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Gov. Healey files FY25 state budget

By Jackie Lavender Bird

On Jan. 24, Gov. Maura Healey filed her \$58.1 billion state budget plan for fiscal 2025, which includes funding for local accounts that she had announced days earlier at the MMA's Annual Meeting.

Healey's budget bill, known as House 2, would increase the main discretionary local aid account by 3% over fiscal 2024, while increasing Chapter 70 school aid by \$263 million, which would honor state commitments made in the 2019 Student Opportunity Act.

The governor also proposed \$100 million for supplemental local road and bridge funding — as was done in the budget for the current fiscal year — and an additional \$24 million for rural roads.

Based on House 2, the Division of Local Services has posted <u>preliminary fiscal</u> 2025 Cherry Sheet aid amounts for individual cities and towns and for regional school districts.



Gov. Maura Healey announces her \$58.1 billion state budget plan at the State House on Jan. 24. (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine said the Healey-Driscoll administration "has created a fiscal blueprint that recognizes many of the challenges facing cities and towns," even as the state is expected to see slower growth in tax collections.

"Local officials look forward to working with the administration and the Legislature to build on this proposal to secure vital investments in our schools and essential municipal services, and continue a strong state-local partnership," he said.

As companion legislation, the governor filed a reform and resources package, called the Municipal Empowerment
Act, intended to improve efficiencies for municipalities.

The governor's state budget proposal is the first step in a months-long process. The House and Senate Ways and Means committees are expected to host a budget hearing in mid-March on municipal and school aid for fiscal 2025, and the House will debate its budget bill in April, with the Senate deliberating its own bill in May. The Legislature will work to get a final budget bill to the governor by the

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John McLaughlin is new MMA president; Jamie Hellen is VP

By Jennifer Kayanaugh

As cities and towns face inflation and fiscal constraints, climate threats, and a range of other challenges, the MMA's new president and vice president for 2024 say they are eager to represent local governments and their diverse needs.

During the MMA's Annual Business Meeting on Jan. 20 in Boston, Waltham City Council President John McLaughlin, who last year served as the MMA's vice president, succeeded Lexington Select Board Member Jill Hai as president. Joining him as vice president this year is Franklin Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, who is also serving as the District 2 representative for the Massachusetts



Waltham City Council President John McLaughlin, left, and Franklin Town Administrator Jamie Hellen became the MMA's new president and vice president, respectively, during the MMA Annual Business Meeting on Jan. 20.

2024 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

John McLaughlin,

MMA President and MMCA President Councillor, Waltham

Jamie Hellen, MMA Vice President Town Administrator, Franklin

Jill Hai, MMA Immediate Past President and MSA Second Vice President Select Board Member, Lexington

Ruthanne Fuller, MMaA First Vice President Mayor, Newton

Andrew Hogeland, MSA President Select Board, Williamstown

Nicole LaChapelle, MMaA President Mayor, Easthampton

John Mangiaratti, MMMA First Vice President Town Manager, Acton

Debra Roberts, MSA First Vice President Select Board, Stoughton

Kevin Sullivan, ATFC First Vice President Finance Committee, Hanson

Brendan Sweeney, MMCA First Vice President Councillor, Beverly

Melinda Tarsi, ATFC President Industrial and Development Committee, Pelham

Kristi Williams, MMMA President Town Manager, Westborough

Adam Chapdelaine (non-voting) MMA Executive Director

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Moises Rodrigues, Councillor, Brockton

Robert Sullivan, Mayor, Brockton

Kevin Sweet, Town Administrator, Wrentham

Michelle Wu, Mayor, Boston

Executive Director's Report

Offering appreciation all around for successful MMA Annual Meeting

A few weeks ago, the MMA welcomed more than 1.300 members to its 45th Annual Meeting & Trade Show. It was an amazing, record-breaking event that filled the Hynes Convention Center with an incredible energy that truly brought to life the meeting's theme of "Turning Passion Into Action." Ballroom A was abuzz as we heard from Gov.

Maura Healey and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, listened to the remarks of keynote speakers Eddie Glaude Jr. and Gina McCarthy, and received updates from Washington D.C. from Senators Warren and Markey.

Personally, I cherished the opportunity to speak with a tremendous range of local officials over the course of the two days. Speaking with Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, members of Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts, and a Select Board member from the self-described "tiny town" of Leyden, among many others, really cemented for me that MMA members have a tremendous amount in common while simultaneously having diverse needs and challenges.

I have attended many MMA Annual Meetings over the years, but this was my first one serving as executive director of the association. As such, I am filled with so much gratitude for all of the work and dedication that went into making the event such a success.



By Adam Chapdelaine

I want to express my deep appreciation to all of the members who attended the Annual Meeting. As a former local official, I know how busy you all are. You have many priorities and emergent issues to manage, and the fact that you committed the time to be with us in Boston is very humbling. As I said during the opening session, the MMA derives its

power from all of its members, and your presence over the course of the two-day event put that power clearly on display.

I'd also like to thank the numerous presenters and panelists for our workshops, who were so generous with their time and expertise. The workshops are the backbone of the learning aspect of Annual Meeting, and without the excellent array of expert presenters, this part of the event would not be possible. I want to give special thanks to Kiana Pierre-Louis and Michael Obasohan for presenting their diversity, equity and inclusion workshop in all three time slots, making sure that all attendees had ample opportunity to access this

Further, I'd like to express my gratitude to the many sponsors and exhibitors, who helped us in offering a tremendous lineup of speakers and filled a jampacked Trade Show.

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

1,300-plus celebrate MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show

By Meredith Gabrilska

Collaboration, problem solving and taking action carried through as themes of the 45th MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Jan. 19 and 20 in Boston, where more than 1,300 municipal officials and employees from across the state gathered for compelling speakers, timely workshops, countless networking opportunities, and a bustling Trade Show.

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu provided a warm welcome to a packed ballroom to start the two-day event.

"I think this gathering is the most important for keeping our communities, our governments, our democracy going, especially at this moment," Wu said. "Everything is falling to cities and

Opening keynote speaker Eddie Glaude Jr., an author, Princeton professor and political commentator, gave an impassioned address on race and democracy in America — and diversity as a value to be cherished in communities.

Also during the Opening Session, Gov. Maura Healey and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll outlined their local aid proposals for fiscal 2025 and announced their Municipal Empowerment Act.

This Annual Meeting was the first as MMA executive director for Adam Chapdelaine, a veteran of local government who attended many MMA conferences as a member.

"I feel deeply connected to local government on an almost cellular level," he told members. "I know it's an institution that always rises to the occasion, no matter the challenge. And that is why I am so grateful to be the new executive director, and why I feel so bullish about the power of the MMA."

At the Women Elected Municipal Officials Leadership Luncheon, Massachusetts Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer talked about her career path, offered advice tied to her experience as a woman in science and public service, and discussed state climate efforts and her current role.

On Saturday, Jan. 20, Lt. Gov. Driscoll returned to address the MMA's Annual Business Meeting, following **U.S. Sens.** Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, who discussed the delegation's efforts to win funding for Massachusetts communities.

The 2024 Annual Meeting theme was "Turning Passion Into Action," a recognition of the commitment and problem-solving skills that local leaders bring to their work every day.

The event featured 21 workshops and six Learning Labs across two days that explored topics ranging from diversity, equity and inclusion to federal funding, climate change and artificial intelligence. Presentation materials from the workshops are available on the MMA website.

The Trade Show featured more than 200 exhibitors, including a number of environmental consulting,

financial, energy and technology firms.

Before the official start of the conference, first-time attendees had an opportunity to network with their seasoned counterparts to get tips on how to make the most of the high-energy event.

The Massachusetts Mayors' Association, Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, Massachusetts Select Board Association, and Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association held their annual business meetings on Saturday, electing leadership and discussing timely topics.

The Massachusetts Select Board Association also launched a <u>new online</u> version of its comprehensive guide for Select Board members during its business meeting.

Massachusetts native Gina McCarthy, a former White House Climate Advisor and former administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, energized the Saturday morning crowd by discussing gains being made in Massachusetts and across the country to adapt to climate change, as well as the



Attendees had plenty of opportunities to catch up and network during the 45th MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show.



Members attend one of the MMA Annual Meeting's 21 workshops, which focused on topics from climate change to municipal finance.

work ahead.

Senate President Karen Spilka and House Speaker Ron Mariano attended the Friday dinner to accept Legislator of the Year awards from the MMA.

For the sixth year, the MMA Annual Meeting had its own mobile app for attendees. The app features comprehensive information and interactive features, including the ability to access workshop materials, build a personal schedule, connect with fellow attendees, and receive important notifications and updates.

The event brought back two popular features that debuted last year: a Headshot Station that offered free professional headshots, and a special session on career advancement featuring some of the top municipal recruitment professionals in the state.

Another returning feature was a "Why I Serve" activity in the entrance hall, where attendees could take a moment to share why they chose to enter public

■ ANNUAL MEETING continued on 29

Gov. Healey files Municipal Empowerment Act

By John Ouellette

Gov. Maura Healey has filed her Municipal Empowerment Act, a wide-ranging bill intended to help increase municipal flexibility, strengthen municipal finances, address municipal workforce challenges, and improve the efficiency of local operations.

The governor, along with Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, first announced the legislation during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show in Boston on Jan. 19, and received a strongly enthusiastic response from the 1,000 or so local leaders in the room. The administration filed the bill on Jan. 22.

Among its many provisions, the Municipal Empowerment Act would reform procurement rules and update borrowing rules for school projects; make permanent a number of popular pandemic-era allowances for remote or hybrid public meetings, outdoor dining permits, and to-go cocktail sales; and establish enforcement mechanisms for prohibitions on doubled-up utility poles. It would also allow cities and towns, which face state-imposed caps on local revenue raising, to increase local-option meals and lodging taxes and create a new local-option motor vehicle excise surcharge.

A new commission would be established to take a fresh look at opportunities to address unfunded liabilities from non-pension employee benefits (known as OPEB). And the state would centralize the valuation of telecommunications and utility property, removing a headache for local assessors.

Driscoll said the package is "a direct result" of input from local officials during a listening tour she conducted around the state this past fall, when she heard from more than 130 managers and administrators representing 112 different municipalities, as well as professional associations representing local leaders and employees.

"This package reduces red tape that municipal leaders far too often encounter, and gives them more options to utilize tools that will make their communities stronger," Driscoll said.

Local leaders were quick to express their support.

New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell thanked



Gov. Maura Healey, right, and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll announce a package of "resources, tools and flexibilities" called the Municipal Empowerment Act during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Jan. 19.

the administration for a "common-sense effort to help me serve the residents of my city better." Amesbury Mayor Kassandra Gove said the legislation "addresses the needs of local government while providing flexibility to do what's best for each of our communities." Gardner Mayor Michael Nicholson said the administration "has proposed ways to build a stronger Commonwealth from the street level on up."

Williamstown Select Board Member Andy Hogeland, president of the Massachusetts Select Board Association called the package "very strong and thoughtful."

"I particularly appreciate the provisions that demonstrate the administration's ongoing support for rural towns," he said, "and for giving all municipalities greater latitude in local control over topics such as a means-tested senior property tax exemption and local-option taxes."

MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine said local leaders appreciate "that the administration made the concerted effort to listen to municipal officials across the state about the challenges they face, and then acted on that input with a robust package of very meaningful reforms."

"The Municipal Empowerment Act will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local government and the delivery of essential services in each one of our communities," he said. "For a number of years, municipalities have been facing cost increases in key areas that are far outpacing the growth in their revenues, so the opportunity to boost locally generated revenue and remove barriers to efficiency is welcome news."

Local revenues and procurement

The bill would enable communities, at local option, to increase the local meals tax from 0.75% to 1%, and increase the local lodging tax from 6% to 7% (6.5% to 7.5% in Boston). Currently, 251 municipalities have adopted a local meals tax, and 216 have a local lodging tax. The rate ceilings haven't changed since the original legislation in 2009.

A new local-option vehicle excise tax surcharge of 5% would be available to all 351 municipalities.

In the area of procurement reforms, the bill would:

- Raise thresholds for competitive bids and remove onerous publishing requirements
- Clarify that Chapter 30B enables groups of cities and towns to award multiple contracts through the request for proposals process and purchase both supplies and services from collectively bid contracts
- Equalize 30B thresholds for advertised procurements to \$100,000 for all municipal purchasing, not just schools
- Eliminate the requirement to publish notice of invitations for competitive bids on COMMBUYS
- Streamline procurement for electric school buses and charging infrastructure by allowing single procurements for both under Chapter 30B

Additional provisions

Additional provisions of the Municipal Empowerment Act would do the following:

- Create a new local-option means-tested property tax exemption for seniors
- Allow cities and towns to amortize emergency deficit spending over three years
- Modernize annual town report printing requirements
- Expand the process for seeking exemptions to post-retirement
 - EMPOWERMENT ACT continued on 27

Everyone belongs at the table, Glaude tells leaders

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

If we want to build a true multiracial democracy in America, we must stop treating diversity as a problem to be managed and instead cherish it as our greatest strength, scholar Eddie Glaude Jr. told local leaders in Boston during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Jan. 19.

Glaude, a bestselling author, political commentator and professor in Princeton University's African American Studies Department, said organizations too often view diversity, equity and inclusion as a chore to be completed, a box to be checked, or a tactic to reduce unease during politically fraught moments. Instead of viewing DEI as a separate concern, he said, leaders need to treat diversity as a critical measure of their mission and as a key metric of success.

"If we come to understand ourselves without the tricky magic that makes us white and Black, or this or that, but to see ourselves as Americans in the full light of our history, then diversity sits at the center of our national identity, and not as a problem, not as a philanthropic gesture, but at the heart of who we are," Glaude said. "It should be at the heart of your service, to treat and govern all with equal regard."

During his conference-opening keynote address, Glaude, a nationally renowned voice on race and democracy, urged leaders to engage honestly with their communities about race.

Achieving a just society, he said, doesn't involve one privileged group magnanimously inviting everyone else to the table — it means understanding that the table already belonged to everyone in the first place. No one owns the table, and people shouldn't take it upon themselves to decide who deserves invitations.

Glaude said the problem is rooted in tension between the notion of "we" and who gets included in the definition of "we" — and those who are seen as "other." Too often, instead of people living DEI as a value, he said, "it is seen as something that you possess to give to someone else. We allow you into our school. We hired you to join our leadership team. And you are still demanding something else."



Eddie Glaude Jr., a renowned writer and commentator, discusses America's struggles with racism during his Jan. 19 keynote address at the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show.

"It should be at the heart of your service, to treat and govern all with equal regard."

- Eddie Glaude Jr.

Americans must reevaluate their relationships with each other, Glaude said, because "old ghosts haunt the nation." America's racist past isn't distant and isn't past, said Glaude, 55, who noted that his father wasn't able to vote in their native Mississippi.

"The fever still holds," Glaude said. "We saw it on Jan. 6, when the mobs sacked the People's House, shouting 'stop the steal.' That was a revolt predicated on grievance, resentment and hatred. We see it in the ongoing efforts to delegitimize our democracy by sowing distrust in the electoral processes and officials. We see it in the assault on women's rights, for control of their own bodies, the attack on voting rights, on LGBTQ+ rights. In so many ways, what we are witnessing today is an all-out assault on the gains of the 1960s."

The racism and violence persist, Glaude said, aided and masked by the mythology of "the American experiment" and the notion of the country as "the shining city on the hill." He said we need to look unflinchingly at who we are as a nation, and how our nation's actions have consistently valued some citizens at the expense of others.

"We must think of ourselves differently because the problem is, and always has been, us," he said. "We are the serpents in the garden. We hoard benefits to some and distribute benefits to others.

"We have to admit that our institutions don't look the way they look by accident. There's a history here, there are deliberate choices here."

During a question and answer session, Holyoke Councillor Juan Anderson-Burgos spoke about his election six years ago as the first Latino councillor for Ward 6, in a community that is more than 50% Latino. He said he recalled reading "Robert's Rules of Order" and feeling alienated from the process and, at times, unwelcome in the community.

"In that room, when I am with these people, I feel like an impostor," Anderson-Burgos said. "This is my fourth term going in, and I still feel like an impostor, and I truly believe in my heart that it's my experiences from the white people in my municipality. It was how I was treated. Always outcast. You cannot sit at this table."

Glaude acknowledged the pressure that people of color feel to leave part of themselves at the door when entering rooms of power. He urged Anderson-Burgos and others, however, to "bring the fullness of ourselves into the room," and not assume the responsibility of making others feel comfortable with

"I tell my students all the time: The world conspires to make you small," Glaude said. "And the question you have to ask yourselves repeatedly is, 'Will you be complicit?' I refuse to be complicit."

Glaude, who frequently appears on news shows including MSNBC's "Morning Joe," is the author of the New York Times Bestseller "Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own," and the forthcoming "We Are the Leaders We Have Been Looking For."

Healey, Driscoll address members at conference

By John Ouellette

Speaking to more than 1,300 local leaders from across Massachusetts on Jan. 19, Gov. Maura Healey and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll announced their local aid and road funding proposals for fiscal 2025 and unveiled a multifaceted package of reforms called the Municipal Empowerment Act.

During the opening session of the MMA Annual Meeting in Boston, Healey said her <u>state budget plan</u>, <u>which she filed days later</u>, would increase the main discretionary local aid account by 3% and fully fund the state's commitment to education aid under the Student Opportunity Act.

The governor also announced her plan to file a \$400 million, two-year Chapter 90 bond bill, supplemented by another \$124 million in her budget for local road and bridge maintenance.

Healey and Driscoll both emphasized their commitment to the state's cities and towns, and to working in partnership.

"We know that everything that we want to do, and we have goals for and a vision for — all of that depends on what you all are doing in your communities, and how well we're doing working with and supporting all of you," Healey said. "I want to thank you for your incredible tenacity, your hustle, your compassion and your care for our communities."

The pair shared the podium to outline their Municipal Empowerment Act, with more than 30 provisions to reduce

barriers to efficiency, enhance local revenue-raising capacity, and make permanent a number of popular pandemic-era allowances. Driscoll said the package is "a direct result" of input from local officials during a 12-stop listening tour she conducted around the state this past fall.

"This is a package of really great things," she said. "It's designed to arm local government with the resources, tools and the flexibilities you need locally."

While the announcement was met with frequent applause, Driscoll asked local leaders for their help as well.

"It doesn't happen unless we advocate for it, and we come together to really showcase how meaningful it is, how important it is," she said. "We're going to need your help to get it over the goal line."

The governor acknowledged that the year ahead will be challenging, with slower growth in state revenues and the drying up of pandemic-era funding from the federal government.

With its new Federal Funds Office, Healey said the administration is making it a priority to enhance the competitive position of the state and its local governments to win historic federal funding under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the CHIPS and Science Act.

"In one year alone, through that effort, we've brought back \$3 billion to Massachusetts," she said.



Gov. Maura Healey outlines her budget and policy priorities for the coming year during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Jan. 19.

The partnership between Healey and Driscoll was evident in their onstage banter, which they likened to comedians Tina Fey and Amy Poehler hosting an awards show.

"Year two is going to get tougher," Healey said, "but I couldn't have a better teammate and partner than Kim Driscoll. ... Her insight and her knowledge operationally — about how everything works, what you are dealing with — influences and informs policy at every single secretariat every single day."

Driscoll said of her partner, "You all can see how lucky I am to work alongside somebody who fully understands that we're not going to achieve our goals in housing and education and public safety and resilience and driving a strong economy unless we have cities and towns that are thriving."

Gov. files 2-year Ch. 90 bill, adds road aid in budget

By Adrienne Núñez

Gov. Maura Healey filed a two-year, \$400 million Chapter 90 bond bill on Jan. 22, just days ahead of filing a fiscal 2025 state budget plan that includes another \$124 million in local road repair funding.

The governor had announced at the MMA Annual Meeting on Jan. 19 that her budget bill would add \$124 million for supplemental local road and bridge funding, with \$100 million distributed to all communities using a formula factoring population, road miles and employment, and \$24 million targeted for rural communities.

The Chapter 90 and budget proposals would total \$324 million for fiscal 2025, essentially matching the current year's

total for local road and bridge maintenance. Authorizations for the current year include \$200 million for Chapter 90, supplemented by \$100 million from the state budget and \$25 million in a transportation bond law for a new rural roads program.

The governor's fiscal 2025 Chapter 90 bill would authorize \$200 million per year for two years for the reimbursement program. In her cover letter, the governor said she "is seeking a two-year authorization to provide cities and towns with sufficient time to put the funds to work."

The MMA has long advocated for a multiyear Chapter 90 authorization, along with a significant increase in funding. At

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Gov. Maura Healey has filed a two-year, \$400 million Chapter 90 bond bill, while including another \$124 million for supplemental local road and bridge funding in her fiscal 2025 state budget plan.

Municipal leaders honor Spilka, Mariano at conference

By John Ouellette

At the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Jan. 19, the MMA and local officials recognized Senate President Karen Spilka and Speaker Ronald Mariano as 2023 Legislators of the Year.

Spilka and Mariano were recognized for their steady leadership during the COVID pandemic and their work on the fiscal 2024 state budget, which featured key state investments in cities and towns such as funding for discretionary local aid, supplemental road and bridge funding, keeping the Student Opportunity Act on schedule, and codifying universal school meals.

"On behalf of local officials across the state, the MMA is honoring two individuals who demonstrated profound leadership to propel the Commonwealth beyond the pandemic and who have led the way to invest in essential municipal services in the past several years," said MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine. "Cities and towns are fortunate to have advocates in the Legislature who will stand with them to improve the quality of life for Massachusetts residents."

Spilka opened by recognizing the kinship she feels with the hundreds of local officials who were in the room for the Friday dinner event.

"I started out as a school committee member [in Ashland]," she said. "I know how hard your job is, and I know how thankless it can be. But I also know how rewarding it can be. And I thank you and congratulate you for doing this every





Senate President Karen Spilka, left, and House Speaker Ronald Mariano speak after receiving MMA Legislator of the Year Awards at the MMA Annual Meeting on Jan. 19.

day.

"When the state and our cities and towns work together, that collaborative energy will lead to our collective success. ... I want to offer my gratitude to the MMA for your partnership and your working toward that joint goal."

Mariano likewise thanked the MMA for "truly a special honor" and recognized the importance of the state-local partnership.

"I truly believe that this relationship is extremely important to both of us," he said. "And we should be giving you guys an award."

Noting that his own public service included time on the Quincy School Committee, he added, "I know the pressures that local decision-makers are under. The pressures are real."

Coming out of the pandemic, he said,

legislators prioritized supporting local accounts in the state budget.

"We continue to recognize the importance of providing you with funding" for local priorities like schools, roads and housing.

In his introductory remarks, Chapdelaine noted that the pandemic was "a whole-of-government crisis" that required state and local governments to work together.

"And fiscal uncertainty caused budgetary strife and difficult decisions in many states across the country, which chose to cut municipal funding and services — but not in Massachusetts," he said. "Senate President Spilka and Speaker Mariano, along with their leadership teams, played a pivotal role to promote a steady and deliberate approach to protect all who depend on state funding, including all 351 cities and towns."

Gov. files supplemental budget seeking funds for emergency shelter

By Jackie Lavender Bird

On Jan. 25, Gov. Maura Healey filed a supplemental budget bill (<u>H. 4284</u>), prioritizing funds for the state's emergency shelter system.

Her proposal would create a new Emergency Housing and Community Trust Fund using the balance of the state's transitional escrow fund, which was created in prior fiscal years when the state realized large amounts of surplus revenue. The balance in the escrow fund was approximately \$700 million as of December, according to the administration.

In a <u>letter accompanying the supplemental budget bill</u>, the governor said the emergency shelter system will have a deficiency in fiscal 2024 and is expected to have a deficiency in fiscal 2025 as well.

The Emergency Housing and Community Trust Fund would distribute an allocation in the current fiscal year and give the administration the ability to draw from the fund in fiscal 2025.

Proposed spending for fiscal 2024 would include:

• \$215 million for Emergency Shelter and Services

- \$150 million for grants or loans to be administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities
- \$10 million for supportive services for unhoused families

In a Dec. 18 report to the Legislature, the administration shared shelter system data and made the case for future needs, saying the state faces "a two fiscal year problem, requiring a solution that spans FY24 and FY25." The report proposed using the state's transitional escrow account to fund the deficiency.

McCarthy urges leaders to seize on climate opportunities

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Gina McCarthy, who has spent decades protecting the environment at the municipal, state and federal levels, told local leaders at the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Jan. 20 that addressing climate change and embracing clean energy starts with local government.

Based on her deep experience, she said she remains "obnoxiously optimistic" about our ability to address the climate challenge.

"We have to deal with this issue, folks," McCarthy said. "And as you and I know, change starts at the local level and moves its way up. There is nothing ever that comes in front of Congress at the federal level that hasn't already been fully discussed at every other level of government.

"Good things start where you sit, where you walk, the things you think about, because you are so close to the people you serve, that you cannot ignore their needs, you cannot ignore your communities' challenges."

McCarthy reflected on her experience as the nation's first White House climate advisor from 2021 to 2022, as the administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency during the Obama administration, as an environmental official in both Massachusetts and Connecticut, and as the first full-time health agent in the town of Canton in the 1980s.

The Massachusetts native, who also once worked for the town of Stoughton, left her White House role in September 2022 and joked that she is glad to be back in her home state, where people pronounce the word "carbon" correctly (cah-bun). Right after she left Washington, D.C., then-Gov.-elect Maura Healey tapped her to work on a climate game plan.

McCarthy praised the work of the state's first climate chief, Melissa Hoffer, who served under her at the EPA, and said the Healey-Driscoll administration's work is already transforming the state, particularly with its green bank to encourage investment in more climate-friendly affordable housing, and its Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office. The administration has already

brought \$3 billion in federal funding back to Massachusetts, much of it for climate-related projects, she said.

"That ain't chicken feed," she said. "That's a lot of resources."

Acknowledging the climate challenges
Massachusetts already faces, such as flooding that devastated several regions last year, McCarthy urged the state to continue capitalizing on federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the CHIPS and Science Act. She called

the IRA, enacted in August 2022, a true "game changer" that has attracted \$310 billion in private funding for clean energy projects in its first year.

"Good things start where you sit, where you walk, the things you think about, because you are so close to the people you serve, that you cannot ignore their needs, you cannot ignore your communities' challenges."

- Gina McCarthy

"Let's grab that opportunity for all it's worth," McCarthy said. "We have to move forward if we want to succeed in making our commitment that we have made to our kids and grandchildren."

McCarthy urged officials to reframe the notion of climate change from a dread-inducing problem to a once-ina-lifetime opportunity, one that can improve people's lives, help save money and create jobs as the nation transitions from fossil fuel dependence. She said



Gina McCarthy describes her optimism about climate solutions during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Jan. 20.

leaders should avoid getting into debates about climate change and instead focus on clean energy technology and the possibilities it holds.

"This is not sacrifice," McCarthy said.
"This is what you would do, all things being equal. You can sit around and never say 'climate change,' and still do what you're doing here in the state of Massachusetts, and in every city and town here, because it saves people money. Why wouldn't you? What is holding anybody back to actually join this revolution?"

McCarthy cited Vineyard Wind, for which the first wind turbine departed New Bedford last September for installation 30 miles off the coast of Cape Cod. McCarthy recalled attending a launch event in New Bedford, and seeing labor leaders who had signed an agreement benefitting workers and creating jobs there. She said that offshore wind operations still hadn't seemed possible when she was in state government, but they are a reality now.

"Every morning when you feel discouraged, just think about those union leaders, think about people who didn't have a job yesterday, who now can provide for their families," she said. "This is the value of recognizing that we need to invest in clean energy."

Melissa Hoffer reflects on career, biases and challenges

By Meredith Gabrilska

Massachusetts Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer inspired attendees of the Women Elected Municipal Officials Leadership Luncheon on Jan. 19 with reflections on the gender-based challenges women face professionally, her lifelong passion for understanding the relationship between nature and society, and her professional path.

In a fireside chat with WEMO Vice Chair and Ashland Select Board Member Yolanda Greaves during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show in Boston, Hoffer reflected on beginning her work as a teacher before going to law school, entering private practice and then moving on to the public sector, where she's now serving as the first state-level climate chief in the country.

A native of Pennsylvania, who came to Massachusetts to attend Hampshire College (followed by the University of Massachusetts and Northeastern University School of Law), Hoffer moved to California in the 1990s to work as a substitute teacher at a school located at a residential drug treatment center.

"What I learned working with those kids [was] ... by the time they were teenagers and they were in that kind of a setting, the structural racism that they faced — many were kids of color but not all — the classism, it was going to be very, very hard, even at that young age, for those kids to be able to make a life and have a good quality of life," Hoffer said. "So that got me thinking much more about structural ways that I might be able to work that would be more effective, and that's what got me interested in law."

In law school, Hoffer retained an interest in the intersection between racism, misogyny and environmental degradation, and how they relate to economic systems, and ways those patterns could be shifted. In her first job in private practice, at WilmerHale in Boston, Hoffer was part of a team that represented six Algerian-Bosnian detainees who were being held without charges at Guantanamo Bay. All six were eventually released.

In her career, she has encountered or witnessed gender-related challenges and inappropriate behavior. She described two particular offensive encounters with male bosses, one of which led her to contact a mentor for advice.



Massachusetts Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer discusses her experiences as a woman in law and government during the Women Elected Municipal Officials Leadership Luncheon on Jan. 19.

"These things are complicated," she said. "I liked both of those men and I learned things from them," but what happened "was 100% inappropriate, so this is what makes these things hard to deal with."

"I think we need to talk to each other as women more about these things," she said, "and we need to talk to young women about it and prepare each other more with strategies for dealing with it."

Hoffer described how she has handled inappropriate behavior with male colleagues. In one case, she confronted a man, who yelled at her on a conference call with other female colleagues, which ended the behavior. Another time, a man repeatedly interrupted her and talked over her while her boss was in the room, so she kept talking and increased her volume until he stopped.

"My boss thought it was great," she said. "Male allies are so important. I'm looking at the men in this audience, and I know many of you are strong allies for us, and I really appreciate it."

Hoffer discussed emotion-based biases faced by women, referencing her own experience and studies done by Arizona State University in the 2000s.

"We all have emotions," she said. "We all bring our whole selves to work. So why being emotional is something that's disparaging is a question for me."

Hoffer offered strategies for dealing with workplace issues like having ideas stolen without being credited, being "mansplained" on a topic you're knowledgeable in, and seeing other women reinforce sexism in the workplace. She said

women need to support each other, and not be afraid of being labeled "bossy" or "difficult."

She said it's vital to have other women to turn to as sounding boards, and described her "trusted board of directors" — a group of women friends in different professions she's known for 30 years.

"One of those women is in her 80s now and regularly tells me ... that sexism is a socio, political and economic construct, so, 'You can't go fix it by yourself. Take that off your shoulders, put it down, you do your best.' And I think that's really good advice."

Hoffer discussed "imposter syndrome," and how hers was amplified by her class background. She urged women to help build each other's confidence.

She said "work-life balance" is one of the "more damaging concepts for women," calling it an "elusive, evasive ideal" targeted toward women.

"In 2024, women are still statistically much more likely to have more responsibilities at home, and that's extra true if you're a parent. So rather than focus on the social or political solutions, the responsibility [is placed] back on the woman to figure out the problem. ... And it's usually like, 'Do more yoga,' and I love yoga, but you can't sun salutation your way out of this.

"I would just say give yourself a break, let it go, and just do your best."

Hoffer talked about how her experiences and background inform her climate work.

"You can see the world changing around us," she said. "It touches everything ... from national security to food security to health to transportation to public safety. ... I feel extremely committed to dealing with it because I'm worried about the continuity of our social organizations as a result of the disruption that will happen."

Interest in the WEMO group has been growing, along with the number of women serving in elected positions across the Commonwealth. In addition to the Leadership Luncheon in January, the group holds a spring symposium and a fall Leadership Conference.

At the luncheon, WEMO inducted its 2024 leadership board, including incoming chair and Gloucester Councillor Valerie Gilman.

Senators Warren, Markey discuss federal funds

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Massachusetts has an opportunity to take the lead in seizing federal funding opportunities and tackling significant challenges, the state's two U.S. senators told local leaders during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Jan. 20.

Speaking during the MMA's Annual Business Meeting, Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Sen. Ed Markey praised municipal officials for their hard work and urged them to be partners in the effort to bring more federal dollars to the Commonwealth. They emphasized funding opportunities made available over the past three years through the Inflation Reduction Act, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the CHIPS and Science Act.

"This an historic moment of opportunity for Massachusetts," Warren said.
"Together we are delivering much-needed investments in our communities, and our motto must be, 'Make hay while the sun shines."

The senators detailed the federal funds that the state's entire congressional delegation has worked to support over the past three years. Markey said the delegation has brought back a total of \$135 billion, about 2.5 times the size of the state's annual budget, including \$372 million toward the replacement of the Cape Cod bridges and more than \$1.1 billion in water infrastructure projects.

Warren pointed to nearly \$8 billion alone for infrastructure, public safety, research and transportation, including \$185 million for broadband and \$275 million for public transit.

Warren said fights are coming on Capitol Hill around child care and housing. She said \$50 billion in federal pandemic-era funding for child care providers has expired, and she is fighting for an additional





U.S. Senators Ed Markey, left, and Elizabeth Warren speak to local officials during the MMA Annual Business Meeting on Jan. 20.

\$16 billion in supplemental funding to prevent more closures of child care centers. She is also pushing for the Child Care for Every Community Act, which she said would lower child care costs for all working parents, and would ensure that half of America's families pay no more than \$10 a day for child care. Right now, she said, government support for child care in the United States ranks 33rd out of the 37 richest countries.

"When was the last time you heard someone chant, 'We're number 33!'?" Warren asked the audience. "That is obscene, and it is just plain dumb. We need to make big bold investments in child care."

To respond to the country's 7 million unit housing shortage, Warren said she has a bill that would invest more than \$40 billion annually to reduce building costs and encourage new housing construction. She lauded the Healey-Driscoll administration's \$4 billion housing bond bill to address the housing crisis in Massachusetts.

Markey discussed the urgency of climate change, and acknowledged the damage that last year's floods inflicted on farms and infrastructure throughout the state. He said that Boston's last winter was 7 degrees warmer than winters were in the 1970s, and that the nearby Gulf of Maine

is the second-fastest warming body of water on the planet, after the Arctic. He said Barnstable County ranks third among counties nationwide in needing help with sea-level rise, he said.

"In 1775, Paul Revere warned Massachusetts revolutionaries of an invasion coming from the sea," Markey said. "With climate change, low-lying areas of the Bay State are facing an invasion of the sea itself."

But there's also good news around climate work and clean energy, Markey said. Spending on renewable energy is now surpassing spending on various types of fossil fuels, and 1.4 million electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids were sold last year, whereas there were only 2,000 electric vehicles in the country 15 years ago. Meanwhile, the new offshore Vineyard Wind will be able to generate 800 megawatts of electricity, 200 megawatts more than the former Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station.

"This is an incredible moment," Markey said. "You are the leaders, if you focus upon it. You're going to be able to make a huge difference in the relationship that exists between our state, our country, our world, and the threat of climate change."

MMA, MMLA submit comments on draft of model HCA

The Cannabis Control Commission released a draft model host community agreement for comment on Jan. 17 and opened a two-week comment period through Jan. 31.

The model HCA was promulgated in accordance with <u>Chapter 180 of the Acts of 2022</u>, the <u>comprehensive cannabis</u> <u>law</u> that required the CCC to draft rules

around host community agreements and social equity.

The MMA and the <u>Massachusetts</u> <u>Municipal Lawyers Association</u> submitted a <u>joint letter to the CCC with comments on the draft</u>. The MMA and MMLA support the clarity a draft HCA would provide, but expressed several concerns about additional clarity needed

for both municipalities and licensees.

The CCC drafted the model host community agreement as part of its Phase 1 of rule promulgation under Chapter 180.

The commission is expected to create rules around social equity as part of its Phase 2 in coming months.

- Ali DiMatteo

Community One Stop for Growth opens for fiscal 2025

By John Ouellette

Community One Stop for Growth, a portal where municipalities can apply for state community and economic development grant programs, has opened for fiscal 2025.

Launched in January 2021, Community One Stop for Growth offers a streamlined application process that makes it easier for communities and entities to access a number of state grant programs and be considered for more than one grant program simultaneously.

The <u>HousingWorks Infrastructure</u> <u>Program</u>, for a variety of infrastructure-related activities to support and unlock housing opportunities, has now been integrated into Community One Stop.

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, who announced the fiscal 2025 opening during the MMA Annual Meeting in Boston on Jan. 20, said Community One Stop "reduces red tape and streamlines the process for communities to apply for critical state funding that will improve quality of life for their residents."

She said the Community One Stop process makes grant programs more accessible to all communities, while ensuring the equitable distribution of resources

across all regions of the Commonwealth.

For the fiscal 2025 round, the following 12 programs will be administered through the Community One Stop:

- <u>MassWorks</u> <u>Infrastructure</u> <u>Program</u>
- Urban Agenda Grant Program
- Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

Lt. Gov. Kim

Driscoll

- <u>Rural and Small Town Development</u> Fund
- Housing Choice Grant Program
- Community Planning Grant Program
- HousingWorks Infrastructure Program
- Brownfields Redevelopment Fund
- <u>Site Readiness Program</u>
- <u>Underutilized Properties Program</u>
- Collaborative Workspace Program
- Real Estate Services Technical Assistance

Fiscal 2025 applications must be submitted between May 6 and June 5, 2024. Expressions of Interest will be accepted from Feb. 9 through April 30. The Expression of Interest is now offered as a short webform accessed through the One Stop website.

A series of One Stop webinars will be held as follows:

- One Stop Overview: Feb. 5 (<u>register</u> here)
- One Stop Application Guidance: Feb. 7 (register here)
- Prerecorded Technology to be posted on Feb. 8

Prerecorded webinars focused on each One Stop program, including more specific information about eligibility, project competitiveness, and examples of past awards, will be posted on the One Stop website on Feb. 16.

One Stop staff and program managers will also host two separate virtual office hour series to answer applicant questions.

In its first three rounds, Community One Stop programs awarded \$396.3 million for 869 grants to 243 communities. The awards included more than \$130 million to Gateway Cities and more than \$100 million to rural and small towns. Of the 869 projects awarded to date, 29% were located in a community identified as a rural or small town; 47% were located in a Housing Choice community; and 32% were located in a Gateway City.

MSBA accepting Statements of Interest for school projects

On Jan. 12, the Massachusetts School Building Authority opened the 2024 Statement of Interest period for the Accelerated Repair Program and the Core Program.

Submitting an SOI is the critical first step in the MSBA's program for school building construction, addition/renovation, and repair grants. The SOI allows districts to inform the MSBA about deficiencies that may exist in a local school facility and how those deficiencies inhibit the delivery of the district's educational program.

The <u>Accelerated Repair Program</u> focuses on the preservation of existing assets by performing energy-efficient and cost-saving upgrades, which will result in direct operational savings for school districts.

The MSBA had temporarily paused the Accelerated Repair Program in October



The Statement of Interest period is open for the Massachusetts School Building Authority's Accelerated Repair and Core programs.

2022, resulting in no new Statements of Interest in 2023, but is reopening the program for 2024 for the partial or full replacement of roofs and windows/doors.

The MSBA has changed its SOI template

for the 2024 filing period, which could impact the responses to certain questions for districts that submitted a Core Program SOI in 2023 and intend to refile it in 2024.

The deadline for submitting ARP SOIs is March 1 at 11:59 p.m.

The deadline for submitting Core Program SOIs is April 12 at 11:59 p.m.

The MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, competitive program, and grants are distributed by the MSBA Board of Directors based on need and urgency, as expressed by districts and validated by the MSBA. Submitting an SOI is not an invitation into the MSBA's capital pipeline; it is the initial step in the MSBA's program. Moving forward in the process requires further collaboration between districts and the MSBA.

For details on the SOI process, <u>visit the</u> MSBA website. ●

2024 MMA Board of Directors installed

The 2024 MMA Board of Directors was installed during the association's Annual Business Meeting on Jan. 20.

The voting directors are elected by the following MMA organizations: Massachusetts Mayors' Association, Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, Massachusetts Select Board Association, and Association of Town Finance Committees.

The immediate past president of the MMA is an ex-officio member.

The board members for 2024 are:

Appointed directors

MMA President and Councillors' Association President: John McLaughlin* Councillor, Waltham

MMA Vice President: Jamie Hellen* Town Administrator, Franklin Mayors' Association President: Nicole LaChapelle* Mayor, Easthampton

Mayors' Association First Vice President: Ruthanne Fuller* Mayor, Newton

Mayors' Association Second Vice President: Michelle Wu Mayor, Boston

Councillors' Association First Vice President: Brendan Sweeney* Councillor, Beverly

Councillors' Association Second Vice President: Lisa Blackmer Councillor, North Adams

Management Association President: Kristi Williams* Town Manager, Westborough

Management Association First Vice President: John Mangiaratti* Town Manager, Acton

Management Association Second Vice President: Paul Bockelman Town Manager, Amherst

Select Board Association President: Andrew Hogeland* Select Board, Williamstown

Select Board Association First Vice President: Debra Roberts* Select Board, Stoughton

MMA Immediate Past President and Select Board Association Second Vice President: Jill Hai Select Board, Lexington

Finance Committees President: Melinda Tarsi* Industrial and Development Committee, Mansfield

Finance Committees First Vice President: Kevin Sullivan* Finance Committee, Hanson MMA Executive Director: Adam Chapdelaine* (ex-officio, non-voting)

Elected directors

Ted Bettencourt, Mayor, Peabody Denise Casey, Deputy Town Manager, North Andover

Stephen Cavey, Select Board Member, Stoughton

Lisa Feltner, Councillor, Watertown Claire Freda, Councillor, Leominster Josh Garcia, Mayor, Holyoke Jennifer Glass, Select Board Member, Lincoln

Christine Hoyt, Select Board Member, Adams

Aaron Langlois, Select Board Member, Oakham

Andrea Llamas, Town Administrator, Northfield

Breanna Lungo-Koehn, Mayor, Medford Kevin Mizikar, Town Manager, Shrewsbury

Irwin Nesoff, Select Board Member, Hull Mike Nicholson, Mayor, Gardner Brad Riley, Councillor, Easthampton Moises Rodrigues, Councillor, Brockton Robert Sullivan, Mayor, Brockton Kevin Sweet, Town Administrator, Wrentham

 st Denotes Executive Committee member



MMA presents its annual municipal website awards

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Six communities from across the state were recognized as winners of the MMA's annual municipal website awards during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Jan. 19.

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

Awards are given in five population categories:

More than 35,000: Plymouth and Pittsfield (tie) — www.plymouth-ma.gov and www.cityofpittsfield.org

25,001 to 35,000: Norwood — <u>www.</u> norwoodma.gov

12,001 to 25,000: Newburyport — <u>www.cityofnewburyport.com</u>

5,001 to 12,000: Brewster — <u>www.</u> <u>brewster-ma.gov</u>

Under 5,000: Hawley — <u>townofhawley.</u> <u>com</u>

Municipal websites are evaluated using the following criteria:

- Current and timely information
- Use of social media and tools for online community engagement (including an events calendar)
- Intuitive navigation tools and organization of material
- Ease of access to resources for residents, such as the ability to apply for licenses and permits, pay bills, order documents and make suggestions
- Availability of public records
- · Clear branding as the official municipal

government site

- Robust search function
- · Mobile-responsive design
- Details about municipal departments
- Visual appeal and overall experience

Previous winners are not eligible to re-enter the contest unless their website has undergone a significant redesign.

This year's contest judges were Amanda Linehan, a city councillor in Malden and communications director at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council; and Deb Radway, a former president of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, former member of the MMA Board of Directors, and a retired director of human resources and human rights in Amherst.

MMA group and affiliated organization officers for 2024

At their annual business meetings held during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show in Boston on Jan. 20, member groups representing the state's mayors, councillors, town managers and administrators, and select board members elected their officers for 2024.

Women Elected Municipal Officials named its 2024 Steering Committee at its annual Leadership Luncheon on Jan. 19. Other groups closely affiliated with the MMA selected their leadership in the summer or fall of 2023.

Massachusetts Mayors' Association



Nicole LaChapelle

President: Nicole LaChapelle, Easthampton First vice president: Ruthanne Fuller, Newton Second vice president: Michelle Wu, Boston District 1: Josh Garcia, Holyoke District 2: Mike Nicholson, Gardner

District 3: Ted Bettencourt, Peabody District 4: Breanna Lungo-Koehn, Medford District 5: Robert Sullivan, Brockton

Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association



John McLaughlin

President: John McLaughlin, Waltham First vice president: Brendan Sweeney, Beverly Second vice president: Lisa Blackmer, North Adams District 1: Brad Riley, Easthampton District 2: Claire Freda, Leominster

District 3: vacant District 4: Moises Rodrigues, Brockton District 5: Lisa Feltner, Watertown

Massachusetts Municipal Management Association



Kristi Williams

President: Kristi Williams, town manager, Westborough First vice president: John Mangiaratti, town manager, Acton Second vice president: Paul Bockelman, town

Secretary/treasurer: Jim Boudreau, town administrator, Scituate District 1: Andrea Llamas, town administrator, Northfield

manager, Amherst

District 2: Jamie Hellen, town administrator, Franklin

District 3: Kevin Mizikar, town manager, Shrewsbury

District 4: Denise Casey, deputy town manager, North Andover

District 5: Kevin Sweet, town administrator, Wrentham

At-large representatives:

Denise Dembkoski, town administrator, Stow Lisa Green, town administrator, Hanson Andrew Flanagan, town manager, Andover Liz Sullivan, town administrator, Dennis

Massachusetts Select Board Association



Andrew Hogeland

President: Andrew Hogeland, Williamstown First vice president: Debra Roberts, Stoughton Second vice president: Jill Hai, Lexington Secretary: Mark Forest, Yarmouth District 1: Christine Hoyt, Adams

District 2: Jennifer Glass, Lincoln District 3: Stephen Cavey, Stoughton District 4: Irwin Nesoff, Hull

District 5: Aaron Langlois, Oakham

Association of Town Finance Committees



Melinda Tarsi

President: Melinda Tarsi, Industrial and Development Committee member, Mansfield

First vice president: Kevin Sullivan, Finance Committee member, Hanson

Second vice president: Mary McBride, Finance Committee member, Billerica Treasurer: Al Tosti, Finance

Committee member, Arlington Directors:

Dana DeCosta, Finance Committee member, Harwich

Andrew Harmon, Finance and Advisory Board member, Stoneham

Jonathan Harris, Finance Committee member, Weston

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources Association



Chair: Vanessa Hale, assistant town administrator,

Southborough Vice chair: Dolores Hamilton, human resources director, Wellesley Treasurer: Molly Kean,

assistant town

administrator/human resources director, Westwood Secretary: Jen Breaker, assistant town manager and communications director, Danvers

Past presidents: Denise Casey, deputy town manager, North Andover Mary Beth Bernard, retired

Directors:

Karen Bratt, human resources director, Franklin

Marie Buckner, human resources director, Sandwich

Stephanie Duggan, assistant town administrator/human resources director, Maynard

Gregory Enos, assistant town administrator/ human resources director, Wrentham Joanne Faust, human resources director, Burlington

Caitlyn Julius, assistant human resources director, Springfield

Michelle Pizzi O'Brien, human resources director, Newton

Michael Taylor, human resources director, Pittsfield

Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts



Denise Dembkoski Chair: Denise Dembkoski, administrator, Stow Vice chair: Ryan McLane, town administrator, Carlisle Treasurer: Kelli Robbins, town administrator, Brookfield Secretary: Paul McLatchy III, town administrator, Ashfield

Women Elected Municipal **Officials**



Valerie Gilman Chair: Valerie Gilman. councillor, Gloucester First vice chair: Yolanda Greaves, Select Board member, Ashland Directors: Gina-Louise Sciarra, mayor, Northampton; Lise Olney, Select Board member, Wellesley; Lisa Kouchakdjian, Select Board member,

Sudbury; Hanna Belcher, councillor, Winthrop

Members endorse fiscal and climate resolutions

By John Ouellette

During the MMA's Annual Business Meeting on Jan. 20 in Boston, hundreds of local leaders from across Massachusetts approved two policy resolutions that will help guide the advocacy work of the MMA in the year ahead.

The "Resolution Supporting an Enduring Fiscal Partnership Between Cities and Towns and the Commonwealth in Fiscal 2025 and Beyond" 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.

With economists and fiscal experts warning about slowing growth in tax collections next year, even as the economy remains strong, it is an important time for municipal leaders to highlight the priorities that are essential for a healthy state and local fiscal partnership. The resolution includes priorities raised by local officials from all parts of the Commonwealth, and builds on policies and principles endorsed at previous



Wakefield Town Councillor Jonathan Chines, center, chair of the MMA's Fiscal Policy Committee, speaks during MMA Annual Business Meeting on Jan. 20. Joining him are MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman, left, and MMA Deputy Legislative Director Jackie Lavender Bird.

MMA Annual Business Meetings.

The "Resolution Supporting a Local-State-Federal Partnership to Address Climate Change, Enhance Resilience, and Bolster Adaptation Initiatives" 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 resolution calls for action in a number of areas that are essential to ensuring an effective local-state-federal partnership to promote climate action. This complex task demands a commitment to support municipal workforce development and decarbonization efforts, and to bolster adaptation and resilience efforts at all levels. The resolution also builds on policies and principles endorsed at previous MMA Annual Business Meetings, including support for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program and the Green Communities Program.

The fiscal resolution was drafted by the MMA Fiscal Policy Committee, and the climate resolution 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 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 are a key component of the MMA's advocacy work.

MMA announces annual town report contest winners

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Andover, Seekonk, Littleton and Tisbury took the top prizes in their respective categories in the MMA's Annual Town Report Contest, the winners of which were recognized during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show on Jan. 19.

The following 12 communities received awards:

Category 1 (population more than 30,000)

1st place: Andover 2nd place: Shrewsbury 3rd place: Lexington

Category 2 (population of 15,001-30,000)

1st place: Seekonk 2nd place: Auburn 3rd place: Westwood

Category 3 (population of 5,001-15,000)

1st place: Littleton 2nd place: Westminster 3rd place: Brewster

Category 4 (population 5,000 and under)

1st place: Tisbury
2nd place: Truro
3rd place: Brookfield
Judging criteria include

layout and cover design,

arrangement of material, presentation of statistics and data, summary of the year's achievements, evidence of local planning for the future, and the report's

usefulness.

State law (<u>Ch. 40</u>, <u>Sect. 49</u>) requires towns to prepare and publish an annual town report before their annual town meeting. The reports typically include financial information, highlights of the



Four towns took top honors in their respective categories in the MMA's Annual Town Report Contest.

previous calendar year, reports from major boards, committees and key officials (including the select board), election results, and town meeting information.

Serving as judges for the MMA contest this year were Easton Assistant Town Administrator Sean Dugan and Julie Jacobson, a longtime town manager who recently retired from Auburn.

MSA launches online select board handbook

By John Ouellette

At the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show in Boston on Jan. 20, the Massachusetts Select Board Association launched a new online version of its comprehensive guide for Select Board members.

The Handbook for Massachusetts Select Board Members, which covers the full range of roles and responsibilities for Select Board members as leaders of their towns, had previously been available only in print or as a PDF.

The new online version, publicly available on the MMA website, has its own navigation tools and built-in search function. The content has been fully updated to reflect changes to laws and regulations, and to include emerging issues such as diversity, equity and inclusion and climate change, both of which are covered in new chapters.

The MSA's handbook, which goes back many decades, was last updated in 2014. The online version has the advantage of being updateable on an ongoing basis.

"As someone who would always choose a book over a Kindle, I was originally hesitant about an online-only format, but I am an enthusiastic convert!" said former Norwell Select Board Member Alison Demong, who served on the handbook

committee. "The new handbook is a comprehensive resource that provides a wealth of information, and the format is very user-friendly and the information is easily accessible, so you can find just what you are looking for."

The handbook committee also included Williamstown Select Board Member Andy Hogeland, who also serves as president of the Massachusetts Select Board Association; former Natick Select Board Member Josh Ostroff; and Adam Chapdelaine, who is now the Executive Director of the MMA.

Nearly two years ago, the handbook committee conducted a survey to ask members about their use of the handbook. The committee recognized that the broad range of topics that a Select Board member must be familiar with grows all the time. And it was clear that a new edition should be more dynamic and accessible, searchable, and easy to update in real time.

The handbook committee and editors sought out many municipal government experts for help with updating relevant content. Survey feedback led to the inclusion of more information and guidance on ethics, the open meeting law, affordable housing, codes of conduct, and maintaining decorum during public meetings.



online edition of its handbook.

The handbook is dedicated to the late Worthington Select Board Member and state Rep. Stephen Kulik, who was a loyal champion of local government and had served as president of the MMA (in 1993) and the MSA. Kulik served on the Worthington Planning Board and later the Select Board for 45 years. He served in the State House for 26 years, until his retirement in 2019.

The handbook committee also acknowledged the talent, record and contributions of Geoff Beckwith, who served as executive director of the MMA from 1992 through September of 2023. Beckwith's "leadership, mentorship and stewardship at the MMA have contributed in countless ways to every city and town in Massachusetts, and to the public service careers of thousands of local leaders."

Mass. select board members discuss diversity, equity, inclusion

By Anneke Craig

During the Massachusetts Select Board Association's Annual Business Meeting on Jan. 20, Bird Guess, CEO of the Racial Equity Group, discussed best practices for select boards to gauge their municipality's diversity, equity and inclusion needs and to initiate DEI work.

Guess, who has been working with the MMA's DEI Committee to develop a strategic plan for the advancement of municipal DEI efforts, recommended starting with local data to identify "significant disparities" in employment, services, public engagement, procurement, and other aspects of town government.

"Significant disparities are inequities," he said.

Data can help local officials to understand "what inequities really mean," including the effect they have on community members, and identify strategies for resolving them.



Bird Guess

This framework is what Guess calls an "equity mindset."

Guess said there's often a gap between the representation of different racial and ethnic groups in the municipal workforce compared to their representation in the

community's population. He reviewed data from a Massachusetts town of 15,000 residents where the representation of municipal workers of color was disproportionately low compared to their availability locally, while white workers had disproportionately high employment rates.

As a result of historical policies and practices, Guess said, municipalities inherited inequities that continue to deter people of color, women and gender-diverse people, disabled people, and others with

marginalized identities from fully participating in local government. But the responsibility to remove barriers does not fall to any one individual, he said.

"Equity should be the mindset of all boards and departments," he said, so that all community members "have the fair opportunity to achieve their greatest potential."

The MSA business meeting, held during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show in Boston, included remarks from MSA President and Williamstown Select Board Member Andrew Hogeland and a report from the MSA Nominating Committee and subsequent vote on the 2024 MSA officers and district 5 and 2 representatives.

The MSA Handbook Committee also unveiled the 2024 edition of the Handbook for Massachusetts Select Board Members, in a reimagined online format with extensive content updates, and new chapters on climate change and DEI.

Hearing held on governor's housing bond bill

The MMA was among those testifying in support of the governor's Affordable Homes Act on Jan. 18 before the Legislature's Joint Committee on Housing.

The State House hearing was standing-room-only, with dozens of legislators and elected officials also testifying in support of the bill and speaking to the need for more housing.

The \$4.1 billion, five-year housing bond bill includes spending, policy and programmatic actions intended to jumpstart the production of housing and make it more affordable across Massachusetts.

Key investments include:

- \$250 million for various HousingWorks programs, including \$175 million for the HousingWorks Infrastructure Program
- \$800 million for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- \$425 million for the Housing

Stabilization and Investment Fund

"Every municipality in the Commonwealth can identify housing rehabilitation and development projects that are ready to go," testified MMA Legislative Analyst Ali DiMatteo, "and this additional funding will provide much-needed assistance to move these projects into the action phase."

MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman said the MMA is eager to work with the administration

and the Legislature to support local housing initiatives while empowering communities.

"The MMA is committed to working with this committee to ensure this legislation remains bold in its scope and can provide needed flexibility to support



MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman, left, and MMA Legislative Analyst Ali DiMatteo testify before the Legislature's Joint Committee on Housing on Jan 18.

municipalities in meeting their local housing goals," he said.

The MMA also submitted extensive written testimony to the committee.

Gov. Maura Healey filed her Affordable Homes Act this past October.

Gov. Healey swears in 2 new housing panels

On Jan. 29 at the State House, Gov. Maura Healey swore in members of a new Housing Advisory Council and Commission on Unlocking Housing Production.

Established by Executive Orders filed in conjunction with the governor's Affordable Homes Act, the council and the commission will bring together a broad range of stakeholders from across Massachusetts to advise the Healey-Driscoll administration on strategies to address the state's housing challenges.

The groups include leaders from government, business, and community and advocacy organizations.

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll will serve as chair of the 20-member Housing Advisory Council, which will develop a comprehensive housing plan for Massachusetts, including strategies for substantially increasing housing production, preserving and upgrading existing housing stock, supporting individuals and families struggling with homelessness, and using housing to create economic mobility for all.



Eric Batista



Nicole LaChapelle

In addition to Driscoll, council members include Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus, Administration and Finance Secretary Matt Gorzkowicz, MassHousing CEO Chrystal Kornegay, and representatives from a range of housing advocacy and related organizations.

Municipal representatives on the Housing Advisory Council include Worcester City Manager Eric Batista, Lynn Mayor Jared Nicholson, and MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine.

The 15-member Commission on **Unlocking Housing Production** is charged with advising the



Jared Nicholson

administration on how state and local laws, regulations, and practices could be revised in order to increase the supply of affordable housing across income levels and the state.

Housing Housing and Livable

Communities Secretary Augustus will serve as chair of the commission, and members include Gorzkowicz, Economic Development Secretary Yvonne Hao, **Energy and Environmental Affairs** Secretary Rebecca Tepper, Easthampton Mayor Nicole LaChapelle, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments Executive Director Jennifer Raitt, and representatives from organizations including the Massachusetts Building Trades Council, Abundant Housing Massachusetts, Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Massachusetts, NAIOP Massachusetts, and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, among others.

IT bond bill includes funds for local grant programs

On Jan. 9, the Healey-Driscoll administration filed a \$1.23 billion, five-year bond bill intended to modernize IT systems across state agencies.

The administration said the FutureTech Act, covering fiscal 2025 through 2029, represents significant capital investments to integrate the constituent experience across agencies, improve cybersecurity, and fund investments in Artificial Intelligence technology, while also providing funding and technical support to secretariats, state agencies, public higher education institutions, and municipalities.

The bill would establish a Digital Accessibility and Equity Governance Board, create the position of chief information technology accessibility officer, and establish the Commonwealth Digital Roadmap, which would seek to standardize the user experience across state agencies.

The bill would provide \$30 million for the competitive Municipal Fiber Grant Program, which supports the closing of gaps in municipal networks, focused on connecting municipal facilities.

It also includes \$25 million for the

competitive Community Compact IT Grant Program, which seeks to drive innovation at the local level and is available to any municipality that is part of Community Compact Cabinet Initiative. The program supports the implementation of technology projects that harness the power of IT to drive innovation, make government more efficient, save taxpayer dollars, and make it easier for residents to interact and transact with their local government.

Danvers Town Manager Steve Bartha, whose town hosts the North Shore IT Collaborative, said he's "confident that the FutureTech Act will lay the groundwork for similar collaboratives elsewhere in the Commonwealth."

The administration said the current Executive Office of Technology Services and Security bond authorization will be exhausted in fiscal 2025. The secretariat's Office of Capital Planning, in coordination with the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, assessed executive branch IT capital project needs for the next five years.

The administration said its bill would provide up to \$350 million to fund the continuation of key business

applications, \$150 million for enterprise cybersecurity investments, and \$275 million for new capital investments.

Among its investments, the bill includes \$52 million to support the continued rollout of the Employment Modernization Transformation, a project which, when complete, will provide both employers and those seeking unemployment assistance with a new portal designed to be mobile-friendly and accessible, making it easier to apply for unemployment assistance and streamline the claims process.

The bill also has \$25 million to support AI projects that align with the administration's priorities and that harness the knowledge and skills of the state's higher education and innovation-driven economy to boost its leadership "in the responsible development and use of AI technology in government."

EOTSS Secretary and Commonwealth Chief Information Officer Jason Snyder said the bill would "simultaneously keep our IT assets current and allow us to plan for our long-term cyber resilience strategy, while continuing to innovate in our business and constituent-facing applications."

Administration releases 1st round of disaster relief funds

By John Ouellette

The Healey-Driscoll administration is releasing the first \$10 million of disaster relief funding for communities that incurred damage from flooding last year.

The funding comes from a <u>supplemental budget enacted in December</u> that included \$15 million for municipalities that experienced damage or incurred emergency response costs from extreme weather over the past year.

This first round will go to 37 cities and towns, primarily in western and central Massachusetts, that suffered damage last summer to roads, culverts and other infrastructure, and incurred extraordinary emergency response costs. (See the administration's press release for the complete list.)

The neighboring Franklin County towns of Deerfield and Conway received the

largest amounts, at \$1.58 million and \$1.25 million, respectively. Twenty-one communities received amounts below \$100,000.

The remaining \$5 million will be released in the spring to support municipalities impacted by storms last September.

The administration said municipalities that suffered catastrophic damage due to severe weather needed more support to rebuild. Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, a

former mayor of Salem, said she knows "first-hand how crucial collaboration is in tackling the biggest challenges facing our 351 cities and towns."

She announced the release of the funds



The administration has released the first \$10 million in disaster relief to 37 cities and towns that suffered flood damage last summer.

during the MMA Annual Meeting in Boston on Jan. 20.

Municipal participants in cyber training announced

On Jan. 25, the Healey-Driscoll administration announced the participants in the Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness training program for 2024.

Administered by the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security and its Office of Municipal and School Technology, the program will provide critical cybersecurity training to 78,000 employees from 227 municipalities and public school districts across Massachusetts in order to help them better detect and avoid cyberthreats.

The program is provided at no cost to municipalities or employees taking the training.

The Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness program is designed to support local government efforts to improve overall cyber readiness through comprehensive online end-user training, evaluation and threat simulation. Awarded communities will receive licenses for end-user training, assessment and phishing simulation procured by the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security.

Program participants begin their training with an initial cyber strength assessment to measure baseline cybersecurity awareness. Following the assessments, periodic assessments consisting of training modules and simulated phishing email campaigns help participants improve their "cyber hygiene" habits and increase their awareness of deceptive techniques used by criminals to gain unauthorized access to government systems. At the end of the program, participants complete a final cyber strength assessment to measure their progress.

Gov. Maura Healey said the administration is "thrilled to see so many cities and towns prioritize cyber readiness" through the state program. Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said the training "makes clear that cybersecurity is everyone's responsibility, whether we have IT in our job titles or not."

Technology Services and Security Secretary Jason Snyder said cybersecurity comes up as a top priority in his conversations with municipal officials. "We work best in Massachusetts when state and municipal organizations work together," he said, "and this grant program exemplifies this commitment."

Participating municipal organizations are further supported with quarterly threat briefings and weekly newsletters with cybersecurity best practices and program updates provided by the Office of Municipal and School Technology. Municipal information technology

officials also receive monthly summary progress reports that detail the number of employees who inadvertently clicked on malicious links contained in the simulated phishing emails, offering important visibility on the threat landscape.

The administration offers a number of other programs to further support municipal officials in their cybersecurity and information technology modernization efforts, including a Free Cybersecurity Health Check Program, the Community Compact IT Grant Program, and the Community Compact Municipal Fiber Grant Program.

Administration boosts climate resilience funding

The administration is increasing funding for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program by \$7 million, or 35%, to help communities plan, design and construct nature-based solutions to inland flooding.

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is providing \$7 million from the Department of Environmental Protection's Climate Mitigation Trust for additional Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness action grants to communities impacted by inland flooding in 2023.



The funds are in addition to the \$20 million allocated for MVP action grants in the fiscal 2025 Capital Investment Plan.

The action grants will fund nature-based solutions such as the planning, design and construction of green stormwater infrastructure and stream and wetland

restoration projects that reduce the risk of flooding.

In December, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs received the largest response to date to its request for expressions of interest from cities, towns, regional groups and tribes for MVP action grants. The office received 196 EOIs, compared to 155 the previous year.

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll announced the additional MVP funding during the MMA Annual Meeting on Jan. 20 in Boston.

- John Ouellette

MassDOT announces one-stop municipal grants portal

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has announced that it will launch a new municipal grants portal this spring called Grants Central.

Intended to simplify and improve the way grant programs are managed, Grants Central will provide a one-stop shop for information, resources and applications for MassDOT funding programs, including Chapter 90, Complete Streets, Local Bottleneck Reduction, Municipal Pavement, Municipal Small

Bridge, and Shared Streets and Spaces.

Grants Central is designed to streamline grant application and reimbursement activities. The intent is to avoid the time-consuming process of having to navigate multiple websites and use different application forms, guidelines and offline tools.

To make the process more transparent, the new online portal will provide municipalities with more consistent and easily accessible information about new application rounds, application status and awards.

MassDOT said the programs, eligibility criteria and application requirements will all remain the same.

More information about the portal's functionality, launch timeline, and learning resources will soon be available from MassDOT.

– Adrienne Núñez

MMA hosts webinar on performance appraisals

By Lily Rancatore

An MMA webinar on Jan. 9 reviewed performance appraisals and offered practical tips for setting "SMART" goals to help local officials start the year off right.

Joellen Cademartori, CEO of GovHR, opened by discussing the objectives of a performance appraisal system. An effective system, she said, can strengthen internal communication, promote productivity, and help identify training opportunities to enhance employee skills or performance.

She said an appraisal system is composed of general data, performance competencies, and a rating tool, among other elements. Performance competencies are pre-established criteria that apply to the position being evaluated. These competencies will vary within four high-level categories: leadership, management, technical and team.

It's important to acknowledge that biases may accompany ratings. Cademartori said biases stem from personal positive or negative impressions that lead to treating someone more favorably or less so.

When setting project-focused or



Joellen Cademartori, CEO of GovHR, discusses performance appraisals and practical tips for setting "SMART" goals during an MMA webinar on Jan. 9.

task-oriented goals, Cademartori recommends the "SMART" goal format. SMART goals are:

- Specific (single outcome)
- Measurable (action-oriented)
- Attainable (can be accomplished)
- Relevant (to your mission and position)
- Timebound (by when?)

Ultimately, to ensure success, Cademartori recommends keeping progress notes and engaging in open communication with employees who are being evaluated. Aligning goals to the mission of the community will Joellen Cademartori, CEO of GovHR, said an appraisal system is composed of general data, performance competencies, and a rating tool, among other elements. Performance competencies are preestablished criteria that apply to the position being evaluated.

also make the work more purposeful, resulting in more pride in the work and a desire for feedback in the future.

Pittsfield Human Resources Director Michael Taylor moderated 15 minutes of questions and answers, which addressed inquiries about managing appraisals in a union environment, bias in performance reviews, and setting reasonable SMART goals.

· View the webinar

Application period opens for CDBG program

The federal fiscal 2024 application for Community Development Block Grants opened on Dec. 8, and the application deadline is March 25.

The federally funded CDBG program helps eligible cities and towns meet a broad range of community development needs in housing, infrastructure, revitalization, economic development and public social services. It supports eligible activities and encourages applicants to develop coordinated, integrated and creative solutions to local problems.

Every CDBG-funded activity must qualify as meeting one of the three national objectives of the program:

- Benefiting low- and moderate-income persons
- Preventing or eliminating slums or blight, or
- Meeting other community development needs having a particular



Community Development Block Grants help eligible cities and towns meet a broad range of community development needs.

urgency

Entitlement communities are not eligible to apply.

Application guidance is posted on the <u>Community Development Block Grant</u> website on www.mass.gov (scroll down to "Application Information" section).

The federal fiscal 2024 Draft One Year

Action Plan has also been posted and should be read before application guidance, as the One Year Action Plan takes precedence over the language in the application guidance.

A public hearing must be held at least two weeks before application submission.

Communities that do not have an account set up in the CDBG online Grants Management System but are

interested in applying, should contact Community Development Unit Manager Kathryn McNelis as soon as possible at kathryn.mcnelis@mass.gov.

For questions or more information, contact Kathryn McNelis at kathryn. mcnelis@mass.gov.

Administration's 9C budget cuts avoid local aid

By Jackie Lavender Bird

After six months of state tax collections falling short of benchmarks, the Healey-Driscoll administration on Jan. 8 announced \$375 million in mid-year emergency budget cuts for fiscal 2024.

The reductions do not directly impact core municipal and school aid accounts, but some reduced budget earmarks will have impacts at the local level. <u>Click here for the list of affected line items</u>.

To close the remaining \$625 million of the shortfall, the administration has identified certain opportunities to increase non-tax revenue.

Section 9C of Chapter 29 of state law gives the governor the authority to



Matt Gorzkowicz

make unilateral budget cuts via executive branch agencies to balance the current fiscal year's budget.

In light of the recent shortfall in tax collections, Administration and Finance Secretary

Matt Gorzkowicz has advised the administration to take multiple steps to reduce spending and rebalance the fiscal 2024 state budget, including directing spending reductions at Executive Branch agencies under the governor's authority.

State tax collections for the first half of fiscal 2024 were \$769 million (or 4.1%) below the year-to-date benchmark, and December was the sixth consecutive month of below-benchmark tax revenue collections. As a result, the Healey-Driscoll administration reduced the estimate for fiscal 2024 tax collections by \$1 billion, to \$40.41 billion, including revenue from the surtax on personal incomes over \$1 million (known as the Fair Share Amendment).

The administration held a conference call with municipal officials on Jan. 12 to discuss details of the 9C cuts and answer questions.

MMA hosts webinar on conducting empathetic dialogue during conflict

By Lily Rancatore

An MMA webinar on Jan. 11 shared practical tips for fostering constructive dialogue and overcoming volatile feelings in challenging times.

Sharon Select Board Chair Kiana Pierre-Louis, who's also the assistant dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Northeastern University, began by discussing environmental and personal barriers to effective communication. Environmental barriers may include time and space, organizational norms, or status dynamics. Personal barriers may include biases, different personality types, and unacknowledged differences in communication preferences.

Conflict can arise from these barriers, creating a divide between people or groups. When this occurs, it's essential to embrace disagreement without making it personal, taking the matter out of context, or negatively characterizing the person in the disagreement.

During conflict, the amygdala area of the brain processes fearful and



Sharon Select Board Chair Kiana Pierre-Louis offers advice on fostering constructive dialogue and overcoming volatile feelings in challenging times during a Jan. 11 MMA webinar.

threatening stimuli, activating a fear-related behavioral response. Pierre-Louis explained how "triggers" can also activate the amygdala, and the body's fight-or-flight response, even if there is no physical threat present.

A trigger can be any sensory reminder of a traumatic event: a sound, sight, smell, physical sensation, or even a time of day or season, Pierre-Louis said. Triggers vary widely from person to person and can be internal or external, but she emphasized there is a difference between being triggered and being uncomfortable.

When someone is triggered, it is impossible to have a productive dialogue. Thus, it's important to understand how your feelings may translate into judgments, attributions or characterizations.

Pierre-Louis reviewed how understanding yourself, and putting aside your internal dialogue, can build the groundwork for effective communication. When engaging in difficult dialogue, it's essential to note your volume and tone of voice, body language and eye contact, and physical distance.

"How you present yourself should align with the message you are trying to convey," she said.

Pierre-Louis moderated a brief question and answer session, which addressed inquiries about dealing with public anger and involving a mediator in difficult conversations.

• <u>View the webinar</u>

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Continued from page 2

Finally, I want to share my most heart-felt appreciation and gratitude to the incredible MMA/MIIA staff, who worked tirelessly to make this event the success that it was. The staff works for months to pull together all the pieces of Annual

Meeting and then works almost nonstop for days leading up to the conference, as well as over the course of the two-day conference. This event would not be possible without this committed team of people, and I am more appreciative of their efforts than words can adequately express. As you might expect, the work to plan for the 2025 Annual Meeting has already begun. We are so excited about the new opportunity that the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center will provide us, and we look forward to seeing you all next Jan. 24 and 25 (and many times before then)!



MIIA presents safety, risk management, wellness awards

By Jennifer Ranz

During its Annual Business Meeting in Boston on Jan. 20, MIIA presented awards to outstanding member communities and municipal entities to recognize their commitment to safety, risk management, and employee wellness.

Safety Leadership

MIIA created a new Safety Leadership Award to recognize a municipal leader who is dedicated to high safety standards and exemplifies a commitment to protecting people and property. The new award honors the late Bridget McGuiness, who led many MIIA training workshops around the state, and served as an advocate for worker health and safety for decades.

MIIA presented its inaugural Safety Leadership Award to Yarmouth Assistant Public Works Director Roby Whitehouse, who serves on the Barnstable County Safety Roundtable and led the development of a safety and health program for local transfer stations. Whitehouse met or exceeded all award criteria, including demonstrating concern for the protection of people and property, dedication to high safety



In honor of the late Bridget McGuiness, who led training workshops for MIIA, a new Safety Leadership Award is presented to Yarmouth Assistant Public Works Director Roby Whitehouse during MIIA's Annual Business Meeting on Jan. 20. Pictured, left to right, are MIIA Chair Paul Cohen; MIIA President and MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine; Whitehouse; Margot Abels, McGuiness's wife; Jilayne Mitchell of Cabot Risk Strategies; and MIIA Executive Vice President Stan Corcoran.

standards, working to create a safety culture, demonstrated leadership and partnership, and promotion of cross-departmental safety efforts.

Risk Management

MIIA's Risk Management program recognized the following members for their commitment to safety and renewed emphasis on compliance with

Occupational Health and Safety Administration standards.

Erving: The town of Erving demonstrated ongoing dedication to safety compliance and infrastructure maintenance. The town's safety committee identified and targeted seven high-priority OSHA programs for enhanced focus and program updates, and employees participated in more than 25 MIIA trainings this past year. Erving hosted multiple training sessions and opened registration to surrounding towns, helping to further spread the workplace safety message.

Longmeadow: The town of Longmeadow is an active participant in MIIA's Hartford Steam Boiler Sensor Program, which helps to identify building conditions with a high probability for losses. The town's safety committee meets quarterly, with strong attendance,

■ MIIA continued on 34

Municipalities advised to be ready for DLS safety inspections

By Jennifer Ranz

Now is a good time to refocus on municipal workplace safety and ensure readiness for onsite inspections by the Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards, the state agency responsible for worker safety.

Massachusetts is in the process of becoming a State Plan state, meaning that the Commonwealth will be operating its own Occupational Safety and Health Administration-approved workplace health and safety programs.

Under state law, all public sector employees are required to comply with OSHA regulations, and the Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards can make unannounced visits at any time to evaluate work-place conditions and to provide recommendations for the prevention of work-related injuries and illnesses. The department may issue a written warning when a potential injury-causing situation is found, followed by a civil citation and penalty if it is not corrected.

"Municipalities that work hard to create a culture of safety through workplace training, with implementation of standard operating procedures that address potential injury causes, and through self-auditing, are much better prepared for these inspections," said Lin Chabra, senior manager of Risk Management at MIIA.

Cities, towns and municipal entities are ultimately responsible for working continuously to improve safety protocols, she said.

The DLS Workplace Safety and Health Program website provides detailed information to help employers comply with OSHA regulations. MIIA works closely with the DLS to educate members about requirements and DLS inspection protocols, through webinars and other training materials.

VMLA webinar series to cover emotional intelligence

Last fall, the MMA launched its Virtual Municipal Leadership Academy webinar series to help promote professional development among municipal officials. The program's three-part pilot, exploring



Cally Ritter

effective communication and feedback, was led by Cally Ritter, principal of Positive Ripple Training and Consulting, and is still available for purchase.

Ritter is a highly regarded municipal trainer who has spent more than 25 years as a leadership development facilitator and employee assistance program consultant.

The program's next series, to be held in February and also led by Ritter, will focus on emotional intelligence, which is the ability to manage your own emotions while understanding the emotions of the people around you. Improving this skill, Ritter says, will help you deliver top-notch municipal services and excellent customer service, while fostering strong internal relationships.

Sessions will include:

Emotional Intelligence 101: Understanding the Key Components

Wednesday, Feb. 7, 12:30-1:45 p.m.

Emotional intelligence isn't static — it can be strengthened, like a muscle. This webinar will explore the five components of EI (self-awareness, self-management, motivation, social skills, and empathy), and attendees will engage in several exercises designed to strengthen their "EI muscle."

Empathy and Emotional Intelligence: The Customer Connectors

Wednesday, Feb. 14, 12:30-1:45 p.m.

Emotional intelligence can shift interactions with residents from defeating to rewarding. This webinar will discuss how to leverage emotional intelligence to meet customer needs, defuse public anger, and disarm demeaning behavior. Attendees will also learn how active listening can build rapport and bolster the ability to express empathy.

Tackling Tough Conversations with Emotional Intelligence

Tuesday, Feb. 27, 12:30-1:45 p.m. Emotional intelligence can help keep you grounded during a tough conversation. This webinar will share strategies for delivering difficult feedback, setting boundaries by saying "no," and handling instances where you may disappoint others. Attendees will also explore how to use emotional intelligence to regulate emotions and diffuse negativity.

Appointed and elected officials are invited to register now for the EI webinars. Each webinar costs \$45, or the series may be purchased for a reduced rate of \$120.

Attendees will be sent the Zoom information once registration closes at noon the day before each webinar. Any cancellation requests must be received by email at least one week in advance to receive a refund. Please note that your registration fee also provides access to the webinar recording on MMA
On-Demand.

MMA On-Demand is a sortable and searchable library with a collection of archived webinars. Members have the ability to save relevant training content for later viewing, browse "101" bundles, and purchase premium content.

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

Climate Forestry Committee releases best practices report

By Josie Ahlberg

On Jan. 3, the Healey-Driscoll administration's Climate Forestry Committee released a report of recommendations regarding climate-oriented forest management practices.

The report, part of the "Forests as Climate Solutions" initiative launched last June, was developed by a 12-member committee created to examine the role of forests in mitigating dangerous climate change consequences.

The committee of scientific experts emphasized the importance of keeping forests intact by enlarging forest reserves, increasing permanent conservation efforts, and reducing the conversion of forests to other uses. Recommendations include strategies to maximize carbon storage, updating management best practices, and encouraging the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental



A new report makes recommendations on climate-oriented forest management.

Affairs to implement its healthy soils action plan.

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is allocating \$50 million to help cities and towns conserve forest and land, and to support forest-based businesses and local economies. The office plans to invest the funding in forest conservation, as well as initiatives that encourage municipal and

private landowners to adopt climate-oriented management approaches.

The forest efforts are intended to help Massachusetts meet the climate goals set forth by the state's <u>Clean Energy and Climate Plan</u>, which requires 40% of the state's natural and working lands to be conserved by 2050.

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs plans to launch an online dashboard this year to highlight forest carbon metrics and trends and to provide a framework that explains the essential role of forests and carbon in fighting climate change. The office will also seek public input on the Climate Forestry Committee's recommendations.

Visit the <u>Forests as Climate Solutions</u> website for more information. ●

MassDEP proposes updates to waterways regulations

By Josie Ahlberg

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection recently released several regulatory updates that affect public and private waterways and permitting requirements for dredging projects.

Waterways

The MassDEP's regulations on waterways, 310 CMR 9.00, seek to protect and promote tidelands, great ponds, and non-tidal rivers and streams. Under Chapter 91, the Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act, MassDEP issues licenses for projects located in waterways and maintains that projects meet the necessary public-access requirements.

The proposed update to these regulations would amend licensing to better reflect potential consequences of climate change that could impact these waterways.

Storm surge and increased precipitation would be considered for existing and proposed structures along waterfronts. Certain existing requirements would be adjusted to prepare for sea-level rise, while still allowing for public access and additional public benefits.

Current regulations provide for "any other relevant factors" to be taken into account for extended terms over 30 years. The proposed change would explicitly incorporate sea-level rise as one of those factors to be considered. Additional changes include reviews of projected sea-level rise during the life of a building being designed, and modified height requirements to move utilities from flood-prone basements to roofs.

Information on the proposed regulations, including a <u>summary document</u>, can be found on the <u>MassDEP's website</u>, along with a <u>frequently asked questions page on waterways permitting</u>.

Wetlands protection and water quality certification

The MassDEP has proposed wetlands-related regulations to promote environmental protection and public safety in the face of climate change impacts. Amendments would affect Wetlands Protection Act regulations (310 CMR 10.00) and Water Quality Certification regulations (314 CMR 9.00).



Updated state regulations will affect public and private waterways and permitting requirements for dredging projects.

Wetlands Protection Act regulations include protection of public and private water supply and groundwater supply, flood control, pollution and storm damage prevention, and protection of wild-life habitat. Water Quality Certification regulations supplement existing permitting requirements for dredging projects, which are required by the federal Clean Water Act.

The proposed revisions would introduce new coastal floodplain standards, allow for additional resilience provisions, update stormwater standards for flood protection, and make water quality improvements, all related to increased incidences of flooding, storm damage, sea-level rise, and runoff pollution.

Coastal floodplain standards

Proposed "Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage" standards — new performance standards impacting development in coastal floodplains — would respond to sea-level rise by reducing damage to property, infrastructure and the natural shoreline.

Most new development would be prohibited in a "Velocity Zone" — areas closest to the ocean where waves are 3 feet or more, so new construction would be prohibited where storm damage is most likely. Areas that are already developed or overlap with other regulated wetlands resource areas, approximately 90% of the Velocity Zone, would not be affected by these regulations.

New development and redevelopment would be allowable in a "Moderate Wave Action Zone," where waves are between 1.5 and 3 feet, when structures are built on open pilings.

Allowed in both Moderate Wave and

Velocity Zones would be plantings, pedestrian walkways, boat launching facilities, open boat storage, docks, piers, and compliant septic systems.

New development, redevelopment and other activities would be permitted a "Minimum Wave Action Zone" so long as the project incorporates best practices to minimize adverse impacts

and structures are built on pilings or solid foundations.

Stormwater standards, water quality improvements

The proposed regulations would update precipitation data to reflect current standards. The data would allow stormwater systems to make more accurate decisions to capture stormwater in properly sized pipes and prevent flooding, damage and other problems from uncaptured water.

The proposed regulatory changes would help move more stormwater efficiently and better align state practices with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's requirements for stormwater pollutant management through MS4 permits that apply to more than 260 communities.

Next steps

Additional resilience provisions and details can be found in <u>background documents</u> and on the <u>MassDEP regulation</u> <u>webpage</u>.

Three virtual public hearings on the proposed regulatory changes were held on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1. Recordings of three public information sessions on the proposed regulations are available on the MassDEP's Youtube page.

Comments may be submitted by email to dep.wetlands@mass.gov with "Wetlands-401 Resilience Comments" in the subject line. The comment period will end on March 1. ●

Public water systems to conduct service line inventories

By Josie Ahlberg

Under recent revisions to lead and copper rules from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, all community public water systems and non-transient, non-community public water systems in Massachusetts must develop and submit a service line inventory to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection by Oct. 16.

The Lead and Copper Rule Revisions require service line inventories to include identification of lead service lines. The gathered data is expected to help public water systems remove all lead service lines as soon as possible.

Lead is a health hazard that can cause brain and nervous system damage, hearing and speech problems, learning and behavioral problems, and slowed growth and development. It is especially harmful to infants, children and pregnant women.

The MassDEP has been working to remediate lead in service lines and to support public water systems to meet MassDEP's public health protection goals. Its Lead Service Line Replacement Program website highlights grant programs and technical assistance available to qualifying public water systems through the State Revolving Fund and the following opportunities:

- Service Lines Inventory and Lead Service Line Replacement Plan Grant Program
- Lead Service Line Planning Program
 Assistance for Small Community Water
 Systems and Non-Transient Non-Community Systems

- Interest-free loans for lead service line replacement projects
- Free Pilot Program for School and Early Education and Care Facilities Testing Ahead of Lead and Copper Rule Revisions

The <u>Lead Service Line Replacement</u>
<u>Program website</u> has details about eligible projects and applicants for each of these programs.

Questions on the service line inventory can be sent to the MassDEP Drinking Water Program at program.director-dwp@mass.gov.

For more information, visit the <u>Lead</u> and <u>Copper Rule Revisions website</u> or download the <u>Service Line Inventory</u> and <u>Lead Service Line Replacement Plan</u> <u>Technical Assistance Program flier</u>.

New, free Complete Streets training sessions set

The next "Complete Streets 201: Designing Your Streets for People" training will be held on Feb. 6 at 200 Park St. in West Springfield.

The training will provide an in-depth technical review of various Complete Streets design elements. It will cover the benefits of Complete Streets; design guidance for people walking, biking, and taking transit; methods to balance roadway users and apply flexibility; Complete Street Funding Program requirements; and best practices for public engagement.

There will be a site visit (weather permitting) and design exercise. (Hard hats and safety vests will be provided by Baystate Roads.)

The training is appropriate for those who need to fulfill the program's



The Complete Streets program is the focus of upcoming free training sessions.

municipal staff training requirement, as well as those who just want to brush up on how the program works.

Space is limited for the free full-day training, and <u>advanced registration is</u> required.

For those looking to dive deeper into the topic, a free "Complete Streets 306:

Public Engagement" session will be held on Feb. 7, 8:30 a.m. to noon, at the UMass Transportation Center Aviation and Research Training Center at 27 Lonczak St. in Chicopee.

Scheduling for additional advanced courses is coming soon. The 300-level courses do not count toward the program's training requirement.

Visit the <u>UMass Transportation Center</u> <u>website</u> for the complete training schedule and details.

A Complete Street is one that provides safe and accessible options for all travel modes — walking, biking, transit and vehicles — for people of all ages and abilities. Visit the Massachusetts Department of Transportation website for information about the Complete Streets Funding Program.

MMA to host 'Municipal Finance 101' webinar on Feb. 6

The MMA will host a free webinar on Feb. 6 to review the basic building blocks of municipal finance.

The webinar will be led by Sean Cronin and Zack Blake from the Division of Local Services, who will highlight topics including Proposition 2½, budgeting revenues and expenditures, and the

importance of financial policies, forecasting and capital planning.

The hour-long webinar will begin at noon. Online registration is available.

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



Sean Cronin



Zack Blake

MMA to host webinar on MBTA Communities law

The MMA will host a free webinar on Feb. 26 to discuss key points of the MBTA Communities law related to compliance and enforcement.

Attorneys Donna Brewer and Susan Murphy with the Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association will review the law, as well as the process and schedule for municipal compliance. Enforcement for non-compliance will also be discussed.

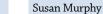
Brewer and Murphy will explain the distinctions between the MBTA Communities law, Chapter 40B and Chapter 40R.

The hour-long webinar will begin at noon. Online registration is available.

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



Donna Brewer





MSA webinar to cover property tax programs for eligible residents

The Massachusetts Select Board Association will hold its first webinar of the year on March 8, exploring recent developments in several property tax programs for eligible homeowners, including new



Lane Partridge

opportunities made possible by tax relief measures enacted last October, as well as a proposed local-option, means-tested property tax exemption for seniors included as part of the administration's



Kenneth Woodland

Empowerment Act. Lane Partridge, director of assessing in Barnstable

Municipal

and president of the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers, will discuss the local property tax exemptions based

on the senior circuit breaker income tax credit.

Two panelists from the Division of Local Services — Local Assessment Bureau

Chief Chris Wilcock and Municipal Finance Law Bureau Chief Kenneth Woodland — will discuss the senior work off property tax deduction and the new local option to provide credits to landlords for renting to low-income individuals.

The webinar will conclude with a Q&A session.

The registration link and agenda will be posted on the MMA website and emailed to MSA members in the coming

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

Women Leading Government to hold Annual Conference on March 7

Women Leading Government will hold its fourth Annual Conference on March 7 at Devens Conference Center.

The full-day event is designed for women in appointed positions in local government who are interested in

advancing their careers and building their management and leadership skills.

The cost is \$60, including lunch and a light breakfast.

Women Leading Government events are open to all staff in appointed positions

in local government. Online registration will be available shortly.

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

MunEnergy webinar on Feb. 29 will focus on spring weather impacts

The MMA's MunEnergy program will hold a free, one-hour webinar on Feb. 29 to provide timely information about spring energy costs and to discuss what spring weather and climate change will mean for energy markets, as well as the optimal time to purchase energy as we head into the spring.

Click here to register for the Zoom webinar, which will begin at noon.

The MMA formed the MunEnergy

program in 1998 to help Massachusetts cities, towns and government entities stabilize energy costs and simplify energy management. MunEnergy provides valuable resources to cities and towns. including a unique municipal contract, energy experts who provide information and answer questions, and a focus on sustainability solutions. MMA members can work with the team at MunEnergy on their climate goals through a range of innovative solutions.

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

For more about the MunEnergy program, visit www.mma.org/munenergy or contact Katie McCue at kmccue@ mma.org or 617-426-7272, ext. 111.

- Katie McCue

MMA-Suffolk to hold information sessions

By Katie McCue

The MMA and Suffolk University will hold an information session about the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program on March 13 at 10 a.m. via Zoom. Visit www.mma.org for more information, or click here for Zoom registration.

In September 2024, the MMA and Suffolk will launch the 23rd and 24th sessions of the Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program, which is held over the course of 25 Fridays from September through May. The 2024-2025 certificate programs will be hosted in Sharon and Pittsfield; they will be 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 MMA-Suffolk webpage on Feb. 1, and the deadline to apply is April 30. Applicants will be notified of their status by mid-May.

Human resources seminar

The MMA and Suffolk University are launching a new Municipal Human Resources Seminar 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.

The 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, 18 and 25, and May 2 and 16. The cost 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.

Finance seminar

The MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar will hold three programs in 2024.

The five-week program, held on Fridays, provides a thorough examination of municipal finance in Massachusetts.

The application period for the fall 2024 session is open through July 31. The application is available on the MMA website.

Municipal Fellowship

The MMA and Suffolk University will hold an information session for their

Municipal Fellowship Program on Feb. 8 at 10 a.m. For more information, visit www.mma.org/events, or <a href="https://cit.cle.nih.giv.giv.nih.giv.nih.giv.nih.giv.nih.giv.nih.giv.nih.giv.nih.giv.nih

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

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

Fellowship applicants must be accepted for admission to Suffolk's <u>Master of Public Administration program</u> and must receive the support of the chief municipal official in their municipality. Additional consideration will be given to graduates of the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management.

Those interested in the Municipal Fellowship should apply to the Suffolk MPA program by May 1. The fellowship selection committee will interview qualified applicants and award up to two fellowships in June.

Questions

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

Inspector General releases first in series of advisories

The Office of the Inspector General released its first OIG Advisory for municipal officials on Jan. 11.

The advisory, "Off-Boarding and Banking Controls Protect Public Funds From Fraud," contains recommendations for retirement boards, state agencies, and municipalities to protect against misappropriation of public funds.

The advisory is derived from an investigation the office did into a public retirement board, but the recommendations apply to other public entities. Its focus is



on ensuring that departing employees are properly "off-boarded," so that they no longer have access to public monies and that all relevant persons are

notified when changes are made.

The OIG is emailing the advisory to the executive directors of public retirement boards, but the information is also helpful to mayors, town managers

and administrators, and city and town treasurers.

In keeping with the OIG's statutory mission to prevent and mitigate fraud, waste and abuse of public funds and assets, the new advisories will synthesize "lessons learned" from OIG investigations into recommendations or best practices for other public agencies.

The <u>OIG also publishes regular bulletins</u> to provide up-to-date information on various topics.

• Download the OIG Advisory

DPU to hold damage prevention training

The Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities' Damage Prevention Program will hold a free, online damage prevention training for municipal officials online in February.

The 90-minute training session will cover damage prevention and several new Dig Safe laws as of 2019. The training will explain new safety measures, how to prevent future damages, how to document your own incident, and the enforcement process when a Notice of Probable Violation is received.



The training is intended to enhance municipal safety practices and further safety goals statewide.

To attend, log into this Microsoft Teams meeting link on either Feb. 12 or 26 at 1 p.m. The meeting ID is 236 409 065 933, and the passcode is aAgzZu. (Use this link to join on the web without the Teams app.)

Participants are encouraged to review Massachusetts Dig Safe laws and explore the Dig Safe information provided on the department's website, www.mass.gov/dig-safe, as well as Dig Safe Inc. (a nonprofit organization providing Dig Safe Tickets through Exactix) at www.digsafe.com.

For any questions, contact DPU. DamagePrevention@mass.gov.

– Adrienne Núñez

EMPOWERMENT ACT

Continued from page 4

employment rules

- Allow regional boards of assessors
- Enable cities to form Veterans' Districts
- Equalize the rules for property tax appeals (among residents and commercial taxpayers)
- Permit more efficient setting of revolving fund spending caps
- Close unemployment insurance loopholes

- Simplify election cost reimbursements from the state
- Make it easier to accept and expends gifts and grants
- Improve notification and response of cybersecurity incidents
- Provide an option for municipalities to adopt a one-year override for noncapital expenditures
- Have the Massachusetts Department of Transportation provide grant application assistance

 Establish a working group to examine the administration of the Chapter 90 local road and bridge repair program

To help address local workforce challenges, the administration announced its intent to recapitalize the Local Finance Commonwealth Fellowship at \$500,000, and to provide \$500,000 to create a new program with the Collins Center for Public Management at UMass Boston focused on generating a pipeline of qualified individuals for high-demand municipal positions.

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!





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STATE BUDGET

Continued from page 1

beginning of the fiscal year on July 1.

Unrestricted General Government Aid

Healey is proposing an increase of \$38.1 million (3%) in the Unrestricted General Government Aid account, which is higher than the 2% consensus forecast for state tax revenue growth that was announced on Jan. 8. The MMA will be working closely with lawmakers to advocate for an adequate funding level for UGGA to maintain essential municipal services.

Chapter 70

House 2 would continue implementation of the funding schedules in the Student Opportunity Act, bringing Chapter 70 school aid up to \$6.86 billion.

An initial examination of the Chapter 70 proposal indicates that 211 of 318 operating districts (66%) would receive only the minimum \$30 per-student increase in the Student Opportunity Act. The Legislature set minimum aid at \$60 per student in the fiscal 2023 and 2024 state budgets, and the MMA will continue to strongly advocate for minimum aid of \$100 per student to ensure that all districts can at least keep pace with inflation and maintain their school services.

• See the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's calculation of fiscal 2025 Chapter 70 aid and net school spending requirements for individual cities, towns and regional school districts based on House 2 (including preliminary fiscal 2025 charter school assessments and reimbursements)

Charter school reimbursements

House 2 would fund charter school reimbursements at \$199 million, intended to meet the state's statutory obligation to mitigate Chapter 70 losses to charter schools as outlined in the Student Opportunity Act.

While the proposed budget meets the state's obligation, the MMA continues to highlight the serious flaws in the overall charter school finance system.

Special education circuit breaker

House 2 would fund the Special Education Circuit Breaker program at \$492.2 million. The administration intends to leverage \$75 million in special education funding from the fiscal 2023 closeout supplemental budget to provide a total of \$567 million for the Special Education Circuit Breaker.

Rural school aid

House 2 would level-fund Rural School Aid for eligible towns and regional school districts at \$15 million. The grant program helps districts facing the challenge of declining enrollment to identify ways to form regional school districts or regionalize certain school services to create efficiencies.

The MMA will continue to advocate to bring this account closer to the \$60 million recommended by the Commission on the Fiscal Health of Rural School Districts in its 2022 report, "A Sustainable Future for Rural Schools."

Regional school transportation

House 2 would increase funding for regional transportation reimbursements from \$97 million in the current fiscal year to \$99.4 million. The administration says its proposed funding level would reimburse districts for approximately 80% of local costs.

Out-of-district vocational school transportation

Reimbursements for the transportation of out-of-district vocational students would be level-funded at \$1 million. This account has been underfunded for years, and represented reimbursement of only 17% of anticipated claims this year as calculated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

McKinney-Vento

House 2 would fund reimbursements for the transportation of homeless students under the federal McKinney-Vento Act at \$28.6 million for fiscal 2025. The administration says this represents 93% of anticipated claims. The impact of this funding level would vary from community to community, depending on the number of homeless families that are sheltered in local hotels and motels.

PILOT

House 2 would fund payments-in-lieuof-taxes at \$51.8 million, an increase of \$335,000. This amount is intended to ensure that no municipality sees a decrease in its overall PILOT payments due to recent valuation changes.

Local road and bridges supplemental aid

In House 2, the governor recommends using \$124 million of surtax revenue from the Fair Share amendment for supplemental local road and bridge funding. This amount would be in addition to the annual Chapter 90 bond authorization. The budget would dedicate \$24 million for rural communities, and the remaining \$100 million would be distributed based on a formula factoring population, road miles and employment.

iLottery

The governor's budget includes an outside section that would allow the Massachusetts Lottery to create an online, or iLottery, platform. The mission of the Lottery for more than 50 years has been to provide funding to cities and towns, so the MMA will watch this development closely to ensure that any proceeds from an iLottery do not undercut traditional Lottery proceeds. The governor's proposal allows for the creation of the platform, but it does not specify how proceeds would be allocated.

Disaster Relief Fund

Another outside section in the governor's budget would establish a state disaster relief fund, intended to provide relief to municipalities impacted by extreme weather events.

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.

NEW PRESIDENT, VP

Continued from page 1

Municipal Management Association.

McLaughlin said working with Hai over the past year has given him a better insight into the MMA's workings and the needs of its members. He said he looks forward to collaborating with local leaders from around the state, and to advocating for residents' needs on Beacon Hill.

"While there are many challenges facing the municipalities of the Commonwealth, fiscal stability is critical," McLaughlin said. "The importance of our partnership with Beacon Hill with regard to revenue sharing cannot be understated. We will work to strengthen that relationship in the coming year."

McLaughlin is also president of the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association and began his sixth term on the Waltham City Council just weeks before the MMA conference. He has also served as council vice president and as chair of multiple council committees, including Ordinance and Rules. Active in the MMA since 2013, he has served on the MMA Policy Committee on Public Works, Transportation and Public Utilities, helped organize a training session for newly elected councillors, and facilitated a webinar about civility and productivity in meetings.

"The MMA has always been something that helps to keep me plugged into what is going on beyond the city limits," McLaughlin said. "It is also an organization that helps to recharge my batteries and keep the creative juices flowing with regard to new ideas I can bring back to

my city."

McLaughlin said he also looks forward to working with Hellen and to continuing his work with MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine, who took over last September after the retirement of long-time MMA leader Geoff Beckwith.

Hellen said Chapdelaine's hiring inspired him to serve as vice president this year. He said he has great respect for Chapdelaine (a former town manager), and he wants to support the MMA during its transition. Hellen said he has experience taking the reins from a "legend" himself, having followed longtime Franklin Town Administrator Jeff Nutting in 2019, and said he understands the effort required to ensure an organization's smooth transition and to establish a new vision.

As MMA vice president, he wants to be a supportive voice for communities.

"We are a very diverse state, and it's critical at this time to hear all voices from across the Commonwealth," Hellen said. "I have been fortunate to have lived, worked and played throughout Massachusetts, and hope that my knowledge of the state can be a helpful ear for all constituencies throughout the Commonwealth."

Hellen said fiscal concerns are central for the MMA and its members — something that's true every year, but has become more acute due to the recent slowdown in state revenue growth and budget cuts. He said it's important to ensure that resources get distributed across the entire state, given the exponential demands for services that communities face, even as local tax levies remain capped by

Proposition 21/2. In addition, he said, funding for infrastructure improvements will be critical to protect residents and municipal facilities from storm damage and the effects of climate change.

"As we enter a very challenging election year," Hellen said, "I hope we can all agree to be civil, understanding, and open to all ideas and opinions. We will not all agree on every issue, but we should agree that we are all fortunate to live in a great state, with exceptional people, and be proud of the incredible quality of life in Massachusetts."

Before becoming Franklin's town administrator, Hellen served for more than three years as its deputy administrator. Previously, he was operations assistant to the town manager in Hopkinton and the municipal services coordinator at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. He also spent years working for several legislators and for the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Before becoming the District 2 representative in the MMMA, he served as an at-large representative.

Hellen said the "camaraderie" among MMA members "is nothing short of inspirational." His desire to be a part of the organization, and to serve in government, stems from a long family tradition of public service.

"Since being a lifeguard as a teenager, I have been in public service my entire life," Hellen said. "Both of my parents were public servants, and most of my extended family and friends were custodians, lunch ladies, dispatchers, police officers, firefighters, teachers and so forth. I don't know any other way of life." ■

ANNUAL MEETING

 $Continued\ from\ page\ 3$

Awards were announced to recognize the best <u>municipal websites</u>, <u>town reports</u>, and innovative programs.

"This jam-packed, two-day event featured an incredible level of engagement among members, who were connecting and getting the latest information about key issues that affect them," said MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine. "There's nothing like the energy generated by this conference. It gives us excellent momentum for the year ahead.

"I want to thank our terrific staff for their hard work to make this sizable event a success, and I applaud our members for using the conference to learn, network and continue their outstanding public service to the people of Massachusetts."

Next year's MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show — on Jan. 24 and 25, 2025 — will feature an exciting change in location, to the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center and the Omni Boston Hotel in Boston's Seaport district. ●



The MMA Trade Show included labrador retrievers from the Comfort Dog Program at the Massachusetts Department of Corrections.

Mass Innovations

Three communities recognized with Innovation Awards

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

This month's Mass Innovations column showcases the winners of the MMA's annual Kenneth Pickard Innovation Award.

The awards went to projects that:

- Reduced disposable plastic use by installing water bottle refilling stations
- Addressed food insecurity at a onestop food hub
- Improved delivery of public health service through regionalization

The winners were announced on Jan. 19 during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show. This year's awards were judged by Mel Kleckner, an MMA past president and the recently retired town administrator in Brookline, and Sandy Pooler, the recently retired town manager in Arlington.

The award is named in honor of Kenneth Pickard, the executive secretary of the Massachusetts League of Cities and Towns from 1969 to 1973.

Brewster hydration stations reduce plastic use

Capitalizing on a public education campaign and the town's award-winning drinking water, Brewster installed water-bottle refilling stations around town that have drastically reduced the public's reliance on plastic water bottles.

Since 2020, Brewster has installed 18 refilling stations in public buildings and at several outdoor properties, including parks and recreation facilities. Town officials said the water stations address several problems simultaneously: reducing the number of single-use plastic bottles in the environment, reducing town recycling costs, saving money for residents who don't need to buy bottled water, and encouraging healthy hydration habits.

"People care about the environment. People care about the water. People want to save money," said Select Board Vice Chair Mary Chaffee. "And every single plastic bottle right now — the way the recycling markets are — we're paying to get rid of those."



Hydration stations have reduced the use of disposable water bottles in Brewster. (Photo courtesy town of Brewster)

The idea for the hydration stations, which include both water bubblers and bottle-refilling features, came to Chaffee when she and her husband made frequent use of a water-refilling station during a 2017 trip to Italy. The idea made even more sense, she said, when Brewster subsequently enacted a ban on the sale of single-use plastic water bottles.

"You can't take something away from people without providing an alternative," Chafee said. "So it was really clear that one approach to this would be, yes, we need to stop using single-use plastic bottles, but we need to do more."

Brewster benefitted from having tap water that people want to drink. The town has won numerous awards for its drinking-water quality, including a 2023 Public Water Systems Award from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. In 2019, Brewster launched a public education program, "Drink Brewster Tap," which featured local notable residents endorsing Brewster's tap water just before the town was about to start installing the hydration stations.

Officials researched similar projects, including one by a nonprofit in Falmouth, and investigated whether the presence of the hydration stations could change people's water-use habits. The town conducted a pilot project, funded by the Water Commission, and developed criteria for locations, including that sites be town-owned, get sufficient visitors, serve multiple populations, offer an opportunity to reduce single-use plastic purchases on site, have sufficient

parking, be close to town water infrastructure, and be easily accessible to the public.

Town officials said each indoor hydration station costs about \$3,600 (purchase and installation), and the outdoor version — which needs to be sturdier — costs about \$10,000. Water Department employees installed the units, which helped defray costs. Last May, Town Meeting approved \$25,000 for the installation of additional stations during the current fiscal year. Before that, the Water Commission had heavily funded the project, with help from town departments and community groups.

"We all kind of chipped in," said Town Manager Peter Lombardi. "All of the departments really saw the value in the overall program and in adding these stations at their different facilities, and they made it come together even though we didn't necessarily always have a direct funding source to do it."

The town is already seeing benefits. The station at Town Hall alone has saved the equivalent of 25,000 single-use bottles. As a result, the town is saving on plastic recycling costs, and people are drinking less-expensive water, since tap water costs Brewster about a half cent per gallon, compared to nearly \$10 a gallon for some retail bottled water brands.

For more information about Brewster's municipal hydration stations, please contact Town Manager Peter Lombardi at townmanager@brewster-ma.gov.

Lynn addresses food insecurity with one-stop hub

One-fifth of Lynn's population struggles with food insecurity, so the city has partnered with area organizations to create a one-stop shop to provide residents with food, nutrition-based education and other services to help them improve their physical and mental health

Launched in December 2022, the <u>Phoenix Food Hub</u> brings together services including a food pantry, nutrition counseling and cooking classes, and referrals to other social services and food

■ INNOVATIONS continued on 31

Mass Innovations

INNOVATIONS

Continued from page 30

benefit programs. The downtown hub resulted from a collaboration between the city and more than a dozen local organizations committed to addressing food-related needs and improving health outcomes in the community.

"The underlying philosophy is that food is medicine," said Mayor Jared Nicholson. "That's true for individuals, and it's also true for the community as a whole. We're looking to build networks to support the health of the entire community."

A task force was formed involving the city and more than a dozen organizations to examine ways to address food insecurity. Meanwhile, one task force member, the nonprofit Greater Lynn Senior Services, was looking to repurpose 7,200 square feet of downtown space that had once housed the Senior Center. The idea for the food hub emerged from the city's Public Health Department, officials said, but it became reality through partnerships with outside organizations.

In its first year, about 400 families visited the food hub each week, according to the city, and the facility had gotten about 16,000 visits as of this past fall. Outside agencies have made 445 referrals to the hub for people needing nutrition programs, 1,525 people have participated in the indoor farmers market, and 880 people have made 3,255 visits to pick up bags of groceries through the hub's brown-bag distribution program. About 500 food pantry visitors have participated in the hub's healthy cooking demonstrations.

The food hub's additional programs include one that explores the connection between nutrition and mental health. The city is also distributing \$125,000 in grants each year, for four years, to community groups pursuing innovative ideas to address food insecurity and promote healthy eating. Lynn officials said the grants reflect the city's commitment to partnering with a wide range of groups to solve a common problem.

City officials said the food hub's scope of services and operating costs are still evolving, but they were fortunate



Services at the Phoenix Food Hub in Lynn have included a farmers market. (Photo courtesy city of Lynn)

to have launched their efforts with a \$2.8 million grant from MassGeneral Brigham and funding from the state and the federal American Rescue Plan Act, as well as financial support from numerous organizations, foundations and private donors.

Officials said the collaboration around the food hub has helped the city and outside organizations address a range of complex issues as a whole, and provided a more integrated set of services for Lynn's most vulnerable residents — since food is usually just one of the challenges they face.

"So this is about meeting [residents] where they're at," Nicholson said, "instead of them having to chase down multiple organizations — creating that one-stop shop to address the clinical and social determinants of health."

Lvnn Public Health Coordinator Norris Guscott, who spearheaded the task force, thinks more communities around the state will establish food policy councils in the next five to seven years. He pointed to the range of services offered, and the mayor's empowerment of the food policy council and its organizations to take action, as keys to the program's success and its popularity.

"I like all of it," Guscott said. "It's all unique, and the best part is being able to report the numbers to the mayor, and the impact that we're having."

For more information about the Phoenix Food Hub, contact Public Health Coordinator Norris Guscott at nguscott@lynnma.gov or Valerie Parker Callahan, director of planning and development at Greater Lynn Senior Services, at VParkerCallahan@glss.net.

Wakefield, Melrose public health partnership expands to Stoneham

The neighboring communities of Wakefield and Melrose, which have shared public health resources for 15 years, have now added Stoneham to their partnership, expanding the reach of services and realizing savings for

Stoneham joined the regional health agreement in January 2023. Officials involved in the arrangement said it has resulted in the delivery of more uniform services in the three communities, positioned them better to assist each other during emergencies, and enabled them to submit more competitive funding applications.

"When you do regionalization and you do it right, you end up with a combination of reducing costs to your taxpayers and to your community, increasing efficiency, and increasing the ability to maximize grant funds," said Wakefield Town Administrator Stephen Maio.

The three communities already had a good working relationship, Maio said, and their residents face common societal issues that adversely affect physical and mental health, including drug abuse, school bullying and violence, and loneliness that was exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. Even with more routine matters such as inspections, he said, the communities will benefit from a more consistent approach to the work.

Under the agreement, the three communities share a health director, a senior environmental health specialist and a senior public health nurse, and each municipality has its own internal employees. The communities also share in the use of a complaint tracking system to gauge progress.

Now, Melrose pays for 40% of the tri-community services and employs the shared workers, while Wakefield and Stoneham each pay 30%. For the current fiscal year, Wakefield is paying a total of \$336,000 to cover both its share of the regionalized services and its internal health staff, Maio said. Without the regional agreement, he said, Wakefield would likely need to spend \$50,000

■ **INNOVATIONS** continued on 33

People

Michael Hemeon, Alessio Pressamarita and Saniya Verma joined the MMA as interns in the Legislative Division on Jan. 22.

Hemeon, an economics major at UMass Boston who



Michael Hemeon

is due to graduate in May, also has an associate's degree in economics from Cape Cod Community College. He has worked as a grounds assistant at Ocean Edge Resort & Golf Club in Brewster and on the restaurant team at the Cranberry Valley Golf Course in Harwich.

Pressamarita is a senior at UMass Boston majoring in economics and exercise and health science. He has been working as a personal trainer at Absolutely Fit in Hingham, and previously worked for UPS in Hartford and at a banquet and catering business in South Windsor, Connecticut. At UMass Boston, he was on the baseball team and was a board member of Hope Happens Here, a mental health resource for



Alessio Pressamarita



Saniya Verma

athletes. He has also volunteered at a youth baseball clinic.

Verma, an economics major at UMass Boston, has also studied economics at the Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences in Patiala, India. She has been an intern at Cisco and at M3M, and a campus tutor in economics and math. Shortly after transferring to UMass, she served as a coordinator on a project evaluating the financial benefits of providing free MBTA passes to students. She was also a member of the economics club at Thapar and was involved in the nonprofit AIESEC in India, participating in a business development cell and a national leaders conclave.

Robert Manners, a longtime member of Shelburne Select Board, died on Jan. 19 at age 59.

Manners had been on the Select Board for 20 years at the time of his death. According to the Greenfield Recorder, he served as deputy fire chief for the Shelburne Fire Department, as a supervisor at American Medical Response in Greenfield, and as a part-time police officer in Charlemont. A graduate of Greenfield Community College, he received the school's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2018 for his public service. He also earned degrees from UMass Amherst and Springfield College's paramedic program, and raised llamas in his spare time, according to a 2018 article on the Greenfield Community College.

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.

AARP Community Challenge opens grant application period

On Jan. 10, the AARP Community Challenge opened its application period for small grants to fund quick-action projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages.

In 2024, the AARP Community Challenge will be accepting applications for three different grant opportunities: Flagship Grants, Capacity-Building Microgrants, and Demonstration Grants.

Grant funding is available for local governments and nonprofits that are eager to work on a community-improving project that can be started and completed before year's end.



Local governments have until March 6 to apply for AARP grants to make communities more livable for people of all ages.

The application deadline is March 6, and applicants will be notified by email of their selection status in mid-May.

June 12 is the deadline for grantees to return their completed memorandum of understanding and vendor forms, and a live public announcement of the selected grantees will be held on June 26.

All projects must be completed by Dec. 15, and after-action reports are due by Dec. 31.

Visit the <u>AARP Community Challenge</u> <u>website</u> for complete information. Questions may also be sent to CommunityChallenge@AARP.org.

MMA.org has latest news for Mass. cities, towns

The latest developments on issues affecting Massachusetts cities and towns can always be found on the MMA website (www.mma.org).

The website is a valuable resource for

news updates in between issues of The Beacon.

The website also features the latest details about MMA meetings, a Resource Library full of helpful documents, a webinar library, MMA advocacy updates, municipal employment opportunities, and much more.

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 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, 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.

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

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.

Additional information and the notice of funding opportunity 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 is available online</u>. ●

INNOVATIONS

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more to maintain comparable services.

Before merging, the communities studied staffing levels in Stoneham and conducted a needs assessment, which showed that it would be beneficial to add Stoneham to the regionalized department. They also established a strategic plan and metrics for success to identify areas for improvement and ways to address them.

Stoneham Town Administrator Dennis Sheehan said the pandemic highlighted the importance of local health departments, and the need to provide greater continuity in the face of labor market challenges. He said the regional partnership has proven successful for Stoneham, which has five of its own health employees.

"Limited staffing levels and employee turnover created a unique set of challenges for Stoneham's small Health



The shared public health services partnership between Wakefield and Melrose has expanded to include Stoneham.

Department," he said. "By entering into an existing regional partnership, the town of Stoneham was able to access a wider variety of skill sets, while also providing an additional level of redundancy during periods of staff turnover."

Maio said the three communities have already collaborated on several community health-related grants, and received a \$1 million STOP School Violence grant. He said the STOP funds will help with public outreach, and allow for more counselors in the schools.

The regionalization has also allowed the communities to maximize money received through opioid abatement funding, a grant through the Public Health Excellence Shared Services program, and a Drug-Free Communities grant. The towns have been able to expand substance use prevention programs and services as a result, said Maio, who wants to see the communities pursue additional grants to expand services.

"I think the bottom line is that we've gotten greater health care for the whole region with our three communities being together," Maio said.

For more information about the three communities' public health collaboration, contact Wakefield Town Administrator Stephen Maio at smaio@wakefield.ma.us.

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 Local News Tips form on the MMA website.

MIIA

Continued from page 21

and the town demonstrates an ongoing commitment to compliance with Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards rules. Over the past three years, Longmeadow has participated in an average of 38 training courses per year.

Woburn: The city of Woburn demonstrates a consistent, proactive focus on risk management. City leaders hold quarterly safety meetings where departments identify key loss areas and develop preventative safety programs to address them. In response to program-wide, loss-related challenges, this past year the city's facility staff installed integrated sensor monitoring technology designed to mitigate property losses related to water damage.

Yarmouth: The town of Yarmouth exemplifies a culture of partnership and demonstrates a consistent focus on risk management. Yarmouth's leadership team works together to address common causes of property losses and damage, regularly developing tailored safety trainings for employees. Yarmouth is also an active participant in the Barnstable County Roundtable Committee, working with neighboring Cape Cod towns.

Health and Wellness

MIIA recognized several members who

have excelled in employee wellness efforts. Each winner participated in a variety of Well Aware activities and took advantage of the many programs and resources offered by MIIA.

Avon – Excellence in Wellness: Avon's Wellness Champion (employee coordinator) brings a wide range of wellness programs to employees, including workshops on exercise, balance, posture, and nutrition. After a pause on in-person programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, the town successfully motivated employees to attend in-person workshops again — garnering strong participation even during the summer, which can be a difficult time to engage employees.

Dracut – Excellence in Wellness: Dracut has two Wellness Champions — one supports town departments and the other supports the schools. They work together to deliver employee workshops focusing on stress reduction, exercise/fitness, disease management, and CPR/first aid/AED training. The Wellness Champions promote wellness programs by email and encourage employees to use the MIIA Member Portal to sign up for classes. Dracut has also opened its classes to a nearby municipality.

Mansfield – Excellence in Wellness: Mansfield benefits from three Wellness Champions and strong support from Town Manager Kevin Dumas, which helps to build a robust wellness culture among employees. Wellness Champions seek out employee feedback, make program improvements, and encourage participation, as well as use of the MIIA Member Portal. The town has offered workshops related to mindfulness, fitness, and nutrition, all with high participation rates from town and school employees.

Winchester – Excellence in Employee Engagement: Since Winchester rejoined MIIA's Health Benefits Trust in fiscal 2023, employees have enthusiastically participated in a range of wellness programs, including yoga, strength, stretch and balance, power conditioning, Zumba, Pilates, nutrition, and mindfulness classes. Additionally, the town offered an adult CPR class, sponsored a 10K-A-Day step challenge, and provided stress-relieving seated massages. Winchester's Wellness Champion has created robust and diverse wellness offerings that support employees in reaching their health and wellness goals.

Wellness award honorees are all supported internally by active employee champions and wellness committee members who showed commitment, support, and dedication to delivering diverse programs to their employees, which helps to foster an overall culture of health and well-being.

CHAPTER 90

 $Continued\ from\ page\ 6$

the 2024 MMA Annual Meeting, members approved a fiscal resolution that advocates for at least \$350 million per year in a multi-year authorization, indexed to inflation. The resolution also supports specific funding for rural roads.

Base Chapter 90 funding has been level-funded at \$200 million per year since fiscal 2012, despite increases in road construction costs that have significantly eroded the program's purchasing power. The MMA's most recent statewide survey shows that cities and towns need \$715 million per year in Chapter 90 funding to adequately maintain 30,000 miles of local roads and hundreds of bridges.

The \$100 million appropriated for municipal road and bridge projects this year through the state budget uses revenue from the voter-approved state surtax on incomes over \$1 million, which must be dedicated to transportation and education programs. This funding was released to municipalities through their Chapter 90 accounts in December. Half of the municipal apportionments were based on total locally owned road miles, and half were based on the Chapter 90 formula.

Also for the current fiscal year, the additional \$25 million for the new rural roads supplemental program will go to communities with fewer than 10,000 residents and a population density below 500 people per square mile. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation is working

with the Legislature's Joint Committee on Transportation to develop a formula to apportion the rural roads funding. Under the statute, the Transportation Committee may hold a public hearing regarding the proposed formula.

The MMA is asking the Legislature to act on Chapter 90 funding early in the legislative session, so municipalities can access this essential funding for the start of the construction season.

The Chapter 90 program was launched more than 50 years ago to help municipalities maintain municipal roads and bridges. Chapter 90 apportionments are allocated through a formula that accounts for local road miles, employment and population.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Town Accountant Town of Holbrook

The town of Holbrook seeks an experienced Town Accountant. This community offers an annual salary of \$100,000+ with competitive benefits to be negotiated based on the candidates' qualifications, education and experience. The full job description can be found at www.holbrookma.gov/select-board. Interested individuals should submit a cover letter and resume. Email documents in a single PDF file to town_administrator@holbrookmassachusetts.us or mail/in person to the Town Administrator's Office, 50 North Franklin St., Holbrook, MA 02343. Interested applicants are encouraged to apply immediately; position is open

Chief Technology Officer Town of Duxbury

The town of Duxbury is accepting applications for Chief Technology Officer responsible for managing the public safety information technology systems for the Regional Old Colony Communications Center. This is a hands-on position working closely with the ROCCC, and member Police and Fire Departments. Bachelor of Science degree in computer science or equivalent work experience preferred. Five years of IT management experience. Familiarity with CJIS compliance preferred. Demonstrated experience of data center network architectures, high-availability, redundancy protocols, cloud networking, virtualization, TCP/IP networking, servers, virtual machines, load-balancing, and disaster recovery. Posted from Jan. 24-Feb. 15. To apply, visit townofduxburyjobs.easyapply.co. Salary: \$111,601 to \$156,242, dependent upon qualifications.

Associate Executive Director Concord Retirement System

The Concord (Mass.) Retirement System is hiring an Associate Executive Director. Ideally, the candidate will have experience in public pension administration but related experience with strong financial and computer skills will be considered. The job entails daily administration and reporting as well as records management for member retirement information. Experience with payroll and other accounting software is preferred. This is a specialized field with potential for advancement and career growth. To apply (or receive a full job description), please send a cover letter and resume to Louise Villani at: lvillani@concordretirement.org.

Experienced Litigation Attorney (Civil Litigation)

Pierce Davis & Perritano LLP

Pierce Davis and Perritano, a downtown Boston law firm with active litigation practice defending municipalities and their officials, seeks an experienced litigation attorney with five to 10 years' experience to join their team. The position involves the handling of challenging and diverse cases involving the defense of lawsuits alleging civil rights violations, employment discrimination, personal injuries, land use disputes, breach of contract and myriad other claims. The ideal candidate will have significant litigation experience (preferably including jury trials), superior academic credentials, strong writing skills, and approximately five to 10 years or more as a member of the Mass. Bar. The firm has a collegial work environment, flexible remote work protocol, strong mentorship, and the

lawyers have one-to-one client contact and autonomy over their case management. An independent skilled litigator will flourish in the firm. Salary commensurate with experience and a generous benefits package. Interested candidates may apply through LinkedIn or email their resume and cover letter to the Law Firm Administrator Michael Frenette at mfrenette@ piercedavis.com.

DPW: Treatment Plant Operator (Various Shifts)

Town of Billerica

Duties required for the proper operation of a public water supply: to assist the Treatment Chemist in procuring and testing samples, to perform required routine mechanical equipment, and to perform related work as required. Salary: \$32-\$38.78/hr. and additional \$10/hr. shift differential. Various Schedules: Tuesday-Saturday second shift 3 p.m.-11 p.m. Saturday 11 p.m.-7 a.m., plus \$10/hr. shift differential, Monday 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Tuesday 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Wednesday 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Sunday 11 p.m.-7 a.m., Wednesday 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Thursday 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Friday 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday-Friday 11 p.m.-7 a.m. (third shift) plus \$10/hr. shift differential. To see details/requirements and apply, visit www.town. billerica.ma.us or send a cover letter and resume to: HR@town.billerica.ma.us.

Town Accountant Town of Topsfield

The town of Topsfield (pop. 6,500) seeks qualified candidates for the full-time (40 hours/week) position of Town Accountant. The Town Accountant is responsible to perform professional, administrative, supervisory and technical work in ensuring the proper recording and maintenance of financial records; approving all financial payments; controlling expenditures of all town funds and auditing financial records and transactions; and coordinates the town-wide annual budget process with the Town Administrator, Finance Committee, department heads, elected and appointed boards/committees and public officials; performs all

other related work as required. Bachelor's degree in accounting, business administration or related field; master's degree in finance or related field preferred; and six years of progressively responsible related experience in professional, municipal accounting, including supervisory experience; or any equivalent combination of education and experience. Salary Range: \$98,000 to \$120,000 DOQ. Job Classification: Grade 10 non-union classification plan; FLSA exempt; under personnel bylaw. Schedule/hours: 40 hours/week. Detailed Job Description: <u>www.topsfield-ma.gov</u>. Applications will be reviewed starting Wednesday, Feb. 7. Please submit a letter of interest and resume to dmorong@topsfield-ma.gov. Topsfield is an AA/EEO employer.

Environmental Engineer City of Gloucester

The city of Gloucester is now accepting applications for the position of Environmental Engineer who is responsible for compliance with regulatory requirements, particularly in the area of water and waste water treatments. This position oversees regulatory programs associated with public water supply operations and wastewater collection and treatment, including Safe Drinking Water Act, NPDES, Water Management Act, industrial pretreatment, sewer extension/connection programs, and stormwater, UST, safety and air quality regulations. This is a full-time position, 35 hours per week with excellent benefits. Salary range is \$91,828.72-\$117,103.35 per year, depending upon experience. A complete job description can be found at: gloucester-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9789/ Environmental-Engineer-GMAA.

Council on Aging Director Town of Groton

The town of Groton is seeking qualified applicants for a full-time Council on Aging ("COA") Director. The COA Director will work under the supervision of the Town Manager and the policy direction of the COA Board. The Director is responsible for preparing and

■ CLASSIFIEDS continued on 36

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 www.mma.org, 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.

March Beacon

Deadline: February 26 Publication: March 1

April Beacon

Deadline: March 26 Publication: April 1

Placing an ad

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

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

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

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

CLASSIFIEDS

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administering the department's annual operating budget as well as overseeing all operations and provisions of programs at the town's senior center facility. The Director is accountable to the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and is also a mandated reporter for abuse and neglect. The Director also supervises employees and volunteers for the COA's programs and activities. This position requires a bachelor's degree with a concentration in gerontology, social work or related education, training and experience. The candidate must obtain CPR/first aid, AED, and CORI within six months of appointment, if not already certified. The candidate must also have a working knowledge and general understanding of the aging process, elder abuse symptoms, and elder programs/services and have experience in advocating for the elderly. The position requires considerable initiative and independent judgment. Working knowledge of local government operations as well as local, state and federal agencies that provide financial, social and/or medical support services to the elderly preferred. Experience in grant writing and work experience in activity planning and coordination of large and small group work with special needs populations, elder preferred. Applicants must have excellent customer service skills and sensitivity to the unique needs of the elderly. The salary range for the position is \$80,000-\$90,000. To apply, please send a cover letter and resume to the Human Resources Director, Town Hall, 173 Main St., Groton, MA 01450 or by email humanresources@grotonma.gov. For questions, call 978-448-1145. Job description is available by request. Deadline for applications: Feb. 9. The town of Groton is an equal opportunity employer.

Conservation Agent Town of Newbury

The town of Newbury (pop. 6,587) seeks candidates for the position of Conservation Agent. The Agent serves as the technical advisor, assisting the Conservation Commission and the Town Planner as it relates to environmental issues. This position is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Wetlands Protection Act and applicable regulations along with town bylaws. The Conservation Agent serves as the liaison to the Conservation Commission, accepts permit applications, assists applicants, provides information and serves on various committees as needed. Candidates should have a degree in environmental science or a related natural science or five years' experience in implementing, administering and enforcing the Wetlands and Rivers Protection Act. Position is 25-35 hours per week with benefits package; salary negotiable based on experience. Complete job description and qualifications at www. townofnewbury.org. Please send resume and letter of interest to: Town of Newbury, Town Administrator, 12 Kent Way, Byfield, MA 01922. AA/EOE

Harbormaster **Town of Chatham**

The town of Chatham (permanent population: 6,711; seasonal: more than 30,000), a complex, dynamic, and diverse coastal community, and full-service charter community, is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Harbormaster. Appointed by the Town Manager, the Harbormaster is charged with overseeing, managing, and providing direction for the Harbormaster Division within the Department of Natural Resources. The Harbormaster's responsibility is to ensure the effective functioning and coordination of the town's dynamic and ever changing waterways, harbors, shorelines and waterfront infrastructures and enforces federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. The Harbormaster reports directly to the Director of Natural Resources and serves as an important member of the town's public safety team. The successful candidate will have excellent leadership qualities, exceptional oral and written communication skills, understanding of or ability to become adept in municipal finances, budgets, procurement, project management, Massachusetts general laws (including MGL c 30B, c 90B, c,91, 102 40 s 22F and CMRs 310 & 323), personnel management, and planning. The candidate should be a communicator with a strong commitment and motivation to work collaboratively with the Director of Natural Resources, management, all departments, public safety staff, and as a staff liaison to appointed advisory boards and committees, as assigned. The Harbormaster must have a proven track record in developing strong and productive working relationships with the various constituencies in the communities and/or organizations in which they have worked. Chatham has a rich maritime history and engaged citizenry who view the Harbormaster Division as a critical link to its maritime past and a critical asset to the current commercial and recreational fleets in its service to all that enjoy and make a living from Chatham's rich maritime resources. The Harbormaster supervises three permanent full-time staff and several seasonal employees. Extensive boating operations experience is required. Candidates should have a bachelor's degree in maritime business management, mooring management, or related field and seven years of related experience, including supervisory experience, or any combination of education, training, and certification. Valid Class D driver's license, Mass. Harbormaster's Training Council certificate, CPR, AED, and first aid certification or the ability to obtain one upon employment is required. Professional maritime training/education preferred. The town has established a salary range of \$89,800-\$118,500. Final salary negotiable commensurate with qualifications. An attractive benefits package, including health and retirement plans (Massachusetts Public Retirement Group 2). All replies will be kept confidential. All submittals will be screened upon receipt. Final interviews are expected to be scheduled at the beginning of the month of February. Qualified candidates should call directly to discuss this opportunity. Please send a cover letter and resume (electronic submissions preferred) to: Richard J White, Groux-White Consulting, LLC, 1 Pelham Road, Lexington, MA 02421. Grouxwhiteconsulting. com, rickwhite58@verizon.net, 781-572-6332.

Program Representative RCAP Solutions

The Program Representative is responsible for handling a large caseload of clients participating in a federal or state rental assistance program that RCAP Solutions manages. They will be responsible for verifying the client's income, assets and expenses to determine continued eligibility and calculate participants' share of rent and program subsidy levels using the income and asset verification process. They will conduct orientation for voucher holders; ensure proper documentation is completed and input confidential data into secured systems. Benefits: Competitive compensation; medical, dental, vision, LTD and life insurance; flexible spending account and health savings account; competitive vacation and sick time; 14 paid holidays; and 403(b) plan RCAP contribution

and match. If interested, please apply by sending your resume to: HR@rcapsolutions.org.

Community Specialist RCAP Solutions

Position will be responsible for providing services under the EPA Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Water Act and Training and Technical Assistance Program for small public water systems/private wells to achieve and maintain compliance with federal/local regulations; administer training/technical assistance for small publicly owned water/wastewater systems and individual well owners to maintain and prove water quality as necessary. Will work with a variety of small systems operators, board members, community leaders and homeowners. Benefits: Medical, dental, vision, LTD and life insurance, flexible spending account and health savings account, competitive vacation and sick time, 14 paid holidays, 403(b) plan contribution and match. If interested, please apply by sending your resume to: HR@rcapsolutions.org.

Superintendent of Public Works City of Revere

The city of Revere is a thriving, fast growing, and vibrant city. Revere has become one of the most desirable cities in the region to live and work. The city of Revere is accepting applications for the position of Superintendent of Public Works. The Superintendent performs complex supervisory, administrative and professional work in planning, organizing, directing, and supervising the Public Works Department, supports other departments in charge of environment, street, traffic control, lights and others associated with public works projects and programs. Please visit our website for a complete job description and for instructions on how to apply: www.revere.org/ departments/human-resources#jobs.

Fire Chief Town of Swanzey

The town of Swanzey (pop. 7,270), located in southwestern New Hampshire's Monadnock region, seeks a qualified individual to serve as its next Fire Chief. Working under the general direction of the Board of Selectmen, the Fire Chief is responsible for supervising, directing, and managing all administrative and technical aspects of the Swanzey Fire Department. This "working chief" plays a critical role in responding to the community's 1,100+ annual fire and medical calls. Salary range is \$86,000 to \$107,000 and includes a competitive benefit package. Full- or part-time employment will be considered. Application review was scheduled to begin on Jan. 26. See the full ad and job description at www.swanzeynh.gov. The town of Swanzey is an equal opportunity employer. Submit an application, cover letter, resume and three references to: Town Administrator Michael Branley, P.O. Box 10009, Swanzey, NH 03446 or mbranley@swanzeynh.

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

Waltham Public Schools

Reporting to the Superintendent of Schools, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations provides leadership to central office administrators, building principals, school committee members, and district staff regarding the day-to-day and long-range management and oversight of the business office, grants,

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CLASSIFIEDS

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strategies and communications, information and technology, school facilities, food services, and parent information center, which entails student enrollment, student transportation, and district-wide translation services. Salary Range: up to \$180,000, commensurate with experience. For more information or to apply, visit wpsd.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx.

Adult Behavioral Health Community Service Clinician Town of Chatham

Come join Team Chatham! Be our first Adult Behavioral Health Community Service Clinician! Town of Chatham seeks a highly qualified and compassionate clinical professional to serve as Chatham's first Adult Behavioral Health Community Service Clinician. Is this job the perfect fit for you? Find out by viewing the full job description (PDF) for more information. Starting biweekly salary is \$3,454.40-\$3,523.20 (\$89,814.40-\$91,603.20). Please email a cover letter and resume in one PDF to jobs@chatham-ma.gov. ADA/EO/AAE

Youth Behavioral Health Community Service Clinician Town of Chatham

Come join Team Chatham! Be our first Youth Behavioral Health Community Service Clinician! Town of Chatham seeks a highly qualified and compassionate clinical professional to serve as Chatham's first Youth Behavioral Health Community Service Clinician. Is this job the perfect fit for you? Find out by viewing the full job description (PDF) for more information. Starting biweekly salary is \$3,454.40-\$3,523.20 (\$89,814.40-\$91,603.20). Please email a cover letter and resume in one PDF to jobs@chatham-ma.gov. ADA/EO/AAE

SERVICES

Municipal Energy Services

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

Town Counsel 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.

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.

Human Resources Consulting

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

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.

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

VADAR Systems provides financial management software to more than 100 Massachusetts municipalities. Our accounting, cloud, utility and collections applications are designed exclusively for Massachusetts municipalities by Massachusetts end users. The VADAR Cloud maximizes efficiency with 24/7 secure, remote access to all your applications from any device. Our

user support offers unparalleled expertise. Proudly serving Massachusetts for 20-plus years. For a free on-site demonstration, please contact us at 877-823-2700 or sales@vadarsystems.com. Learn more at www.VADARsystems.com. 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 caseby-case basis. Many of our clients take advantage of a flat monthly rate for unlimited phone calls and emails, which encourages key managers to work with counsel prior to making critical personnel decisions. Check our website at CliffordKennyLaw.com to see a complete list of our satisfied clients or call John Clifford or Jaime Kenny at 781-924-5796 for more information.

Tax Title Legal Services

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

Municipal Support Services

Capital Strategic Solutions (CSS) is a Massachusetts-based, 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 www.capital-strategic-solutions.com, call 508-690-0046, or email info@capital-strategic-solutions.com.

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 expertise you require, based on decades of real-world experience. We take the time to understand your situation. We inquire, listen, and respond. We provide

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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.

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.

Organizational Development and Conflict Resolution

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

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.

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 www.GovHRusa.com or contact us at

847-380-3240 or info@govhrusa.com to discuss how we may serve your organization. Post to our job board at www.govhriobs.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.

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

All-America City Award applications due Feb. 13

Applications for the National Civic League's 2024 <u>All-America City Award</u> are due Feb. 13.

The award program honors communities that harness the power of civic engagement, collaboration, inclusivity and innovation to effectively tackle local challenges. Since 1949, the National Civic League has recognized more than 500 communities, including 19 from Massachusetts.

The 2024 theme, "Strengthening Democracy Through Local Action and Innovation," aims to spotlight communities bolstering democratic processes through innovations such as making it easier to vote, engage in community affairs, and participate in leadership roles.

The deadline for optional letters of intent to apply was Dec. 14. Final applications are due by Feb. 13.

In March, the National Civic League will

announce the 20 finalists, who will have an opportunity to convene in Denver from June 7 to 9, 2024, to showcase their community's achievements at the All-America City Award event.

The application fee is \$250 for communities that did not submit a letter of intent by Dec. 14.

For more information, watch the <u>informational webinar</u> and <u>download the 2023 application</u>.

Form-of-government resources available

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

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

of government with a professional administrator.

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

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

These and other related resources can

be found in the MMA website Resource Library.

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

Contact: MMA Senior Member Program
Coordinator Denise Baker

Calendar

FEBRUARY

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

7 MMA webinar, VMLA: Emotional Intelligence 1o1, 12:30-1:45 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

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

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

MMA webinar, VMLA: Empathy and Emotional Intelligence, 12:30-1:45 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

Association, board meeting, 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m., via Zoom. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

MMA webinar, MBTA communities, 12-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

MMA webinar, VMLA: Tackling Tough Conversations, 12:30-1:45 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

Massachusetts Mayors'
Association, monthly meeting,
virtual, 10-11:15 a.m. Contact: MMA
Communications and Membership
Director Candace Pierce

MARCH

MMA webinar, procurement, 12-1 p.m. Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore



Massachusetts Municipal Association

3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108

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

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

MMA webinar, digitizing municipal records, 12-1 p.m.
Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

Massachusetts Municipal
Management Association and
Massachusetts Municipal Human
Resources, joint meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.,
Lake Pearl, Wrentham. Contact: MMA
Senior Member Services Coordinator

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

Director Candace Pierce

APRIL

Denise Baker

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

For more information, visit www.mma.org

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

10-12 ICMA Local Government Reimagined Conference,

Sheraton Boston Hotel. Contact: https://lgr.icma.org/boston

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

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

MAY

9 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, boot camp,
The Hotel Northampton, Northampton.
Contact: MMA Member Program
Coordinator Anneke Craig

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

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