program part-time.

Applicants must already be accepted for admission to Suffolk's master's in public administration program and receive the support of the chief municipal official in their municipality. Consideration will be given to graduates of the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program. The application will be available on the <u>MMA-Suffolk programs web page</u> on Feb. 1. The application deadline is May 1.

Certificate Program

An information session about the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program will be held on Zoom on March 13 at 10 a.m. For more information, visit www.mma.org, or <u>click here for Zoom</u> <u>registration</u>.

In September 2024, the MMA and Suffolk University will launch the 23rd and 24th sessions of the Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program. The program is held over the course of 25 Fridays from September through May. The 2024-2025 certificate programs will be hosted in Sharon and Pittsfield; the program is held in person (40%) and on Zoom (60%).

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

The certificate program application will be available on the <u>MMA-Suffolk web-</u> <u>page</u> on Feb. 1, and the deadline to apply is April 30. Applicants will be notified of their status by mid-May.

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. ●

MMA to host webinar on empathetic dialogue skills for volatile times

A free MMA webinar on Jan. 11 will explore the art of communication in challenging times, including how to have productive dialogue with a clear head and how to overcome feelings related to volatility.

In today's world, where tensions run high and conflicts seem inevitable, finding common ground through dialogue can feel like a daunting challenge — particularly for those who have felt traumatized by news events or past conflicts. Is it even possible to engage in meaningful conversations when everything around us feels so volatile? Sharon Select Board Chair Kiana Pierre-Louis, the assistant dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Northeastern University, will share practical tips for fostering con-



Kiana Pierre-Louis

structive dialogue and provide insights into how a trauma response can affect communication. The 75-minute webinar will begin at noon. <u>Online registration is available</u>.

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

Federal RAISE grant application period opens

By Adrienne Núñez

The U.S. Department of Transportation has announced that \$1.5 billion in grant funding is available for 2024 through the <u>Rebuilding American Infrastructure with</u> <u>Sustainability and Equity</u>, a competitive program that supports investments in road, rail, transit and port projects that have a significant local or regional impact.

RAISE discretionary grants are funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Eligible applicants include state and local governments, Tribal governments, and counties.

Grantees may receive up to \$25 million per project and will receive no less than \$1 million for rural-area projects and \$5 million for urban-area projects. No more than \$225 million will be awarded to a single state.

MassTrails accepting grant applications

The application period for the <u>MassTrails</u> grant program is open through Feb. 1 via an <u>online application system</u>.

MassTrails supports recreational trail and shared-use pathway projects with reimbursement grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000. Applicants must provide a minimum of 20% of the total project cost.

Eligible grant activities include project development, design, engineering, permitting, construction, and maintenance of recreational trails, shared-use pathways, and the amenities that support trails.

Projects require documented landowner permission submitted with the application

Let us know about your local news

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

If your community has launched a new program or initiative, or has found a unique solution to a common problem, please let us know by filling out our new <u>Local News</u> <u>Tips form</u> on the MMA website. Half of the funding will be awarded to projects in rural areas, and half to urban areas. At least \$15 million will be awarded to Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Communities, and projects located in these areas will be eligible for a federal cost share of up to 100%.

RAISE projects are reviewed and evaluated based on safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, mobility and community connectivity, economic competitiveness and opportunity including tourism, state of good repair, partnership and collaboration, and innovation. Applicants are encouraged to consider how their projects can address climate change, ensure racial equity, and remove barriers to opportunity.

Projects designated "RCN Program

and are subject to all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations.

MassTrails grants are reviewed and recommended by the governor's Inter-Agency Trails Team and the <u>Massachusetts</u> <u>Recreational Trails Advisory Board</u>.

Communities, public entities, Native nations, and nonprofit organizations are eligible. Full grant guidelines and application information is available <u>online</u>.

– Adrienne Núñez

Extra" during the federal fiscal 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods program competition, and submitted for consideration under the fiscal 2024 RAISE notice of funding opportunity, will have a greater opportunity to be advanced.

<u>Additional information</u> and the <u>notice</u> <u>of funding opportunity</u> are available online. Questions may be directed to RAISEgrants@dot.gov or 202-366-0301.

The application deadline is Feb. 28, and selections will be announced no later than June 27.

In 2023, RAISE supported 162 projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Northern Mariana Islands. The <u>list of 2023 awarded projects</u> is available online. ●



MassTrails is accepting grant applications through Feb. 1 for recreational trail and shared-use pathway projects.



New councillors get budget primer

Sean Cronin, senior deputy commissioner at the Division of Local Services, left, and Salem Finance Director Anna Freedman speak during the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association training for newly elected councillors on Dec. 9 in Devens. Cronin focused on the basics of state finance and local aid, and Freedman gave an overview of municipal budgeting.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Continued from page 2

Careers initiative, the MMA's goals will continue to include collaborating with the state to stand up new state-funded workforce development and training programs to close the skills gap and expand the municipal employment pipeline, changing state law to allow communities an easier path to withdraw from the Civil Service system, and engaging with our members to deliver DEI programming for internal operations and workforce needs.

Full Funding for School Funding Programs Beyond the SOA: Many

communities and school districts are benefiting from the state's impressive commitment to funding the Student Opportunity Act, but the state's failure to adequately fund a broad range of school reimbursement commitments, exacerbated by the far-too-low \$30-per-student minimum aid, and rapid inflation in transportation, supply and personnel costs, is sliding a majority of communities backwards, making it exceedingly difficult for most localities to maintain existing education services over the long term. Major challenges are created by underfunded state commitments including regional and vocational school transportation and special education, deepened by the problems of charter school finance, declining enrollment in rural school districts, and vocational school administration and cost allocations. This is creating inequities between communities due to geography and demography, undermining municipal finances, and creating harder-to-solve gaps over time. This "basket of school funding issues" has been a top priority in past years, too.

Housing and incivility

The MMA Board this year also elevated two troubling issues that are gripping our region and the nation as a whole: the severe shortage of affordable housing and the challenge of incivility in community discourse.

Housing: It is indisputable that the affordability of housing remains one of the major political and policy issues confronting much of Massachusetts, in both the homebuyer and rental markets. While all parts of the state have been touched, the most acute impact has been in the Greater Boston region.

Board members continued to support a number of tools and resources that are needed to help municipalities address housing affordability.

First, the state needs to take a more flexible approach to policy and provide positive incentives to support and encourage communities to increase housing, such as:

- Fully funding and expanding Chapter 40S to provide supplemental education aid to offset costs resulting from student enrollment growth
- Providing funding and programs to develop distressed properties
- Working with communities to advance mixed housing projects that provide multiple benefits to neighborhoods
- And delivering improved public transportation.

The state should increase funding for affordable housing and homeownership, expanding on programs to provide financial support to renters and firsttime homebuyers, which will incentivize developers to create housing stock that matches these purchasers.

Overall, communities *and* the state can do a better job of educating residents on what affordable and market rate housing looks like, and who would be served through access to affordable apartments and homes, so that residents can have a clearer understanding of the issue, rather than acting out of fear and resisting change.

MMA Board members remained in general agreement that the MMA should continue to advocate for local decision-making on zoning, rather than state-imposed mandates. Board members also recognize, however, that zoning changes to spur housing affordability will be hard to achieve in many communities, especially if the state does not step up with the incentives, resources and education outlined above. This is why the state needs to take a more balanced and flexible approach, and why municipal leaders will continue to face difficult challenges addressing this issue at home.

Incivility: Every municipal leader has a story to tell about rising incivility at the local level, including outbursts by the public and disputes between officials on the same municipal board or across the

organization.

MMA Board members discussed ways the MMA can help foster civility and reduce incivility, with recommendations centering on education and support for local officials and employees to understand the root causes of incivility. Training could include best practices for responding effectively, residents' rights and what they are allowed to do and request, listening skills and strategies for handling difficult conversations, best practices for engaging with the public using remote technology, and successful local initiatives, such as citizen academies and effective communication strategies. Fully aware of the challenges, the MMA has held a number of webinars and member group meetings on these topics, and will continue to do so in 2024!

Other issues

MMA Board members also discussed several issues that certainly warrant further analysis and consideration, though the path forward is less clear at the moment.

Impact of Funding Formulas on Different Types of Communities: It's clear that there is persistent inequity in the way that many state funding formulas treat small communities vs. larger ones and urban communities vs. rural ones. Solving this is no easy feat, but certainly a worthy endeavor. The MMA has had some success in this area, most recently with <u>fiscal 2024 road funding</u>, which allocates some new funding specifically focused on meeting the needs of rural communities.

Regionalization: Though regionalization is mentioned within the MMA's four long-range policy goals (below), there was significant discussion of the need for a fresh look at the impediments to regionalization in order to better inform advocacy efforts by the MMA. As revenues tighten and costs increase, the need to consider the cost-saving potential of regionalization will become more important, and the MMA is well-suited to be a leader in that discussion.

Proposition 2½: There was a great deal of concern expressed about the anachronistic nature of Proposition 2½ and the need for a serious and intentional analysis and discussion about its efficacy

■ DIRECTOR'S REPORT continued on 25

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Continued from page 24

and value. Determining whether this should be an effort that the MMA pursues certainly needs further discussion, and this discussion can be pursued at both the Fiscal Policy Committee and at the Board level.

Migrant Shelter Crisis: The overwhelming demand on the Emergency Assistance shelter program has become a pressing issue for those communities that are serving as hosts to migrant families. The MMA has been serving as an information conduit between the Healey-Driscoll administration and municipalities, and has also been advocating for adequate funding and resources to be provided by the state. As this crisis evolves, the MMA will need to work with members to refine and deliver a clear advocacy message that aims to provide impacted municipalities with the assistance they need on a go-forward basis.

Longstanding priorities

It's important to note that the MMA has not, and will not, neglect the following

longstanding, long-range priorities, which were reaffirmed by the Board during its October session:

- Establishing an effective and sufficient framework for local aid that is equitable for all communities, focusing on core municipal aid programs, including unrestricted municipal aid and education funding
- Modernizing, reforming and addressing unsustainable legacy costs in local personnel systems and employee and retiree benefit structures, including underlying cost drivers, and supporting municipal efforts to attract and retain a skilled and diverse workforce
- Providing local governments with the tools to reduce the cost of government through effective innovation, eliminating unfunded mandates, and promoting regionalization, reforms and cost controls
- Addressing the long-term economic development, housing and infrastructure needs of cities and towns, especially in local, regional and statewide transportation systems,

aging local and regional environmental systems, planning for and managing the impacts of climate change, facilitating local initiatives to increase housing affordability, and ensuring that communities have the modern and fully functioning facilities they need to deliver services to residents and businesses

Meeting space wanted

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

With more than 60 member group meetings each year, the MMA uses several different types of function spaces around the state. The use of municipally owned meeting rooms greatly improves the organization's ability to sponsor affordable educational events in a variety of places.

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

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

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

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





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

SIGN UP TODAY

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ANNUAL MEETING

Continued from page 1

- <u>A range of informative and timely</u> workshops
- A lively <u>Trade Show</u> with more than 200 exhibitors featuring the latest services and solutions for cities and towns
- Member business meetings and important <u>policy discussions</u>
- Countless networking opportunities

The <u>MMA's Annual Meeting website</u> has the very latest information about the largest conference for municipal officials in the state.

The 2024 MMA Annual Meeting theme is "Turning Passion Into Action," recognizing the dedication that local leaders bring to their work and their problem-solving approach to myriad challenges.

"The MMA Annual Meeting fosters an atmosphere of collegiality and encourages a growth mindset," said Sudbury Select Board Member Lisa Kouchakdjian, who was the first registrant for the 2024 conference. "To put it simply, attending the MMA conference will make me a better public servant!"

Speakers

The speaker lineup includes:

- Opening Keynote: <u>Eddie Glaude</u>
 <u>Jr.</u> bestselling author, Princeton professor and political commentator who provides a better understanding of race and democracy in America
- Opening Session: <u>Gov. Maura Healey</u> — just days before she files her state budget plan for fiscal 2025
- Women Elected Municipal Officials Leadership Luncheon: <u>Melissa Hoffer</u>
 — first-ever cabinet-level climate chief in the nation
- Saturday Keynote: <u>Gina McCarthy</u> the White House's first-ever climate advisor, a former EPA administrator, and one of the country's most prominent voices on climate change and the environment
- Lt. Gov. <u>Kim Driscoll</u> during the <u>MMA Annual Business Meeting</u>
- <u>U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed</u> <u>Markey</u> — during the <u>MMA Annual</u> <u>Business Meeting</u>

Workshops

Over two days, 21 <u>workshops</u> will cover key municipal issues such as artificial intelligence, boosting local business districts, building affordable housing, community outreach, climate change and property coverage, cybersecurity, data-driven decision making, decarbonization, diversity, equity and inclusion, education funding, federal funds, state and local finances, happiness in the workplace, labor law, labor relations, managing a disaster, municipal law, solid waste contracts, and unemployment fraud. (<u>See</u> <u>website for details</u>.)

Trade Show

The MMA is continually updating the list of exhibitors for its sold-out <u>Trade</u> <u>Show</u>, which will be open on Friday, Jan. 19, from 11:15 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Saturday, Jan. 20, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The Trade Show will also feature six Learning Lab sessions on Friday, Jan. 19.

Companies, nonprofits and government agencies interested in exhibiting at the meeting can find <u>details and contract</u> <u>information on the MMA website</u>.

Other features

First-time Annual Meeting attendees will get a special welcome during an event-opening orientation session from 8 to 9 a.m. The session is an opportunity to learn from seasoned MMA members about the best strategies for making the most of the Annual Meeting experience, as well as MMA membership.

A special session on Saturday morning, "Polishing Your Interview Skills," will feature a panel of executive recruiters offering advice.

The two-day event also features networking receptions, awards programs and other activities.

Attendees can use the event's <u>free mobile</u> <u>app</u> to make the most of their conference experience. A guide to accessing the app will be emailed to registrants in the weeks leading up to the Annual Meeting.

Registration

Online registration is available at <u>www.</u> <u>mma.org/register</u>, and the early rate is \$240 for members. Reservations will also be accepted for the Women Elected Municipal Officials Leadership Luncheon, which will be held on Friday, Jan. 19, and costs \$45, and the Friday evening dinner, which costs \$55. Only online registrations will be accepted. No registrations can be accepted by mail or over the phone. The MMA accepts credit cards for Annual Meeting transactions, or we will invoice your municipality after the meeting. MMA staff are happy to help anyone who needs assistance. Attendees may use their unique username and password to register. Those who don't have a username and password, or who have forgotten them, may email amregistrations@mma.org.

MMA Partnership Program members qualify for member rates. Partners must have been in good standing as of Dec. 30, 2023, to be eligible to register and attend the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show. The deadline for new MMA Partner Program applications was Nov. 30. Partnership Program renewals or applications will not be accepted during the Annual Meeting.

After the early registration deadline of Jan. 10, all registrations will be at the onsite rate of \$290.

Hotel information

The MMA's discounted room block has sold out at the Sheraton Boston Hotel, located adjacent to the Hynes, but rooms can still be booked at the regular rate by contacting the Sheraton Boston directly at 888-627-7054.

Other hotel options in the area include:

- Hilton Boston Back Bay (40 Dalton St., Boston)
- Boston Marriott Copley Place (110 Huntington Ave., Boston)
- Westin Copley (10 Huntington Ave., Boston)
- The Colonnade Hotel (120 Huntington Ave., Boston)
- Courtyard by Boston Marriott Copley Place (88 Exeter St., Boston)

Questions?

Visit the <u>MMA Annual Meeting & Trade</u> <u>Show website</u> for all program details. For more information on Annual Meeting logistics, contact Timmery Kuck at 617-426-7272, ext. 106. For Trade Show and Partnership Program information, contact Karen LaPointe at 617-426-7272, ext. 154. ●

GOV. HEALEY

Continued from page 1

that priority.

"We need your partnership. We need your best ideas. And frankly, we need your courage, too," she said. "We've got to be aggressive."

In November 2022, Healey became the state's first woman and first openly gay candidate to be elected governor, after serving two four-year terms as the state's attorney general. She has been a frequent speaker at MMA Annual Meetings since her time as attorney general.

Raised in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, Healey came to

Massachusetts to attend Harvard College, where she majored in government, was co-captain of the women's basketball team, and graduated with honors in 1992. After graduation, she spent two years playing professional basketball as a starting point guard in Europe before returning to earn her law degree at Northeastern University School of Law.

Healey began her legal career as a clerk in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts, followed by more than seven years in private practice at Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr. She also served as a special assistant district attorney in Middlesex County.

In 2007, she was hired by her predecessor

as attorney general, Martha Coakley, as chief of the Civil Rights Division, where she spearheaded the state's challenge to the federal Defense of Marriage Act. Under Coakley, she also served as chief of the Public Protection and Advocacy Bureau and chief of the Business and Labor Bureau. She resigned in 2013 to run for attorney general in 2014, winning her first campaign for elected office. She was reelected in 2018.

While Healey was the first woman elected to serve as governor of Massachusetts, Jane Swift served as acting governor from 2001 to 2003 after Paul Cellucci resigned to become the U.S. ambassador to Canada.

CIVIL SERVICE

Continued from page 8

Policing Reform Law. The panel has been co-chaired by Sen. Michael Brady and Rep. Ken Gordon, who also co-chair the Legislature's Joint Committee on Public Service.

The panel offered an interim <u>final report</u> in March of 2022, and its charge was recently extended into the current legislative session.

The chairs of the special legislative commission said they intend to propose legislation — which is not yet available that will include the "hybrid" pathway, as well as many other recommendations from the commission's interim final report. Its policy recommendations are likely to include:

- Adding flexibility for municipalities in providing residency requirements
- Adjusting the formula for entry-level certifications (from 2n+1 to 3n+1)
- Supporting and investing in cadet programs
- Lowering barriers to the civil service exam fee waivers
- Increasing the Civil Service Commission budget and enhancing its

authority

Supporting diversity scholarship models

In the coming weeks, a bill is expected to be reported out of the Joint Committee on Public Service and forward in the legislative process.

The Joint Committee on Public Service has also released its presentation from the Dec. 12 meeting of the special commission.

For more information, contact MMA Senior Executive and Legislative Director Dave Koffman at dkoffman@ mma.org.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Continued from page 4

infrastructure, especially in light of the tight cap on local property tax revenue



and recent cost escalations.

For the MMA, other key objectives early in 2024 will be investments in municipal infrastructure, housing, climate

Session held for newly elected councillors

Marlborough City Council President Michael Ossing speaks during the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association training in Devens on Dec. 9. Ossing discussed the mechanics of a council meeting, the role that councillors play at various kinds of meetings, and council rules. Ossing is a 24-year member of the council, and he shared his experiences with the audience of mostly newly elected councillors from around the state. resiliency, and bills that ease unnecessary burdens on local government in Massachusetts.

Additional policy priorities of the House and Senate that are expected to get attention this year include health care reform, gun control, mental health services, economic development, early education and care, clean energy, and more. Additionally, the Legislature will make decisions on whether to propose alternatives to the seven potential questions making progress toward the 2024 general election ballot.

The legislative session formally ends on July 31. To have a realistic chance at passage this session, most legislation must move out of committee by Feb. 7 (governed by a legislative joint rule) unless it receives an extension.

Around the Commonwealth

Easthampton

City updates hate crimes policy

With war raging abroad and hate crimes increasing nationally, Easthampton recently updated its Hate Crimes Policy to improve public safety, promote inclusivity, and provide greater clarity around its investigation processes and community outreach.

Easthampton had been periodically revising its policy after the 2020 murder of George Floyd, according to Mayor Nicole LaChapelle, and to reflect court rulings. But given concerns about white supremacists locally, and increased antisemitic and Islamophobic activity after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel, the city further refined its <u>policy</u> and released it in November.

"We felt like we really needed to [update the policy] and get that out to the public," LaChapelle said. "And send a very clear signal that hate has never been tolerated in Easthampton, and it is not an antiquated, definitional approach. It is top of mind, and with the most current information possible."

The country has seen alarming increases in hate crimes recently. Citing federal statistics, the Anti-Defamation League said Massachusetts had 412 hate crimes in 2021, a 33% jump over the previous year. The country saw a 38% increase in white supremacy propaganda efforts from 2021 to 2022, with Massachusetts ranking second in propaganda activity, after Texas, according to the ADL. The state also saw a 41% increase in antisemitic incidents over that period, with 71 municipalities experiencing at least one incident.

Easthampton has seen white supremacist activity, including "some really discouraging, disgusting rumors" on social media and a white supremacist group leafleting in a neighborhood, LaChapelle said.

Easthampton reviewed the policies from Northampton, Holyoke and Cambridge as part of its update process, LaChapelle said. Officials worked with the city attorney and relied on the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, the U.S. Department of Justice and civil rights



Easthampton has updated its Hate Crimes Policy as part of its efforts to protect the public amid increasingly hateful rhetoric and incidents locally and around the world.

groups for information.

"We did not want this policy to be aspirational," LaChapelle said. "We wanted this policy to be hands-on, written, issued and on the streets."

The policy details how police need to collect and document evidence and move a case up the chain of command. It emphasizes the need to gather evidence, including hate literature, spray paint cans, and symbolic objects; instructs investigators to record suspect statements verbatim ("Exact language is critical"); calls for officer training on hate crimes; and elaborates on the role of the department's civil rights liaison.

After an incident, the city expects police to place the alleged crime in context, by identifying any previous incidents in the same area, or against the same victim; identifying patterns, or hate groups potentially involved; familiarizing themselves with local hate groups; and complying with state and federal hate crime data collection and reporting requirements.

Easthampton's policy also emphasizes community outreach and hate crime prevention, including engaging the media and communicating with community organizations, religious institutions, neighborhood groups and residents in targeted communities; identifying sources of support for victims; keeping victims updated; and arranging for translators if necessary. The policy encourages public forums to address hate crimes and violence generally, and, where appropriate, expanded prevention programs in schools.

"This revised policy reflects our

dedication to fostering a community where everyone feels secure, regardless of background," Police Chief Robert Alberti said in a statement about the policy.

LaChapelle said the update builds on work already underway to improve interaction and trust between first responders and residents. Two years ago, the city contracted with Clinical & Support Options to have a social worker co-responding to incidents with the police, and last year, the city paired that with a community social worker and a public health nurse to support victims, she said. The work also inspired the police department to write a separate grant for a staff therapist, she said, to support first responders who face these difficult situations.

— Jennifer Kavanaugh

Methuen

City takes collaborative approach to mental health, homelessness, addiction issues

In an effort to address concerns about mental health, addiction and homelessness in the community, Methuen has convened a monthly mental health task force with representation from across municipal departments to collaborate on addressing the issues.

"Rolled up in the issue of mental health is addiction, is homelessness," said Mayor Neil Perry. "And we started looking at various ways to combat it to make sure that a., each department knew what other departments were doing, b., we were maximizing our approach to obtaining grants, and that c., the first year and each year after we have a plan for our opioid settlement money.

"Even though it is a 20-plus person team, there has been great cohesion and great focus on direction," he added.

Perry said that convening the group, which kicked off over the summer, has allowed departments to learn from each other.

"Being able to share all this between all these departments, and other

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Around the Commonwealth

COMMONWEALTH

Continued from page 28

departments being able to use these ideas, I think has been the biggest positive by bringing everyone together at the same table," said City Councillor and task force member Joel Faretra.

Perry said a proposal to the City Council for how to use the first \$380,000 in opioid settlement funds includes expanding access to <u>Care Solace</u>, a mental health coordination service used in the school system, to anyone in the city, as well as funding for two patrol officers, two EMTs, and increased education and messaging in the community.

Following the suicides of two teenagers last year, Faretra said struggling populations like students, veterans and seniors also need support, and the task force is looking to provide a social worker to support the senior population as well as clinicians to be available for first responders.

The task force is also requesting increased access to Narcan, additional support for the Health and Human Services Department, and for treatment and recovery efforts.

Perry noted that by the end of November, overdoses in 2023 had already exceeded data for 2020, 2021 or 2022.

He said the city is expecting an additional \$68,000 in opioid settlement funds in fiscal 2025, with additional funding through fiscal 2039. Faretra said the task force has proposed seeking additional funding through the local meals tax.

Police Chief Scott McNamara said about a quarter of calls to the department "have a connection to mental health issues, and these are calls that we're going to over and over."

"We immediately understood we needed to get mental health clinicians embedded into the department," he said.

The Police Department has partnered with <u>Front Line</u>, a behavioral health company that works with numerous municipal police departments in the state, to pursue and facilitate the use of two grants as a part of the citywide effort to

address mental health concerns.

The first is a \$550,000 Justice Mental Health Collaborative Partnership grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance provided over three years. The grant will support the partnership between the Police Department and Front Line and the creation of a secondary co-response team and community support center. The secondary team will consist of a clinician and peer support specialist who can respond to a scene when requested by an officer. The responders will conduct an initial assessment and develop a care plan, including connection or transfer to additional services.

Methuen Crime Analysis Director Dawn Reeby said Front Line will connect with a number of departments and stakeholders and draft a report to provide a citywide view of resources that exist and where there are gaps. The support center is expected to be operational in the fall of 2024.

"We can deal with the crisis with the help of the clinician, but there is a window of time that is critical," McNamara said. "With this money we can provide services until they are in the hands of a provider."

The second grant, \$400,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, will fund a clinical co-response clinician to respond to mental health events alongside officers who are trained in Crisis Intervention Team techniques, creating a primary co-response team. The grant will also provide access to Front Line outpatient services and after-hours clinical tele-services.

"The importance of the task force going forward is taking a look at what we are doing, measuring ... what's the result," Perry said. "Is it having a positive impact? And if it's not in certain areas, how do we take a look at those areas and adjust. Waiting is not helping anybody."

– Meredith Gabrilska

Cambridge/ Anmoughcawgen

City to add Indigenous language translations to some street signs

As it seeks to acknowledge its Indigenous past and present, the city of Cambridge will soon install bilingual street signs translated in the Massachusett language on several streets in the eastern part of town.

By March, the city hopes to erect 70 to 80 new street signs on First through Eighth streets as part of the <u>African</u> <u>American and Indigenous Peoples</u> <u>Historical Reckoning Project</u>, which has received \$180,000 through Cambridge's participatory budgeting process to recognize local Indigenous history through the street signs and other projects, and to repair and enhance the city's Black historical markers.

Though Indigenous-language signs are more common on reservations, Cambridge may be one of the first municipalities to have them in this state, if not the country, according to people involved in the project. The project's organizers said they hope the Indigenous street signs will encourage greater awareness of local tribal history and of current Native American residents, and that the increased awareness will lead to more projects and programming centered around Indigenous history and culture.

"The city of Cambridge is very committed to acknowledging the diversity in our community, and to equity and inclusion efforts," said Sarah Burks, a preservation planner for the Historical Commission. "This is something that the citizens of Cambridge voted for, and it's something they wanted to fund, so the city staff are committed to seeing it through."

Resident Sage Carbone, a descendant of the Massachusett Indian Tribe and a member of the Northern Narragansett Indian Tribe of Rhode Island, proposed the idea in 2021 through the city's participatory budgeting process, in which residents vote on funding for one-time

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People



Timothy McInerney

Timothy

McInerney became the new town administrator in Northborough on Dec. 11.

McInerney previously served as the interim director of inspectional services in Worcester

from January to September 2021, as the interim administrator and later town administrator in Grafton from 2008 to 2020, as interim town administrator in Ware in 2006, as interim town manager in Uxbridge in 2005, as town administrator in Seekonk from 2002 to 2004, and as town manager in Salisbury from 2001 to 2002. He also worked as a safety service director in Mt. Healthy, Ohio; as a human resources consultant in Lexington County, South Carolina; and as an assistant budget analyst for the South Carolina General Assembly.

McInerney has a master's degree in public administration from the University of South Carolina, and a bachelor's degree in political science from Suffolk University.

In Northborough, he replaces **John Coderre**, who left the position last spring. Michael Gallagher had been serving as the interim administrator.

On Jan. 1, E.

2025 term.

A lifelong

Denise Simmons

was sworn in as

Cambridge resi-

dent, Simmons

will be serving her

City Council (since

2002) and her third

12th term on the

Cambridge's new

mayor for the 2024-



E. Denise Simmons Photo courtesy Kyle Klein Photography

term as mayor.

In Cambridge, the mayor is selected from the City Council.

In 2008, Simmons made history by becoming the nation's first Black, openly lesbian mayor, as well as the first Black woman mayor in Massachusetts.

She has a long history of service in Cambridge, including as executive director of the Cambridge Civic Unity Committee in the 1980s and as a member of the Cambridge School Committee in the 1990s.



Dan Rourke was sworn in as Lowell's newest mayor on Jan. 2, after having been chosen among his fellow city councillors to serve in the role.

Rourke was first elected to the council in 2013, and was the city's vice

Melissa Pimentel.

who has exten-

sive experience in

human resources

ioined the MMA

on Jan. 2 as the

organization's first

human resources

manager.

management,

mayor in 2016. While on the council, he has served as chair of the public safety, neighborhood services, elections and substance abuse subcommittees. He is also an assistant chief probation officer at the Lowell District Court.



Melissa Pimentel

From May 2022 until recently, Pimentel served as the human resources director for the Easton Public Schools. Previously, she worked as the personnel administrator for the town of Dartmouth, from June 2013 to 2022; as the human resources and diversity administrator for the Somerville Public Schools, from 2011 to 2013; as a human resources generalist for the town of Braintree, from 2004 to 2007; and as the personnel assistant for the Dartmouth Public Schools, from 2004 to 2007.

She has a bachelor's degree in human resource management from Bridgewater State University, and an associate's degree in office administration from Bristol Community College.

Michael Case joined the Washington Select Board after winning a special election on Oct. 21. He replaced **John Fish**, who stepped down from the board over the summer. Case's term ends in the spring of 2025.

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Paul Wetzel won a Nov. 4 special election to fill a vacant seat on the Williamsburg Select Board. His predecessor, **David Mathers**, died in July after serving 16 years on the board. Wetzel's term ends in the spring of 2025.



Dover Board of Selectmen Chair **Robert Springett** died on Dec. 4 at age 76.

Springett served the town in numerous roles over the past 17 years, including the last five as a selectman and terms on the School

Robert Springett

Committee and the Capital Budget Committee. With an accounting degree from St. Peter's College and a law degree from Fordham University, he spent three decades working at JPMorgan before retiring as a managing director in 1995.



Mary Waselchuk, the first woman to be elected to Peabody's City Council five decades ago, died on Nov. 23 at age 91.

Waselchuk first

ioined the council in 1978 as the Ward Mary Waselchuk 3 councillor, and

later became an at-large councillor and council president during her 16-year tenure. She also served on the council with her brother. Frederick Murtagh. She had worked at the Essex County Administrative Office before becoming a real estate agent.

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People

PEOPLE Continued from page 30



Bernard Goldberg

Bernard

Goldberg, a former Cambridge city councillor and vice mayor, died on Nov. 30 at age 94. He served for a decade on the City Council, starting in 1960. He and his twin brother, William, practiced law at their own firm in Cambridge for more than 60 years. The city named a square after the brothers in 2004.

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.

Video features Franklin officials discussing road salt reduction

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Just in time for winter, two public works officials from Franklin are featured in a short video offering advice on treating roads in ways that promote safety while minimizing impacts on the environment.

"<u>On the Road With Salt</u>" features Public Works Director Robert "Brutus" Cantoreggi and Carlos Rebelo, the town's highway and grounds superintendent, describing their efforts to balance safety with protecting the water supply and the local environment.

"As a public works guy, I wear a lot of different hats," Cantoreggi said in the video. "On one hand, I'm dealing with my residents, and they want the safest roads possible and the quickest way and the cheapest way to do it. On the other hand, I run the water department, and in the water department, they want quality drinking water."

Salty snow and ice melt flows from roads into water bodies and groundwater, where it can harm and even kill freshwater animals such as snails, frogs and trout, and can cause drought-like symptoms in plants and health problems for people.

Cantoreggi and Rebelo said they've made a variety of efforts to reduce their use of salt on the town's 180 lane miles of road: targeted salting in high-traffic and hilly areas instead of oversalting the whole town; checking road treatment



Franklin Public Works Director Robert "Brutus" Cantoreggi discusses road treatment strategies in the video "On the Road With Salt."

trucks each year to ensure that they are correctly calibrated; training employees on striving for the goal of using no more than 250 pounds of salt per road mile; pretreating roads during the three or four days before a storm; and educating the public to stay off the roads during storms and to reduce speeds when they do use them.

As a result, the Franklin officials said, they have reduced salt use by about one third.

"Salt is a problem, and we don't want to contribute to it," Rebelo said in the video. "We want to be a solution."

Produced by <u>Trillium Studios Film</u>, the nearly 8-minute video is part of the <u>Turnaround Films series</u>, which highlights innovative solutions to the changing environment. Cantoreggi said the video was filmed last winter and completed in the fall. ●

ELECTRIC SECTOR

Continued from page 13

Revised drafts will be submitted to the Department of Public Utilities in January for their review process.

The Grid Modernization Advisory Council and electric sector modernization plan system was created by a major 2022 <u>climate law</u>, which requires the state's distribution companies to prepare plans to upgrade the distribution system while also achieving the following objectives:

- Improve grid reliability, communications and resiliency
- Enable increased, timely adoption of renewable energy and distributed energy resources
- Promote energy storage and electrification technologies for decarbonization
- Prepare for climate-driven impacts on transmission and distribution systems
- Accommodate transportation and building electrification, and other new loads
- Minimize or mitigate impacts on ratepayers

The climate law also created the <u>Electric</u> <u>Vehicle Infrastructure Coordinating</u> <u>Council</u> and the <u>Clean Energy</u> <u>Transmission Working Group</u>, among other programs. Gov. Maura Healey recently appointed a <u>Commission on</u> <u>Clean Energy Infrastructure Siting and</u> <u>Permitting</u>.

The collaborative process these groups have been engaging in will support future electrification efforts across Massachusetts. The work is intended to help shift key sectors away from fossil fuels with properly supported electricity generated through renewable energy.

The draft ESMPs are available on the <u>Grid Modernization Advisory Council</u> <u>website</u>, along with the input of the council and related materials.

MIIA

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Adding to the challenge for municipal governments is that city- and townowned buildings are typically diverse in age, structural materials and construction practices, which may require specific management plans for each structure.

Kenneth Wertz, executive director of the Massachusetts Facilities Administrators Association and the National School Plant Management Association, said newer building codes promote higher efficiency construction, including a tighter building envelope.

"This is ideal for managing extreme cold and extreme heat efficiently," he said, "but it can create a lower margin of error when dealing with water intrusion."

What municipalities can do

When it comes to climate change readiness, municipalities can start by getting a full picture of maintenance needs across town buildings, Wertz said, and then establishing a plan for regular maintenance.

1. Complete a thorough assessment of all buildings, including appliances and systems that require regular maintenance and/or replacement (boilers, HVAC systems, roofs, etc.). Software systems are available for tracking, and MIIA often covers this cost for its members via risk management grants.

2. Implement capital planning that anticipates maintenance needs and includes a realistic timeline for maintenance and replacement. With tight budgets, recommissioning systems may need to be completed on a building-by-building, rotating basis.

3. Set an amount aside in the municipal budget for maintenance. Consult facilities staff for input, and look at what municipalities that are comparable in location and size are doing. 4. Take advantage of state and federal funding earmarked for carbon footprint reduction to help with appliance and systems upgrades. Replacing an old boiler with a newer, high-efficiency system can bring an added benefit of helping to prevent malfunctions (and pipe freeze-ups).

5. Leverage new technologies, such as remote shutoff valves, that can be used in conjunction with plumbing and water level sensors.

Batchelder said municipal officials need to be aware of trends in the property insurance marketplace and how municipal insurance could be impacted moving forward. Volatility in the reinsurance market is leading to higher costs, and could reduce the availability of property insurance as a fallback when disaster strikes. Planning ahead and avoiding maintenance deferral is more critical than ever.

COMMONWEALTH

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capital projects. Ultimately, her proposal was combined with a proposal to restore and improve Cambridge's Black historical markers. Work on the Black historical markers has started, Burks said, but the city is trying to hire a new staff member to move that project forward.

The Indigenous project reflects a heritage that has always existed, but was not always acknowledged. In the first state to receive an Indigenous name (Massachusetts translates to "greathill-small-place"), Indigenous peoples lived in an area called Anmoughcawgen, which means either "fishing weir" or "beaver dam." After European colonization, the area became known as Newtowne, and later Cambridge.

In proposing the translated signs, Carbone said she was inspired by seeing Indigenous-language signs on reservations, and was motivated by the lack of Indigenous representation in diversity programming and initiatives.

"If the city wants to increase the visibility of Indigenous peoples and languages, this is an economical way to do it," Carbone said. "A street sign is not a huge investment. What the investment is



David Shane Lowry, left, and Sage Carbone, members of an advisory group helping Cambridge improve the visibility of Indigenous languages and history, hold up a prototype for bilingual street signs that will go up in the city's eastern end.

— is opening up a relationship with the tribal nations that are in your area, and having a conversation about it."

Working with the Historical Commission and city staff, an advisory group composed of Carbone, David Shane Lowry and Elizabeth Solomon invited scholars, leaders and language keepers from tribes in New England. The group selected the Massachusett language, since the Massachusett people lived in the area, and their language closely resembles other locally spoken Indigenous languages. Translators from the Massachusett tribe at Ponkapoag provided the translations. The group started with the numbered streets in East Cambridge because those words would be the easiest to translate. They also approved a design containing the standard green background and white lettering for the official street name, with a purple strip along the top bearing the translated name in white letters.

At some major intersections, additional, smaller signs placed lower on the poles will direct people to a website with background on the project, information about the Massachusett language and history, and audio pronunciations of the translated street names.

After completing the initial phase, the group will look at other ways to increase Indigenous visibility in Cambridge. Carbone wants the project to inspire other cities and towns.

"That's the major hope," Carbone said, "is that municipalities will be more open to relationships with tribal nations."

— 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.

EMPLOYMENT **OPPORTUNITIES**

Highway Superintendent

Town of Raynham

The town of Raynham is seeking a Highway Superintendent to oversee management and administration of the Highway Department. There are seven major areas of responsibility that are under the jurisdiction of the Highway Superintendent: maintenance of public ways, MS4 stormwater permit compliance, snow and ice, solid waste, parks and grounds, highway facility and equipment maintenance. The full job profile can be viewed on the town's website, at www.town. raynham.ma.us/human-resources/news/job-posting-highway-superintendent. The town seeks an individual who possesses the following characteristics and skills: A strong manager who is forward-thinking and fair minded, who can foster a team environment. Bachelor's degree in engineering, public administration or related field, and five to seven years of related experience or any equivalent combination of education, training, certification, and experience. Must have a valid Massachusetts driver's license and have or be willing to obtain certification as a Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official (MCPPO). This position is 40 hours/week, with a salary of +/-\$110,000 DOQ. Please submit a resume and cover letter to recruitment.umb@ gmail.com. The town of Raynham is an equal opportunity employer that welcomes all applications.

Deputy Commissioner of Public Works (Deputy Director of Public Works) City of Medford

Department: Public Works. Hours of Work: Full-time (35 hours/weekly), Monday through Friday, 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Salary: \$118,600.67-\$131,376.12 (FLSA Exempt) - PW 22 Non-Union. Basic Function: The Deputy Commissioner of Public Works performs responsible supervisory, administrative, and professional duties. Manages the operations of the Department of Public Works (DPW) under the direction of the Commissioner. The DPW provides quality and professional services through seven divisions: highway, water and sewer, parks, forestry, cemetery, engineering, and fleet maintenance. Must have technical and practical knowledge of public works facilities, equipment, utilities, design, and materials. Must have the ability to assist the Commissioner in planning, assigning, and supervising the work of DPW employees engaged in a variety of public works duties, including construction, maintenance, and emergency response. Available to respond 24/7 during off-hours. Supervision: Reports directly to the Commissioner of Public Works. Education: Bachelor's degree in civil engineering or a related field; master's degree and/or professional engineers license preferred; 10 years' responsible experience in municipal public works administration, engineering, and construction; public management or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Valid Massachusetts motor vehicle operator's license. Possess a valid Class D driver's license required. Address all cover letters and resumes to: Office of Human Resources, City of Medford, Room 204, 85 George P. Hassett Drive, Medford, MA 02155. Or send a cover letter and resume with the job title in the subject line to jobs@medford-ma.gov. For the complete job posting, please visit the city of Medford's website: www.medfordma.org. The city of Medford is an equal opportunity employer. All applications will receive equal consideration regardless of disability, race, color,

religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, and any other protected class status, in accordance with applicable. Residents of the city of Medford, women, people of color, veterans and persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Finance Director Town of Kingston

The town of Kingston, Massachusetts (EOE/AA), is seeking an experienced, professional municipal Finance Director to join its leadership team. Kingston is a growing south shore community with a current population of nearly 14,000 residents and a FY24 operating budget of \$54 million. Successful candidates will be skilled in municipal finance, have MUNIS experience, an excellent communication style and be able to work collaboratively. Requirements include bachelor's degree in finance or related field and six to eight years of related experience in municipal government finance, or any equivalent combination of education and experience is preferred. A current Certified Governmental Accountant (CGA) or ability to obtain certification within two years of hire is required. The current salary range is \$97,120-\$135,968. This position currently oversees the departments of accounting, assessors, and procurement, with future oversight of the Treasurer/Collector Office. Complete job descriptions can be found here. To apply, email resume and cover letter in a single PDF with "Kingston Finance Director" in subject line to personnel@kingstonma.gov. Position will remain open until filled.

City Manager

City of Newport, Vermont

The city of Newport, Vermont, is looking for its next City Manager. Seeking a true servant leader, the Mayor and City Council seek a candidate with operational and human resource expertise to help develop and implement strong internal and operational controls and practices. The city of Newport is a picturesque community of 4,400 people in Vermont's northeast kingdom, on the shores of Lake Memphremagog. It is home to five recreational facilities and parks including

a campground, City Dock, and 20-acre Gardner Memorial Park. A border community, Newport sees many tourists from Quebec and is 20 miles north of the famed ski area Jay Peak. Newport's largest employers include Poulin Grain, Columbia Forest Products, North Country Hospital, and the North Country Supervisory Union. The city of Newport is truly a beautiful city to live and work. To learn more, please click here for our recruitment brochure. The city of Newport is prepared to offer a competitive compensation package based on qualifications and experience. Excellent benefits package. Residency is strongly preferred. Submit resume, cover letter, and contact information for five professional references by Jan. 31, online to Corey Parent and Alex Brigham at corey@leoninepublicaffairs.com. For questions, please call Corey Parent 802-370-0494 or Alex Brigham 802-999-0939. The city of Newport is an equal opportunity employer.

Director, Housing and Community Development City of Chelsea

Annual Base Salary: \$103,152-\$128,822.72 (FY23). The city of Chelsea is looking to hire a Director of Housing and Community Development to provide a variety of administrative, technical and professional work in preparation and implementation of housing and economic development plans, programs and services. This includes direct management and oversight to functions of the department and its staff. The Director is responsible for formulating, with the City Manager and for working closely with the City Manager. To apply online and for a complete job description, click on the link below: www.chelseama. gov/job_detail_T14_R135.php. The city of Chelsea is an equal opportunity employer.

Assistant Purchasing Agent

City of Lawrence

Under the supervision and in collaboration with the Purchasing Agent, this position provides assistance and guidance to city and school departments for the

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Classified advertising rates and information

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

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

Classified advertising rates

Classified ad rates include publication in The

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

Member rates

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

Nonmember rates

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

Beacon deadlines and publication dates

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

February Beacon

Deadline: January 26 Publication: February 1

March Beacon

Deadline: February 26 Publication: March 1

Placing an ad

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

For more information, call 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.

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procurement of goods, services, and construction, in compliance with city policy, state laws, rules, and regulations. Qualifications: Bachelor's degree preferred or any combination of experience and knowledge equivalent to completion of four years of college with course emphasis in business administration, accounting, finance, or related field. Must have knowledge of M.G.L. Chapter 30 B. Three years of municipal purchasing, accounting, or finance experience. Special Requirements: Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official (MCPPO) required within one year of hire. www.cityoflawrence.com/Jobs.aspx?Unique-Id=98&From=All&CommunityJobs=False&JobID=Assistant-Purchasing-Agent-393.

Assistant Librarian for Public Services Town of Wellfleet

The town of Wellfleet is seeking to fill the position of Assistant Librarian for Public Services who will be responsible assisting patrons, providing reference services, promoting services, performing computer reference searches, training patrons in the use of equipment and software, holding tech "drop in" hours, providing interlibrary loan service, supervising volunteers, working at the general circulation desk of the library, and carrying out all related activities of an automated library system. Full-time position with benefits. Compensation range \$30 to \$34.48 per hour commensurate with experience. As a condition of employment, applicants must be CORI certified or become CORI certified. As indicated above, all applicants must complete the town's application (link: required application), even if a resume is attached and submit by email to the HR recruitment email: HumanResources@wellfleet-ma.gov.

Community Development Block Grant Planner

City of Easthampton

This position is a great opportunity to work in an urban planning environment, helping to better local communities. The Community Development Block Grant Planner conducts work dedicated to supporting the administration of the city's community development block grant program. This position works under direction of the Senior Planner with a range of Planning Department functions, including financials, payment processing and record keeping, consultant coordination, and community interaction associated with the city's fiscal year 2022/2023 CDBG grant program. This position is grant-funded, minimum of 24 months. Schedule: 34 hours/week, Monday-Thursday. Salary: \$24.21-\$29.78 per hour. To see full posting, visit our website at <u>www.easthamptonma.gov</u>.

Assistant Treasurer/Collector Town of Maynard

Are you the professional, qualified self-starter we're looking for to serve as our next Assistant Treasurer/ Collector? Performs supervisory and complex technical and clerical work assisting our Treasurer/Collector in the management of town funds, tax collections and utility bills, issuance/funding of all checks, including processing payroll/deductions, and day-to-day supervision of Treasurer/Collector's office staff. Knowledge of municipal procedures and related laws, cash handling/ controls, strong communication skills, strong computer/software skills (spreadsheets, financial). Degree in accounting or related field with four years in municipal government finance/related financial field or equivalent combination education and experience. \$28.19 to \$33.51/hour, DOQE (AFSCME, Grade VI), 39 hours per week. Review of full job description is encouraged: careers in town government | Maynard, Mass. (town ofmaynard-ma.gov). Resume and letter of intent to hr@townofmaynard.net. Open until filled. EOE

Military and Veterans Associate Quincy College

Under the direction of the Vice President of Student Success sand Partnerships, this position is the major administrative support and front line staff for military, veterans, and military/veteran dependents educational benefits and services. The incumbent is responsible for day-to-day operations related to these services and other services provided by the Office of Student Development including, but not limited to, updating and using department databases, correspondence, filing, communications, routine procedures and presentations. For a full job description or to apply, please visit <u>quincy.interviewex.change.com/jobofferdetails.</u> jsp?JOBID=170756.

Executive Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent Easton Public Schools

Job goals: To provide support services to the Assistant Superintendent in the areas of communication, public relations, professional development, community outreach, personnel management, financial services, grants management and program administration. Knowledge, ability and skills: Minimum qualifications: Bachelor's degree preferred. Minimum of five years in an administrative assistant role. Compensation: Twelve-month, non-union contract with regionally competitive benefits. Salary range: \$51,763-\$64,063. Start date: January 2024. Apply on <u>School Spring</u> job #4469300.

Budget Director City of Brockton

Brockton, the City of Champions, is hiring! We are seeking a detail-oriented, organized Budget Director to assist the Chief Financial Officer in coordinating, administering and supervising all matters related to the city's financial affairs. This is a full-time, non-union position with a starting salary of \$106,917, annual step increases and excellent benefits. This position is open until filled; applications will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. For more information and application instructions, please visit <u>brockton.interviewechange.</u> com/jobofferdetails.jsp?JOBID=170121

Conservation Agent Town of Falmouth

The town of Falmouth is seeking a highly motivated full-time Conservation Agent to join the Conservation Department's active team. Please apply through the town's website. Falmouth is proud to have the second busiest Conservation Department in the state, as reflected by the number of applications received for permits for work within 100 feet of a resource area. The Conservation Department provides support to the Falmouth Conservation Commission, which serves to protect and conserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that are dependent upon the town's wetlands' resources. The department is responsible for land management and regulation of over 2,000 acres. The Conservation Agent works 40 hours per week, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and participates in Wednesday evening Conservation Commission meetings. Under the direction of the

Conservation Administrator, the Conservation Agent spends approximately half of his/her time engaged in public-facing site visits using field knowledge and half of his/her time conducting detail-oriented office work, reviewing plans and property histories. This position reviews and assesses requests to conduct work in areas that are protected by the Wetlands Protection Act and the Falmouth bylaws, and a primary role of this position is to understand these regulations as they apply to homeowners to help them navigate the regulatory channels. Other duties include reviewing hearing applications under requests for determination, making determinations, and reviewing notices of intent and administrative reviews. The Agent schedules public hearings, prepares public hearing notices, verifies abutter lists with filings, and makes public presentations. This position also reviews building permit applications and participates in land management activities, including identifying priority conservation parcels and writing grant proposals. Minimum Requirements Include: Bachelor's degree in the natural sciences, land use management, or a related field and one year of experience in conservation activities; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. The successful candidate has a deep understanding of why wetland regulations are necessary and a working knowledge of Massachusetts conservation law, the Wetlands Protection Act, local wetlands bylaws, and subdivision rules and regulations. Applicants should have a working knowledge of botany, geology, and soil types and functions; and the ability to verify wetland boundaries, interpret regulations accurately and objectively, and interpret complex engineering drawings. Some areas can be taught to the successful candidate who has a working knowledge of many of these criteria. The successful applicant is comfortable speaking clearly, calmly, and tactfully in situations that are both explanatory and regulatory and has attention to detail, critical thinking, and the ability to follow through while multitasking. Starting Wage: Step 1 (\$28.36/hour) -Step 3 (\$30.67/hour), depending on qualifications and experience, with room to grow along the seven-step pay scale. Comprehensive benefits and overtime opportunities. The position will remain open until filled, but candidates who applied by the preference date (Dec. 22) will be given additional consideration over later applications. The town of Falmouth is proud to be an EEO/AA employer.

Business Manager Town of East Brookfield

The East Brookfield Board of Selectmen is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Business Manager. The Business Manager is responsible for providing managerial oversight, direction, and coordination related to the operations of the town of East Brookfield. Duties include, but are not limited to, assisting the Board of Selectmen by performing professional tasks in the areas of communication (internal and external), human resources, budgeting, planning, and training; representing the Board of Selectmen by attending various meetings, training sessions, and programs that require a presentation for the town; acting as a liaison for various occasions; and interacting with all town departments and elected officials as a resource for the town. The successful applicant will be driven and results-focused with a "can-do attitude." This is a position of high responsibility and high pressure. Bachelor's degree or 15 years of direct experience in

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business, finance, accounting, municipal management or related field. With a bachelor's degree, a minimum of five years of direct management and procurement experience is also required. Send all inquiries to the Selectmen at ebbos300@eastbrookfieldma.us. Position will be open until filled.

Library Director Town of Newbury

The town of Newbury, through its elected Board of Library Trustees, seeks an energetic full-time Library Director to manage all operations and activities of the Newbury Town Library. Our ideal Director will be outgoing, have diverse library experience, and enthusiasm for working in a small community. A full job description and application process can be found on the town's website. This is a 35-hour a week, salaried, contract position and as such the Director will, from time to time and as required, attend night time or weekend programs, events, and meetings.

Municipal Secretary Town of Blackstone

The Town of Blackstone seeks applicants for the position of Municipal Secretary. This is a full-time 33.5 hour per week clerical union position with an excellent benefit package. Hiring range \$19.09-25.40 dependent on qualifications, experience, education, and current certifications. If you are interested please visit www.townofblackstone.org under employment opportunities.

Administrative Assistant Assessor Town of Blackstone

The town of Blackstone seeks applicants for the position of Administrative Assistant Assessor. This is a full-time 33.5 hour per week clerical union position with an excellent benefit package. Hiring range is \$19.09-25.40 per hour depending on qualifications, experience, education, and current certifications. If you would like to know more please visit the town of Blackstone employment opportunities.

DPW Laborer

Town of Saugus

Applications are being accepted for a full-time DPW Laborer (40 hours) within the Department of Public Works. This individual will perform various types of manual labor related to digging and backfilling holes, ditches and trenches. Cleans out clogged catch basins, culverts, drains, well holes and manholes; cleans and flushes sewers. Shovels snow, breaks ice, spreads sand, sets out and maintains sand and salt boxes and performs similar tasks in connection with snow removal operations. Breaks pavement; spreads, smooths and irons asphalt mix; sprays emulsion; and performs similar tasks in surface treating road sections and repairing pavement of sidewalk defects. Rakes leaves; seeds, fertilizes, weeds, mows grass; shovels, rakes, grades loam; trims trees and brush; picks up paper, trash and debris. Loads and unloads material, equipment and supplies; cleans and fills lanterns. May perform semi-skilled and equipment operation tasks on an emergency and relief or training basis. Operates power mowers and similar equipment. Performs related work as required. Qualifications: Some knowledge of the use of tools, equipment and materials commonly employed in municipal construction and maintenance work. Ability to understand and follow oral instructions. Ability to perform manual laboring tasks for extended periods, _____

frequently under adverse weather conditions. Willing to receive Class B CDL within one year of employment. Application: Please email all cover letters/resumes to Human Resources Manager Gabriela Christina at gchristina@saugus-ma.gov.

Highway Foreman Town of Hardwick

Seeking qualified applicants for a full-time Highway Working Foreman. Provides direct in-field supervision of employees working on all phases of Highway Department construction, maintenance, repair operations and performs all other related work as required. Repairing heavy equipment and large trucks is essential to the position. Responsible for maintaining and improving upon the efficiency and effectiveness of all areas under his/her control as delegated by the Highway Superintendent. \$24.05 per hour, DOQ. Send resume or application to Hardwick Highway Department, P.O. Box 575, Gilbertville, MA 01031-0575 or by email at highway@townofhardwick.com For full job description see www.hardwick-ma.gov.

Highway Assistant Superintendent Town of Hardwick

Town of Hardwick seeks qualified applicants for the full-time, benefited position of Highway Assistant Superintendent. This is a working hands-on position to assist on all Highway Dept Needs including assisting in supervising dept workers. Reporting to the Highway Superintendent. This position is 40 hours/week, Monday-Thursday, with a pay scale of \$26-\$28/hour, DOE. CDL Class B, Hoisting Engineer License Class 2A are all required. Details and application on link: www. hardwick-ma.gov/jobs. Email application, cover letter and resume to Highway@townofhardwick.com. Town of Hardwick, Highway Dept, P.O. Box 575, Gilbertville, MA 01031. AA/EOE

Truck Driver/Laborer

Town of Hardwick

Town of Hardwick seeks qualified applicants for the full-time benefited position of Highway Truck Driver/ Laborer. Position is 40 hours/week, Monday-Thursday, with a pay scale of \$19-\$20.40/hour, DOE. Excellent benefits including insurance, participation in retirement plan and paid time off. CDL Class B with Air Brake Endorsement and Hydraulics Class 2B License are required. Details and application on link: www. hardwick-ma.gov/jobs. Email application, cover letter and resume to Highway@townofhardwick.com. Town of Hardwick, Highway Dept, P.O. Box 575, Gilbertville, MA 01031. AA/EOE

Member Services Rep/Insurance Coordinator

Middlesex County Retirement System

The Middlesex County Retirement System seeks a full-time, onsite, Member Services Representative/ Insurance Coordinator to join our team. This position entails providing retirement counseling to public employees, and processing benefit applications and insurance premium withholdings for members and beneficiaries. Experience with a public retirement system, finance department or within other related fields is preferred. Competitive salary, leave and benefits package. A full job description, including salary and application information, is posted at www.middlesexretirement.org.

Associate Executive Director **Concord Retirement System**

Associate Executive Director for the Concord

Retirement System. Daily administration of all retirement services, reporting to the Executive Director. Responsible for all paper and electronic records management for all members of the system. Experience and understanding of MA General Law Chapter 32 and PERAC regulations as well as public pension administration is preferred. Proficient computer skills required (Excel and Word) along with experience in payroll, PTG and Prosper. This is a full-time position with competitive benefits and salary. For a full job description and more information, contact Louise Villani at lvillani@concordretirement.org. Deadline for application is Jan. 20.

Town Accountant/Finance Director Town of West Tisbury

The town of West Tisbury is seeking to hire a 37.5 hour/week Town Accountant/Finance Director. The position reports to the Select Board. This employee performs professional, administrative, and technical work in ensuring the proper recording and maintenance of financial records, approving all financial payments, controlling expenditures of all town departments, excluding schools, and preparing statements of financial condition; submits required reports to the state, coordinates annual budget process and performs all other related work as required. Minimum Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in accounting, finance or business administration or related field; and five years of progressively responsible related experience in professional, municipal accounting; some experience with the UMAS Uniform Massachusetts Accounting System; or any equivalent combination of education and experience. Familiarity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS) and Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). Master's degree in business, public administration or accounting is helpful. This is a benefited position. Full job description and required application form can be found on the town's website at www.westtisbury-ma. gov, or by calling 508-696-0102. Starting rate begins at \$49.24/hr, resume and applications must be returned by 12 p.m. on Jan. 25. EOE

Town Accountant

Town of Duxbury

The town of Duxbury is accepting applications for a full-time Town Accountant. The Town Accountant, reporting to the Finance Director, will oversee and supervise, proper expenditure of all town funds, recording and maintenance of financial records, approval/ audit of all financial payments/transactions. Monitor expenditures of town and school funds for accuracy, supervise Assistant Town Accountant who manages payroll/AP/AR. Bachelor's in finance/accounting, three to five years related work experience, must be MA Certified Governmental Accountant or eligible to take the exam and possess a valid driver's license. Posting will remain open until filled. Salary range is \$78,381 to \$109,734. For the full job description and to apply, go to: townofduxburviobs.easvapplv.co.

Planning Director Town of Duxbury

The Planning Director performs professional and administrative duties in planning, organizing, and coordinating the town of Duxbury's planning, land use, and community development functions and activities. Bachelor's degree in planning or related field; five to seven-year municipal planning experience or

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equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform essential job functions. Certification as Planner by the AICP or the ability to obtain within 12 months of hire. Posting will remain open. Pay range is \$78,381 to \$109,734. Actual salary depends upon qualifications. For the full job description and to apply go to: <u>townofduxburyjobs.</u> <u>easyapply.co.</u>

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.

Municipal Support Services

Capital Strategic Solutions (CSS) is a Massachusettsbased, certified woman-owned, disadvantaged business enterprise composed of municipal experts. We have hands-on experience that allows us to formulate and implement strategies tailored to the communities we serve. We specialize in public administration and municipal finance, human resources and policy development, emergency management services and public safety, public works and infrastructure operations, public relations and community engagement, project management and oversight, grant writing and administration, and onsite support services. For more information, visit <u>www.capital-strategic-solutions.com</u>, call 508-690-0046, or email info@capital-strategic-solutions.com.

Town Counsel/Legal Services

Brooks & DeRensis, P.C., is available to provide services to government entities at the state, county, city, town or regional district level. Legal services available include procurement law, contracts, eminent domain, labor relations and civil rights. Contact 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 short-term services as well as flexible access, either remotely or on-site, without adding to your long-term employee benefit costs. Contact us today! info@marcumllp.com

Executive Recruiting, Management and Governance Consulting Services

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

Executive Recruiting, Interim Staffing, Human Resources and Management Consulting

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

Town Counsel Services

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

General Consultant, Recruiting and Special Studies

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

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

Harrington Heep LLC provides Town and Special Counsel services to help build and implement local programs that serve community needs. We have the experitse 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@harringtonheep. com or 617-489-1600.

Tax Title Legal Services

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

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CLASSIFIEDS

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

Labor Counsel Services/Municipal Human Resources Specialists

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

prior to making critical personnel decisions. Check our website at <u>CliffordKennyLaw.com</u> to see a complete list of our satisfied clients or call John Clifford or Jaime Kenny at 781-924-5796 for more information.

Municipal Financial Management Services

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

Human Resources Consulting

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

Executive Recruitment and Municipal Management

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

RFPs

22339 Comprehensive Master Plan RFP Town of Plymouth

The town of Plymouth is seeking proposals from qualified consultants to provide professional services supporting the development of a townwide, long-range, comprehensive Master Plan. Specifications and proposal forms are available at <u>www.plymouth-ma.gov/bids.aspx</u>. Proposals are to be submitted by 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 31. All proposals are subject to the provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 30B. The awarding authority is the Town Manager who reserves the right to reject all proposals if deemed to be in the best interests of the town of Plymouth. ●

Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness Grant Program opens

The Executive Office of Technology Services and Security has opened the Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness Grant Program for 2024.

The program improves overall cybersecurity posture by helping organizations mitigate their human risk through awareness training and monthly threat simulations (phishing campaigns). The program is open to all local government agencies (municipalities, public school districts, libraries, police departments, fire departments, planning commissions, and municipally run utility departments and airports), as well as members of the PERAC Retirement System.

The Office of Municipal and School Technology, within the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security, procures the user licenses and manages the program, making it free to participating organizations.

Applications are now available, and the application period will close when all available seats are taken, or on Jan. 10, 2024, whichever occurs first.

Details about the program are <u>available</u> <u>on the program's website</u>.

POLICY COMMITTEES

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solid waste and recycling, hazardous waste, wetlands, coastal areas, wastewater treatment, renewable energy and energy conservation.

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

- **Policy Committee on Personnel and Labor Relations:** This committee considers issues in the following areas: collective bargaining, civil service, employee benefits and pension reform.
- Policy Committee on Public Works, Transportation and Public Utilities: This committee considers issues that relate to regional and metropolitan transportation, transportation planning, the relationship between local

governments and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and the question of local control in joint statelocal public works programs.

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

For more information, contact Daniel Yi at dyi@mma.org or or visit <u>www.mma.org/</u><u>advocacy</u>.

Calendar

JANUARY



11 MMA webinar, conflict conversations, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore



• 45th MMA Annual Meeting & Trade

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

FEBRUARY

6 **MMA webinar**, municipal finance 101, 12-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

7 **MMA webinar**, Virtual Municipal Leadership Academy, 12:30-1:45 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

13 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, board meeting, 8:45-9:45 a.m., via Zoom.

Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

13 MMA Board of Directors, 10-11:15 a.m., remote. Contact: MMA Executive Director's office

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

14 MMA webinar, Virtual Municipal Leadership Academy, 12:30-1:45 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

27 MMA webinar, Virtual Municipal Leadership Academy, 12:30-1:45 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore



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

28 Massachusetts Mayors' Association, monthly meeting, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

MARCH

7 Women Leading Government, conference, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Devens Common Center, Devens. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

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

14 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, webinar. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

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

27 Massachusetts Mayors' Association, monthly meeting, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

APRIL

6 Massachusetts Select Board Association, Western and Rural Massachusetts Conference, Hotel Northampton, Northampton. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

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

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

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

11 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, joint meeting, Cyprian Keyes, Bolyston. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker and MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

24 Massachusetts Mayors' Association, monthly meeting, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

27 Association of Town Finance Committees, spring conference. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

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.

For more information, visit www.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