

The Beacon

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March 2024

MMA testifies at key local aid hearing

By Jackie Lavender Bird

At a major legislative budget hearing on education and local aid on March 1, the MMA and local officials called for the Legislature to support an increase to Unrestricted General Government Aid of at least 3% for fiscal 2025 and for the state to protect proceeds from the Lottery to fund local aid.

While local officials appreciate the 3% increase in unrestricted local aid proposed by the governor in her fiscal 2025 budget, MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine noted that the UGGA account remains below 2008 levels — even without adjusting for inflation.

“The difficult decisions during the Great Recession are still making an impact today at the local level,” he told members of the House and Senate Ways and Means committees during the hearing, which was held at Greenfield Community College. “UGGA provides essential funding for vital municipal and school services, allowing communities



MMA President and Waltham City Councillor John McLaughlin, center, discusses the importance of local aid during a legislative budget hearing in Greenfield on March 1. He was joined by Athol Town Manager Shaun Suhoski, left, and MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine.

to deliver core services to residents and businesses.”

The MMA also spoke about an outside section the governor included in her budget proposal that would allow the

Massachusetts State Lottery to create an online platform, known as iLottery, though the proposal does not address how proceeds from the new platform would be allocated. Chapdelaine pointed out that the Lottery was created more than 50 years ago for the sole purpose of funding local aid to cities and towns. Any new Lottery revenue, he said, should continue to be used to support the underfunded UGGA account.

Joining Chapdelaine on the municipal panel were MMA President and Waltham City Councillor John McLaughlin and Athol Town Manager Shaun Suhoski.

McLaughlin addressed the fiscal picture for cities and towns.

“Our local officials are bracing for a difficult budget season for fiscal 2025, where the constraints of municipal finance are clashing with rising costs across the board and generally flat sources of revenue,” he said. “I’m

■ LOCAL AID *continued on 23*

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MMA holding Legislative Breakfast Meetings

By Daniel Yi

The MMA is holding its spring series of six Legislative Breakfast Meetings this month in locations around the state.

Each year, the MMA hosts a series of meetings in communities across the Commonwealth to give local leaders, legislators and MMA staff the opportunity to network in an informal setting and learn about and discuss issues of importance at the local and state level.

The spring series of breakfasts will take place as legislative priorities are taking shape for the new session, and as the Legislature begins its work on a fiscal 2025 state budget plan.

Discussions will also be centered on the many bills and issues that continue to be on the MMA’s radar for the new session, including the Municipal



Sen. Joanne Comerford discusses legislative priorities with local leaders during an MMA Legislative Breakfast Meeting on March 1 in Greenfield.

Empowerment Act, PFAS regulations, road and bridge funding, the housing bond bill, and more.

■ BREAKFASTS *continued on 28*

2024 MMA Board of Directors

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

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Robert Sullivan, *Mayor, Brockton*

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Michelle Wu, *Mayor, Boston*

Executive Director's Report

Municipalities can't be left to recover from climate disasters alone

Two weeks ago, the city of Leominster was informed that the Federal Emergency Management Agency had denied their request for a disaster declaration related to the catastrophic flooding that occurred last September. This denial came after months of work by city leadership and representatives of the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency to provide FEMA with all of the information and analysis that was required for them to consider the request.

The floods caused an estimated \$35 million in damage to municipal infrastructure, not to mention extensive damage to 1,400 homes and businesses. To put this in context, the city's entire operating budget is \$116 million. This means that one day of flooding caused municipal damage that equates to 30% of the city's annual expenditures. This straightforward context makes it abundantly clear that Leominster cannot be asked to bear this burden alone, nor should any other community in the Commonwealth.

The good news is that the Healey-Driscoll administration, along with members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation, have picked up this fight and are standing side by side with Leominster as they appeal FEMA's decision. The bad news is that this episode



By Adam
Chapdelaine

is evidence of a federal system that is not accounting for the climate reality that we are all currently living in.

A 2022 [study by UMass Boston](#) highlights the likelihood that the intensity of storms and amount of precipitation in Greater Boston and Massachusetts will only increase as the 21st century advances. Without a change

in the way the federal government considers these disaster declaration requests, we are at risk of seeing what happened in Leominster replaying with a disturbing level of frequency. Now is the time for all levels of government to begin considering policy changes that acknowledge our new normal and put in place funding mechanisms that can assist local governments as they work to recover from climate-related disasters.

Further good news is that many in Massachusetts are already pursuing this very course. Sen. Jo Comerford and Rep. Natalie Blais have astutely co-authored [legislation](#) to create a permanent disaster relief fund to provide reimbursements to municipalities, nonprofits, businesses and individuals. Recently, Gov. Maura Healey included a similar provision as an outside section to her [fiscal 2025 state budget proposal](#). The MMA looks forward to engaging on this important issue through the rest of the

■ DIRECTOR'S REPORT *continued on 20*

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

MMA panel testifies at Chapter 90 hearing

By Adrienne Núñez

On Jan. 30, the MMA and several municipal officials testified before the Joint Committee on Transportation in support of Gov. Maura Healey's Chapter 90 bond bill.

The municipal panel focused on the importance of the Chapter 90 local road and bridge program for communities in every corner of the state. Several MMA members highlighted specific projects that the reimbursement program has funded, as well as the direct and indirect benefits of the program, including supporting economic development, housing projects, and climate resiliency.

Members pointed out that inflation has eroded the program's purchasing power over the past dozen years, but highlighted the benefits of a two-year authorization rather than the traditional one-year bill.

The governor's [two-year Chapter 90 bond bill](#), filed on Jan. 22, would fund the program at \$200 million per year, where base funding has been set since fiscal 2012. Two days later, however, the governor [filed her fiscal 2025 state](#)

[budget proposal](#), which proposes an additional \$124 million to support local road and bridge maintenance. Combined, the proposals would provide \$324 million for fiscal 2025, just \$1 million shy of the local road aid provided for the current fiscal year.

The MMA expressed deep appreciation for the local road investments made by the governor and the Legislature in fiscal 2024, which are helping to offset the purchasing power loss that communities continue to face.

The MMA has long advocated for a multi-year Chapter 90 authorization, along with a significant increase. At the MMA Annual Meeting on Jan. 20, members approved a [fiscal resolution](#) that advocates for a multi-year authorization of at least \$350 million per year, indexed to inflation. The resolution also supports funding for a rural roads program.

At the Jan. 30 hearing, local officials said they are eager to put the road funds to work early in the construction season. It's a hopeful sign that the hearing was held more than a month ahead of when it was held last year.



Jill Cahill, Gloucester's chief administrative officer, testifies in support of the governor's Chapter 90 bond bill during a hybrid hearing by the Joint Committee on Transportation on Jan. 30.

The MMA also [provided written testimony](#) to the committee.

The Joint Committee on Transportation may offer amendments to the bill before moving it to the next stage of the legislative process. In recent years, the committee has included authorizations for additional transportation-related grant programs along with the Chapter 90 authorization. ●

State to begin lodging tax reimbursements for shelters in cities, towns

State officials have announced a new program to financially support municipalities that have lost local hotel excise tax revenue due to emergency assistance shelter placements in hotels and motels in their community.

Of the more than [7,500 families in the emergency assistance system](#), just over half are being housed in hotels or motels in roughly 100 cities and towns, with the other half being housed in traditional state shelters.

The Municipal Tax Reimbursement Program will be funded through a [fiscal 2023 supplemental budget](#) and be managed by the Division of Local Services.

According to the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, distributions will be determined by comparing fiscal 2024 quarterly local room occupancy distributions to the same quarter in fiscal 2023.

The first round of distributions will

include backdated distributions from the start of the program in September 2023. First payments are expected to be distributed in early March, and no application is required.

The program is expected to be in effect for fiscal 2024, with determinations to be made about fiscal 2025 based on available funding.

- Ali DiMatteo

CCC approves model host community agreement

By Ali DiMatteo

The Cannabis Control Commission has approved a model host community agreement that it developed in accordance with a [comprehensive cannabis law](#) enacted in 2022 that requires the CCC to draft rules around HCAs, as well as social equity.

Along with the template, the CCC released a [guidance document](#) on HCAs.

The CCC had released a [draft model host](#)

[community agreement](#) for comment on Jan. 17 and opened a two-week comment period through Jan. 31. The CCC's vote to approve the eight-page template came a day before the March 1 deadline set by [Chapter 180 of the Acts of 2022](#).

The HCA template approved by the CCC had only minor changes from the draft. The CCC said the template will be posted soon on its [website](#).

All marijuana establishments and

medical marijuana treatment centers must have an executed host community agreement with the municipality within which they operate. The model agreement conforms with new regulations under Chapter 180, and the CCC has stated that agreements that conform to the model HCA will be presumed compliant. Communities with existing HCAs are encouraged to use the model as a

■ CCC continued on 15

Gov. files \$3.5B economic development bond bill

By John Ouellette

Gov. Maura Healey has filed a five-year economic development bond bill intended to strengthen the state's leadership in life sciences and boost the climate technology and applied artificial intelligence sectors.

The omnibus bill, filed on March 1, also proposes support for small businesses, rural communities, workforce development, and arts and culture.

The "Mass Leads Act" is a central part of a 10-year economic development strategy to execute the vision outlined in the administration's 2023 economic development plan: Team Massachusetts: Leading Future Generations.

The bill includes a 10-year reauthorization of the Life Science Initiative, as well as a new 10-year investment in climate technology to compete in the growing clean energy marketplace.

Of note to municipalities, the bill includes five-year capital authorizations for existing programs that are core parts of the state's economic development toolbox, including programs offered through the Community One Stop for Growth, as well as capital resources for advanced manufacturing and the tourism and cultural sector.

These investments include:

- \$400 million for the MassWorks Infrastructure Program for public infrastructure improvements to spur private development and create jobs
- \$100 million for the Rural Development Fund to provide financial support for infrastructure improvements and community planning efforts in rural communities
- \$100 million for the Seaport Economic Council to support marine economies in coastal communities
- \$99 million for Advanced Manufacturing, for flexible grants to support advanced manufacturing initiatives through Mass Tech Collaborative
- \$50 million for the Cultural Facilities Fund to provide resources for capital improvements at cultural facilities, such as museums, theaters and performance venues
- \$40 million for Destination

Development Grants to support capital improvements at tourism assets across Massachusetts

The bill also includes \$100 million for Local Economic Development Grants.

It would also codify the rural community designation, with the goal of creating access to more resources for local economic development initiatives, such as the Rural Development Fund.

On permitting, the bill would make several targeted reforms to expand opportunity and improve predictability for development. These include:

- Updates to [Chapter 43D](#) relative to expedited local permitting
- Elimination of the interagency permitting board and consolidation of its functions within the permit regulatory office at the Executive Office of Economic Development
- Modest reforms to the existing permitting landscape with the permit extension act and technical clarifications relative to municipal permitting safeguards for special permits and site plan review

Competitive edge

In total, the legislation recommends approximately \$2.8 billion in bond authorizations for capital-related grantmaking, of which \$1.75 billion is dedicated to the reauthorization of existing programs and \$1 billion is proposed for new capital initiatives. The bill also proposes \$750 million in economic development tax program changes, which includes the creation of the new climatetech incentive program and an expansion of the life sciences incentive program.

The governor said her bill "will position Massachusetts to maintain our competitive edge on the global stage," and that the package prioritizes "equity, affordability and competitiveness."

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll added that the package "invests in the entrepreneurs and small businesses that are the backbone of our communities, works to close



Gov. Maura Healey, center, highlights the life sciences and climate technology aspects of her economic development bill during a Feb. 29 visit to Form Energy in Somerville. She was joined by Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, second from right, administration officials, local legislators, industry leaders, and Somerville Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, far left. (Photo courtesy Governor's Press Office/Joshua Qualls)

the digital divide and bring more regional equity into our economy, and empowers local government with the tools they need to combat climate change."

The governor said the proposal is focused on three priority areas: investing in the fundamentals to enable economic growth, retaining and attracting the best talent across all backgrounds, and supporting businesses that power the state's economy.

In addition to the climate technology initiative, new capital programs include:

- \$100 million for an Applied AI Hub, for grants to facilitate the application of artificial intelligence across the state's ecosystem, which will be informed by the strategic priorities of the AI Strategic Task Force
- \$75 million for a Massachusetts TechHub, to establish a new program modeled on the U.S. Economic Development Administration's Regional Technology and Innovation Program
- \$25 million for a Robotics Investment Program
- \$25 million for a Business Builds Capital grant program to support business improvements, such as energy efficiency, via the Business Front Door

Executive orders

Gov. Healey also signed two related Executive Orders.

One establishes a Cultural Policy Development Advisory Council that will

■ **DEVELOPMENT BILL** *continued on 20*

State works to boost federal funding resources

By Adrienne Núñez

The Massachusetts House on Feb. 28 approved a bill designed to leverage interest from the state's rainy day fund to improve the competitive position of the state and its communities for federal dollars.

The idea was proposed by Gov. Maura Healey in a [bill she filed last October](#). The Senate approved a version of the bill on Jan. 11.

Healey's bill proposes the creation of a Commonwealth Federal Matching and Debt Reduction Fund to provide a funding source for the state and communities across the Commonwealth to be used to meet the required local match for grants. The proposal would use \$750 million in interest generated annually by the state's stabilization fund.

The bill also proposes \$12 million for technical assistance to help municipalities with grant tracking, grant writing and implementation.

The House bill differs from the Senate version, and the differences will need to be reconciled by the two branches.

Additional resources

Obtaining federal aid was the topic of the "Unlocking Federal Funds" workshop held during the MMA Annual Meeting in January, which featured presentations from three key federal funds partners: the Massachusetts Building Trades Unions; the U.S. Department of the Treasury; and the state's Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office.

The workshop focused on support and resources available to municipalities seeking funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the [Inflation Reduction Act](#). Among other topics, presenters explained how labor standards and registered apprenticeships factor into grant applications and administration, and the municipal implications for IRA elective pay.

The new elective payment and transfer options enable state, local and tribal governments to take advantage of certain tax credits even if they don't have taxable income. The options can be applied to certain clean energy credits under the Inflation Reduction Act.

With only two fiscal years left in the bulk of the Bipartisan Infrastructure



David Eichenenthal, a senior advisor at the U.S. Treasury Department/U.S. Digital Service, right, speaks during the "Unlocking Federal Funds" workshop at the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show in January. Workshop panelists also included Frank Callahan, president of the Massachusetts Building Trades Union, left, and Quentin Palfrey, director of the state's Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office.

Law authorizations, and [IRA elective pay registration](#) ready for use, municipalities are advised to act quickly on federal funding opportunities.

The IRS announced in February that municipalities can take the first steps to monetize clean energy tax credits through [elective pay](#). Municipalities are encouraged to [register online](#) prior to filing.

Unlike competitive grant and loan programs, in which applicants may not receive an award, elective pay (also known as direct pay) allows entities to get their payments if they meet the requirements for both elective pay and the underlying tax credit. Under the proposed rules, elective pay is available for 12 different tax credits related to energy generation and carbon capture, manufacturing, vehicles and fuels.

An overview of elective pay implications is available in the [MMA workshop presentation](#) by David Eichenenthal, senior advisor for policy implementation and delivery at the U.S. Department of the Treasury/U.S. Digital Service.

Many projects eligible for Inflation Reduction Act or Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds can benefit from the use of registered apprenticeships and adhering to particular labor standards. The Massachusetts Building Trades Unions is offering support to municipalities to address such labor standards, with the aim of boosting grant application competitiveness while

also developing a skilled, ready workforce to complete the proposed projects.

Local labor partnerships can constitute significant competitive advantages on Bipartisan Infrastructure Law grant applications by adding language into the "Job Creation/Workforce Development Section" of grant applications. The U.S. Department of Transportation [Grant Application Checklist for Strong Workforce and Labor Plan](#) and the [Department of Energy guidance and webinar on Community Benefits Plans](#) offer helpful information about these competitive advantages. The USDOT also offers [examples of projects with strong workforce plans](#).

Labor standards, including the use of registered apprenticeships, for qualifying projects, will multiply clean energy generation and efficiency subsidies included in the Inflation Reduction Act. By multiplying incentives, communities may save money while also helping to grow local careers. The U.S. Department of Labor provides a [Breakdown on IRA Labor standards](#).

The Massachusetts Building Trades Unions has worked with the city of Brockton to create a Community Workforce Agreement. Such an agreement can be adapted to meet the unique needs of individual communities. For questions and support, contact the [local building trades council](#) or Dan McNulty at 508-439-0565 to schedule a meeting.

■ **FEDERAL FUNDS** *continued on 22*

MMA joins NLC for congressional visits

A delegation from the MMA joined 23 municipal organizations from other states and the National League of Cities in Washington, D.C., in late January to meet with members of Congress and push for federal help on issues such as infrastructure investment, cybersecurity, gun safety, PFAS regulations, and avoiding a federal government shutdown.

MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine, MMA President and Waltham Councillor John McLaughlin, MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman, and MMA Deputy Legislative Director Jackie Lavender Bird attended the two-day event, which was coordinated by the NLC. The MMA group met with Sen. Ed Markey and Rep. Katherine Clark, as well as staff from Sen. Elizabeth Warren's office.

The municipal organizations from across the country focused on priorities including passage of the bipartisan Railway Safety Act, which would provide additional resources for PFAS mitigation and remediation at the local level, including liability protection for municipal

drinking water, wastewater and stormwater utilities, landfills and solid waste facilities, airports, and fire departments, so the polluters' financial burden isn't shifted to communities and taxpayers.

They also urged Congress to avoid a federal government shutdown or a full-year Continuing Resolution, and to send the 12 annual appropriations bills, as passed by the U.S. Senate, to the president for enactment.

The municipal organizations also called for extending the Affordable Connectivity Program so that millions of households don't lose broadband service and accumulate debt from unpaid bills.

As founding members of the NLC, the 49 state municipal leagues play an important role in guiding the



Several MMA representatives meet with federal officials during a late January trip to Washington, D.C. Pictured, left to right, are MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman, MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine, Rep. Katherine Clark, MMA President and Waltham City Councillor John McLaughlin, and MMA Deputy Legislative Director Jackie Lavender Bird.

organization's priorities and are key partners in shaping and advancing federal policy that supports municipalities of all sizes across the country.

Also participating in the event were state municipal leagues from Vermont, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, California, Michigan, and many others.

MMA to host 'Climate Action' webinar series, beginning March 26

On March 26, the MMA will launch a "climate action" webinar series, which will explore how climate change impacts municipalities and address questions about how appointed and elected officials can take action.

[Online registration is open](#) for the first webinar in the series, which will feature a "fireside chat" between Massachusetts Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer and MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine.

Hoffer and Chapdelaine will discuss the municipal role in addressing climate change and explore why climate action is so urgently needed at the local, state and federal levels. They will also highlight resources available to help communities as they prepare for and respond to climate threats.

The climate webinar series will continue throughout 2024, with more webinars to be announced later this spring. Additional details and registration links will be posted on the MMA website and emailed to members in the coming weeks.



Melissa Hoffer



Adam Chapdelaine

Upcoming webinars include:

- "Inspiring Climate Action: From Planning to Practice"
- "Inspiring Climate Action: Designing Effective Community Engagement"

The MMA's membership reaffirmed a commitment to climate work in January when they adopted a [Resolution Supporting a Local-State-Federal Partnership to Address Climate Change, Enhance Resilience, and Bolster Adaptation Initiatives](#). The MMA's webinar series builds on the vision articulated in the resolution to help create

Hoffer and Chapdelaine will discuss the municipal role in addressing climate change and explore why climate action is so urgently needed at the local, state and federal levels. They will also highlight resources available to help communities as they prepare for and respond to climate threats.

stronger, more resilient communities in each corner of the Commonwealth.

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

With survey completed, MMA works on DEI plan

By Candace Pierce

The consultant for the MMA's diversity, equity and inclusion initiative has completed the Municipal DEI Survey and is using the input to help create a DEI strategic plan for municipalities.

Bird Guess, CEO of [Racial Equity Group](#), presented the survey results to the MMA's DEI Committee in February and plans to meet with the committee again in early March to review his proposed strategic plan.

The MMA launched the Municipal DEI Survey last November in order to better understand the progress municipalities have made in advancing diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. The survey was designed to identify how municipalities have emphasized DEI in municipal practices, policies and culture, and measured the maturity of this work.

Survey results, from nearly 125 communities, show that 60% of communities have not yet started any DEI work, 30% are emerging in this area (discussions are started or awaiting approval), 10% are establishing practices (partially in place, or the process for implementation has started), and less than 1% are reinforcing (full practice is currently present and active). Approximately one third of



Bird Guess, CEO of Racial Equity Group, speaks during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show in January.

respondents have hired a staff person to lead their DEI work.

The greatest challenges for communities that haven't started implementing DEI practices are a lack of staff to manage the work, and funding for training or for hiring consultants. For municipalities that have started, challenges include a lack of time, staff resources, and financial constraints. More than 20% have received DEI grant funding, with the majority spending it on equity audits.

Along with a strategic plan, Guess will

identify tools and resources for communities to use in implementing DEI policies and practices.

The MMA continues to offer educational DEI opportunities, and plans to increase these offerings in the year ahead.

The MMA Annual Meeting in January included a strong focus on DEI, with a [keynote address by Eddie Glaude Jr.](#), a bestselling author and professor in Princeton University's African American Studies Department. Glaude 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 recommends that leaders treat diversity as a critical measure of their mission and as a key metric of success.

The Annual Meeting also featured a DEI workshop led by Pittsfield Chief Diversity Officer Michael Obasohan and Sharon Select Board Chair Kiana Pierre-Louis. The workshop was repeated in each of the three workshop time slots, to give local leaders ample opportunity to learn more about core DEI foundations and recommended best practices.

MMA Board approves policy committees for 2024

By Daniel Yi

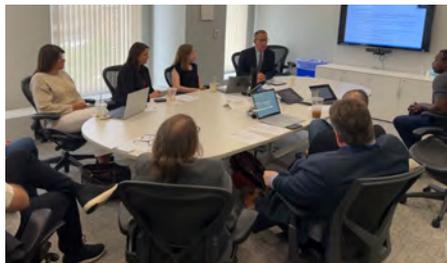
At its Feb. 13 meeting, the MMA Board of Directors approved the rosters for the MMA's five policy committees for 2024.

More than 110 local officials from communities across Massachusetts serve on the MMA policy committees, which advise the MMA Board of Directors, staff and MMA members on legislative, regulatory and public policy issues.

The committees also draft resolutions for the MMA's Annual Business Meeting and work on the MMA's legislative package (biennially).

Policy committees hold a regular schedule of meetings, usually one per month. Each committee is assigned an MMA staff member to assist with its research, consideration of issues, and administrative functions.

Each committee has 23 members, composed of mayors, select board members, councillors, city and town managers/



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

administrators, and finance committee members, plus five "presidential appointees" and five technical appointees. Presidential and technical appointees serve one-year terms, while the other members serve three-year terms.

The following are the chairs of each committee:

Fiscal Policy Committee: Jonathan Chines, Select Board member, Wakefield

Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment: Michael Ossing, councillor, Marlborough

Policy Committee on Municipal and Regional Administration: Yolanda Greaves, Select Board member, Ashland

Policy Committee on Personnel and Labor Relations: Jennifer Breaker, assistant town manager and communications director, Danvers

Policy Committee on Public Works, Transportation and Public Utilities: Jeremy Marsette, town administrator, Sherborn

The [full committee rosters and descriptions are posted on the MMA website.](#)

State leaders urge EPA to restore lead pipe funding

Top state officials submitted a letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Feb. 1 urging the agency to reconsider a new grant formula that has reduced lead service line replacement funding to Massachusetts by more than \$30 million.

In a [letter to EPA Administrator Michael Regan](#), Gov. Maura Healey, Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell and Treasurer Deborah Goldberg said the EPA's new data and methodology has cut the state's share of funding through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Lead Service Line Grant by nearly half. Massachusetts received \$65.8 million in fiscal 2022, but was allocated just \$33.7 million for 2023 and future years of the program.

The letter asks the EPA to reverse the changes in their funding allocations.

In a statement, Healey said Massachusetts "has made great progress in removing lead service lines," and historic federal investments in the past several years "have been instrumental in these efforts."

Goldberg, who chairs the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust, said there are "very serious concerns with the EPA's data that will hinder this vital work, and we urge them to reevaluate their position."

The EPA's lead remediation programs are intended to address President Joe Biden's goal to remove 100% of lead service lines nationwide and address the critical public health and environmental justice challenges that come from lead-contaminated



State officials are asking the federal government to reconsider a new grant formula that has reduced funding for lead service line replacement.

drinking water. This includes the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, which has \$15 billion in funding nationally from the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

The letter from state leaders identifies the Commonwealth's unique needs for lead remediation funding due to the high percentage of housing stock from before 1940, when the use of lead in service lines was prevalent. The letter emphasizes how the effects of this history cause disproportionate lead exposure in communities of color.

The letter says Massachusetts has leveraged Bipartisan Infrastructure Law money to meet these challenges, including commitments since 2022 of more than \$59 million in federal funds for lead remediation projects. This funding has gone toward needs assessments and development of action plans in 121 Massachusetts

communities and has financed \$30 million for remediation including projects in Andover, Boston, Fall River, New Bedford and Somerville.

The letter describes a flawed process behind the EPA's award numbers, which included calculations based on incomplete data, formulas that fail to account for relevant state-specific factors, and a lack of clarity from the EPA that data that had been requested from states on a voluntary basis would be used to determine funding.

"Massachusetts and our cities and towns lead the nation in eliminating lead service lines," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper. "Low-income and communities of color face a higher burden from environmental pollution. Reducing lead service line funding will directly impact our state's most vulnerable residents. We urge EPA to fully fund the state's lead service line grant allotment."

The Healey-Driscoll administration said Massachusetts is set to secure a \$5.76 million reallocation of 2022 funding from the EPA due to a reallocation of EPA funds. This amount, however, falls far short of reversing the shortfall caused by the EPA's new allotment determinations.

The Massachusetts federal delegation has strongly advocated for a revision of the EPA's methodology, including in a [September letter](#). ●

Community One Stop for Growth is open 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, is open 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 [HousingWorks Infrastructure Program](#), for a variety of infrastructure-related activities to support and unlock housing opportunities, has been

integrated into Community One Stop.

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

- [MassWorks Infrastructure Program](#)
- [Urban Agenda Grant Program](#)
- [Massachusetts Downtown Initiative](#)
- [Rural and Small Town Development Fund](#)
- [Housing Choice Grant Program](#)
- [Community Planning Grant Program](#)
- [HousingWorks Infrastructure Program](#)
- [Brownfields Redevelopment Fund](#)
- [Site Readiness Program](#)
- [Underutilized Properties Program](#)
- [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 through April 30. The Expression of Interest is now offered as a short webform accessed through the One Stop website.

Prerecorded webinars focused on each One Stop program, including more specific information about eligibility, project competitiveness, and examples of past awards, are posted on the [One Stop website](#). ●

Clean energy siting and permitting group seeks input

By Adrienne Núñez and Josie Ahlberg

The Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting is seeking public input through March 15 on questions related to the siting of clean energy infrastructure.

The public is invited to comment on four questions related to siting and permitting clean energy infrastructure:

1. How should Massachusetts balance the need to accelerate deployment of clean energy, ensure communities have input into the siting and permitting process, and ensure the benefits of the clean energy transition are shared equitably?
2. How should the above be accomplished while also protecting health, safety, and community livability, particularly for vulnerable or under-resourced populations?
3. How should we accomplish the above while also protecting the environment?
4. Who should have a seat at the table when decisions are made about where to locate clean energy infrastructure and what restrictions apply?

The [online survey](#) also seeks input on several more specific questions covering topics related to the siting and permitting processes. Topics include the



The Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting is seeking public input about the siting of clean energy infrastructure.

definition of clean energy infrastructure, state- and local-level permitting reforms, environmental impacts, community engagement, community benefit agreements, and processes under the [Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act](#) and the [Energy Facilities Siting Board](#).

Gov. Maura Healey established the [Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting](#) last September to develop recommendations for reforms to reduce barriers to clean energy infrastructure development. Such infrastructure predominately includes electric generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure that will be necessary

to meet the required emissions limits outlined in the Commonwealth's [Clean Energy and Climate Plan](#), which calls for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50% compared to 1990 levels by 2030 and reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

The state projects that Massachusetts will need to significantly expand energy infrastructure, including thousands of megawatts of new solar and wind generation, storage capacity, and the transmission and distribution infrastructure necessary to interconnect these resources and deliver electricity to customers.

The Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting is tasked with developing recommendations on how to reduce permitting timelines, ensure that communities have input on siting and permitting, and ensure that the benefits of the clean energy transition are shared equitably.

The CEISP must submit its recommendations to the governor by March 31. The committee's recommendations are expected to be followed by legislative action.

The MMA is represented on the CEISP by Acton Town Manager John Mangiaratti. ●

Culvert replacement grant program opening soon for FY25

By Alessio Pressamarita

The Division of Ecological Restoration announced that it will soon be accepting applications for the fiscal 2025 [Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program](#).

The program provides funding to municipalities who are interested in replacing undersized, perched, and/or degraded culverts located in areas of high ecological value. Only projects that are intended to meet the [Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards](#) will be considered.

Projects should be designed to facilitate fish and wildlife passage, maintain the natural movement of water and sediment through the stream crossing, and reconnect upstream and downstream habitats.

Awards typically range from \$25,000 to \$400,000 and are anticipated to be



The application period is expected to open shortly for the fiscal 2025 Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program.

posted in the summer of 2024. Work must be completed by June 30, 2025.

New in fiscal 2025 is the implementation of Division of Ecological Restoration Culvert Replacement Training Sites, which will serve as case studies and provide in-depth training

for local road managers and surrounding communities.

Training sites are long-term projects/relationships between the DER and municipalities stretching across multiple fiscal years. Successful applicants generally do not need to re-apply in subsequent years to seek funding for future phases of work. Applicants with projects in the planning or field data collection phases (i.e., new projects) are anticipated to have the option to apply to become a DER Culvert Replacement Training Site.

The approximately four-week culvert grant application period is expected to open very shortly.

For more information, visit the Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance program [FAQs](#) or email DERCulverts@mass.gov. ●

MassDEP extends comment period on water rules

By Josie Ahlberg

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has extended the public comment period through April 30 on several regulatory updates that affect public and private waterways and permitting requirements for dredging projects.

The [proposed regulatory changes were released in January](#) and are related to waterways, wetlands protection and water quality certification, coastal floodplain standards, and stormwater standards and water quality improvements.

The comment period was initially set to close on March 1.

Waterways

The MassDEP's regulations on waterways seek to protect and promote tide-lands, great ponds, and non-tidal rivers and streams. Under 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.

Information on the proposed regulations, including a [summary document](#), can be found on the [MassDEP's website](#), along with a [frequently asked questions page on waterways permitting](#).



The public comment period on proposed waterways regulations has been extended through April 30.

Recordings of two public information sessions as well as two public hearings on this regulatory package can be viewed on the [MassDEP's Youtube page](#).

Comments may be submitted by email to dep.waterways@mass.gov with "Waterways Resilience Comments" in the subject line.

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). 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.

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.

Proposed regulations related to stormwater standards and water quality improvements would update precipitation data to reflect current standards. The proposed changes are intended to 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.

Additional resilience provisions and details can be found in [background documents](#) and on the [MassDEP regulation webpage](#).

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. ●

FTA accepting applications for bus and bus facility grants

The Federal Transit Authority is accepting applications through April 25 for the Low or No Emission Grant Program and Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program.

More than \$1.1 billion is available for "Low-No," and \$390 million is available for Bus and Bus Facilities.

The [Low or No Emission](#) program provides funding to state and local government authorities for the purchase or lease of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses, including acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities.

The [Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities](#) competitive program assists with the financing of buses and bus facility capital

projects, including replacing, rehabilitating, purchasing or leasing buses or related equipment, and rehabilitating, purchasing, constructing or leasing bus-related facilities.

Recipients are permitted to use up to 0.5% of their requested grant award for workforce development activities eligible under federal public transportation law, and an additional 0.5% for costs associated with training at the National Transit Institute. Projects related to zero-emission vehicles must use 5% of the federal award for workforce development activities.

The FTA is joining these two grant opportunities in one notice of funding opportunity, and applicants may apply

to either program or both.

Low-No provides funds to designated recipients of FTA grants, including states, local government authorities, and Indian Tribes.

The Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program provides funds to designated recipients that allocate funds to fixed-route bus operators, states, or local government authorities that operate fixed-route bus service, and Indian tribes.

Applications are made through [Grants.gov](#), and must include [supplemental form SF-424](#). ●

Administration announces \$50M for EV charging

The Healey-Driscoll administration on Feb. 7 announced an investment of \$50 million in initiatives to build out electric vehicle charging infrastructure across Massachusetts.

The state will use American Rescue Plan Act funds to increase access to charging infrastructure for more residents, electrify the state fleet, improve operation of public charging stations, manage the impact of charging infrastructure on the electric grid, and provide charging solutions for difficult-to-electrify vehicle types.

“Many Massachusetts drivers want to make the switch to electric vehicles, but worry about access to charging,” said Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll. “This investment will break down barriers to widespread electric vehicle adoption and help Massachusetts meet its ambitious greenhouse gas emissions targets.”

The funding will support innovative EV technology programs at the [Massachusetts Clean Energy Center](#), charging infrastructure investments for the state fleet through Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance and the Department of Energy Resources, testing equipment and staff at the Division of Standards to conduct inspections of public charging stations, and future analysis of EV charging needs by the [Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Coordinating Council](#).

Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper said vehicle emissions also impact public health, “especially in environmental justice communities,” so the administration “is creating more equitable access to clean transportation and ensuring drivers in all communities across Massachusetts have the option to choose an electric vehicle.”

Of the funding, \$12.5 million is set aside for an Electric Vehicle Curbside Parking for Residents in Multi-Unit Dwellings initiative. The MassCEC will work to help municipalities expand access to EV charging for residents with limited access to home charging, particularly in environmental justice and urban communities, by pursuing pole-mounted and streetlight charger options and addressing regulatory hurdles, complex ownership structures,

and unclear business and financial models.

Another \$9.5 million will be used for medium- and heavy-duty electrification mobile charging solutions. Medium and heavy-duty vehicles make up 3% of vehicles in Massachusetts, but produce 20% of on-road vehicle emissions, making their electrification critical to reaching the state’s climate goals and to improving air quality in environmental justice communities, especially those near warehouses and ports. The MassCEC will complete a market characterization study paired with deployment projects to demonstrate mobile charging financial models and use cases.

The MassCEC will receive \$8 million to deploy EV charging to support the electrification of taxi and transportation network company fleets, intended to support the deployment of electric vehicles in urban areas and environmental justice communities. This project will fund level 2 and fast charging infrastructure projects.

Another \$8 million will be used for “vehicle-to-everything” analysis and demonstration projects. Deployment of “bidirectional technology” would allow EV owners to use their car battery as a resource to reduce home energy costs or sell electricity onto the grid. The MassCEC will complete a market characterization analysis and demonstration projects that support vehicle-to-grid and/or vehicle-to-building projects designed to reduce peak demand and provide grid services.

The DCAMM will receive \$9.5 million to install fleet EV charging infrastructure in 60 or more high priority sites at state facilities, and the DOER will receive \$1.5 million to provide funding to other agencies to install fleet EV charging infrastructure at approximately 60 sites, focusing on those not on the high priority list, non-executive branch fleets, and leased facilities.

In August 2023, the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Coordinating Council’s



The state plans to use \$50 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds to build out electric vehicle charging infrastructure across Massachusetts.

[Initial Assessment](#) found that approximately 10,000 publicly accessible fast charging ports will be necessary to support the light-duty vehicle fleet by 2030, in addition to 35,000 publicly accessible Level 2 stations and more than 700,000 residential and workplace charging stations.

Earlier this year, the administration [expanded the Massachusetts Offers Rebates for Electric Vehicles program](#) (MOR-EV), which provides rebates for the purchase or lease of light-, medium-, and heavy-duty battery electric and fuel cell electric vehicles. ●



LGAC addresses school funding

Discussing the governor’s proposed spending plan for fiscal 2025 during the Feb. 13 virtual meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission, Amherst Town Manager Paul Bockelman thanks the administration for proposed investments in Chapter 70 school aid, while expressing hope that the final fiscal 2025 budget will raise minimum new aid to \$100 per student.

MMA webinar reviews MBTA Communities law

By Lily Rancatore

An MMA webinar on Feb. 26 outlined the process and schedule for municipal compliance with the MBTA Communities law.

Attorney Donna Brewer of Harrington Heep began by reviewing [Section 3A](#) of [Chapter 40A](#) (the state's zoning act), which is intended to encourage the production of multi-family housing by requiring MBTA communities to adopt zoning districts where multi-family housing is allowed as of right, and that meet other requirements set forth in the statute.

Attorney Susan Murphy of Dain Torpey discussed the affordability requirements and implications for mixed-use development districts.

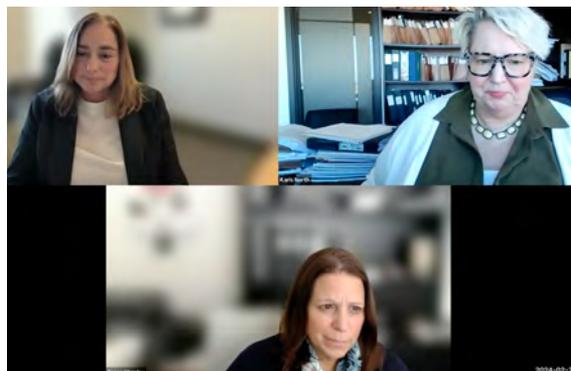
The deadline for compliance for Commuter Rail and adjacent communities is Dec. 31 of this year. Adjacent small towns have until Dec. 31, 2025, to adopt zoning and submit their [District Compliance Application](#). Murphy said adoption of the zoning alone is not sufficient to meet the deadline and retain interim compliance status.

Murphy shared the current [status of](#)

[MBTA Community zoning adoption](#), available from the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. Arlington, Lexington and Salem have approved districts, while approximately 20 other communities have applied for district compliance. Several communities have submitted an economic feasibility analysis, and a number of communities have submitted draft zoning amendments for pre-adoption review.

Penalties for failure to comply with the MBTA Communities law include ineligibility for state discretionary grant programs, as well as potential litigation.

Murphy and Brewer shared tips for maintaining interim compliance and achieving full compliance. They recommended being proactive and not waiting until the compliance deadline to schedule a vote. Murphy emphasized the importance of reviewing the local zoning ordinances or bylaws and requesting pre-adoption review from the



Attorney Donna Brewer of Harrington Heep, top left, attorney Karis North of Murphy Hesse Toomey & Lehane, top right, and attorney Susan Murphy of Dain Torpey discuss the process and schedule for municipal compliance with the MBTA Communities law during a free MMA webinar on Feb. 26.

Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities at least 90 days before a scheduled vote.

Attorney Karis North of Murphy Hesse Toomey & Lehane moderated 15 minutes of questions and answers, which addressed transit radius, the quantum of a vote requirement, and affordability percentage rates.

• [View the webinar](#)

MMA hosts 'Municipal Finance 101' webinar

By Lily Rancatore

An MMA webinar on Feb. 6 featuring panelists from the Division of Local Services reviewed the basic building blocks of municipal finance.

Sean Cronin, senior deputy commissioner of the Division of Local Services, reviewed the four primary sources of municipal revenue: the property tax, state aid, local receipts, and other available funds.

Cronin began by explaining the components of [Proposition 2½](#) and how the law caps local property tax revenue-raising capacity. Given the way the law works, for forecasting purposes, he said, it's important to monitor trends in community economic activity and development.

State revenue-sharing, the next largest local revenue stream, includes the two most significant sources: [Chapter 70](#) (education aid) and Unrestricted General Government Aid.

Local receipts include the motor vehicle



Sean Cronin, senior deputy commissioner of the Division of Local Services, discusses the primary sources of municipal revenue during a Feb. 6 MMA webinar.

excise, which is collected by all communities, and the local-option meals tax and lodging tax. These rates are established by state law.

"Other available funds" include "free cash" and the local stabilization fund. Free cash is unrestricted funds carried over from the previous fiscal year and available for appropriation by the legislative body. The stabilization fund, or "rainy day fund," can be used for any

lawful purpose via a two-thirds vote of the local legislative body.

Cronin also reviewed general fund expenditures, departmental expenditures, reserves, non-departmental expenditures, debt, and capital investments.

Zack Blake, chief of the DLS's Financial Management Resource Bureau, reviewed best practices for local government budgeting. He explained how a municipality's budget represents the intersection of all aspects of municipal finance, and translates community needs and priorities into services.

Municipal budgets should provide short- and long-term fiscal context to guide decision-making, and serve as a community's single most important policy statement.

Blake stressed that the local budget process is not exclusive to finance committees and teams. Other local officials, such as select boards, town managers, mayors,

■ **FINANCE WEBINAR** *continued on 14*

Executive order establishes AI Strategic Task Force

Gov. Maura Healey signed [an Executive Order](#) on Feb. 14 establishing the Artificial Intelligence Strategic Task Force to study AI and Generative Artificial Intelligence technology and its impact on the state, private businesses, higher education institutions, and constituents.

The task force will conduct outreach and collect input from stakeholders and experts, advise the governor and executive branch on the state's role in AI implementation, and find ways to encourage leading industries to adopt the technology.

The Task Force will make recommendations for how the state can support Massachusetts businesses in leading sectors around AI adoption and how startups can grow and succeed.

“Massachusetts has the opportunity to be a global leader in Applied AI, but it's going to take us bringing together the brightest minds in tech, business, education, health care and government,” Healey said.

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said the task force “will position Massachusetts as a hub for talent and business excellence ... with the goal of establishing our state

as a global leader in its effective and responsible utilization.”

Artificial intelligence is a machine-based system that can, for a given set of human objectives, make predictions, recommendations or decisions. Generative artificial intelligence, as used in the executive order, is a type of AI that can generate many forms of content, including but not limited to texts, images and multimedia.

The Artificial Intelligence Strategic Task Force was envisioned in the administration's economic development plan, [Team MA: Leading Future Generations](#). The 25-member task force is co-chaired by Economic Development Secretary Yvonne Hao and Technology Services and Security Secretary Jason Snyder, with members including Boston Chief Information Officer Santiago Garces and Boston Chief of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion Segun Idowu.

“Technology is critical to delivering services and connecting residents in Boston and across Massachusetts to opportunity,” said Boston Mayor Michelle Wu. “As we continue to address our most urgent challenges, it's essential to understand the opportunities, key questions, and impact of AI.”



A new Artificial Intelligence Strategic Task Force will study the implications of AI technology for the state.

Gov. Healey said she will seek \$100 million in her upcoming economic development legislation to create an Applied AI Hub in Massachusetts. The funding would be used for a capital grant program to support the adoption and application of AI capabilities to solve public policy problems and to advance the state's lead in technology sectors.

The governor's recently filed [FutureTech Act](#) includes a \$25 million authorization for IT capital AI projects within the Executive Branch.

The Artificial Intelligence Strategic Task Force will begin its work in February and present final recommendations to the governor later this year. ●

Applications due March 8 for \$9.1M in cybersecurity grant funding

The Healey-Driscoll administration on Feb. 9 announced that more than \$9.1 million in federal grant funds will be made available to strengthen cybersecurity and reduce systemic cyber risk for public agencies statewide.

The [Municipal Local Cybersecurity Grant Program](#) will invest nearly \$7.3 million into local agencies, including cities and towns, regional school districts, and other regional authorities. Single applicants may apply for up to \$100,000 in funding, while multiple municipalities may jointly apply for up to \$300,000.

State agencies can apply for funding through the State Share Cybersecurity Grant Program, for which more than \$1.8 million is being made available.

Applications for both grant programs are due by March 8.

In accordance with terms of the federal grant award, the Massachusetts Cybersecurity Planning Committee was

formed to guide allowable cybersecurity activities for the Commonwealth, its municipalities, and other public entities.

Secretary of Technology Services and Security Jason Snyder, who chairs the Massachusetts Cybersecurity Planning Committee, said cybersecurity is a top concern “in every conversation I have with a municipal leader, but they either do not have the dedicated personnel or funding to implement the most impactful best practices.”

Public Safety and Security Secretary Terrence Reidy noted that state and local adoption of advanced technology has improved the government's ability to deliver services to constituents, but those innovations “have also exposed our operational systems and sensitive data to significant risk.”

Interested municipalities and state agencies can learn more about the application process during upcoming webinars offered by the Office of Grants and

Research. Additional information, webinar registration links and application materials are available by visiting the OGR's [Municipal Local Cybersecurity Grant Program](#) web page.

The Office of Grants and Research and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security partnered with the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security and the MassCyberCenter to make the grant funds available. The federal funds were awarded through the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program, offered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency](#) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The OGR, as the state administrative agency for grant funds received by Massachusetts from these federal agencies, is responsible for managing and administering the grant. ●

MassDEP updates recycling market development plan

By Josie Ahlberg

In February, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection released a revised Recycling Market Development Action Plan.

The plan is one effort among many articulated in the state's Solid Waste Master Plan to help the Commonwealth reduce disposal tonnage by 30% by 2030 and 90% by 2050 (based on 2018 standards).

The Recycling Market Development Action Plan identifies and prioritizes markets in need of investment to meet these waste reduction goals and spark development in key areas.

The plan's three main sections include:

1. Business support and economic development strategies to expand recycling market infrastructure
2. Strategies to build demand for recycled products
3. Research and development strategies for products, equipment and technologies

The plan identifies the following items in need of additional support:

- Grant and loan funding to support recyclers
- Business planning guidance
- Workforce development and job training programs
- Strategies to reduce contamination
- Sorting and processing equipment improvements
- Products and packaging designed for reuse or recyclability

To address these concerns, the MassDEP has identified short-, medium- and long-term actions, some of which are already being implemented.

One commitment for future action includes the development of municipal pilot programs focused on better use of construction-related materials. Another highlights the need for the MassDEP to engage with the Legislature on potential strategies to build demand for products that are more easily recyclable or contain higher recycled content.



The state's Recycling Market Development Action Plan identifies and prioritizes markets in need of investment to meet waste reduction goals and spark development in key areas.

The Recycling Market Development Plan is intended to help ensure that the MassDEP has the support and resources needed for the state to achieve its waste reduction goals.

The action plan is available on the [MassDEP Recycling Market Development Workgroup website](#). ●

MMA webinar to share best practices for procurement

The MMA will host a free webinar on March 5 exploring how to streamline the procurement process.

Mansfield Select Board Member Maureen Doherty, also a municipal consultant, will discuss the benefits of a centralized vs. decentralized system, tips for organizing bids and delegating authority, and how to implement standard templates and policies.

Foxborough's procurement team will share lessons learned following the implementation of a decentralized system, and resources that can be used to avoid reinventing the wheel.

Speakers from Foxborough will include Town Manager Paige Duncan, Finance



Marie Almodovar



Paige Duncan



Brandon Roberts



Maureen Doherty

Director and Town Accountant Marie Almodovar, and Assistant Finance Director Brandon Roberts.

Appointed and elected municipal officials are invited to [register online](#). The

hour-long webinar will begin at noon.

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

FINANCE WEBINAR

Continued from page 12

councils, and department heads, all play important roles.

Blake reviewed the essential concepts of the budget process: financial policies, a capital investment plan, and a multiyear

forecast. He highlighted the role each element plays when projecting expenditures and revenues.

Once a budget has been adopted, Blake stressed the importance of keeping accurate data and monitoring spending.

Kasey Bik and Marcia Bohinc from the

Division of Local Services offered written responses to nearly 30 questions in real time. MMA Deputy Legislative Director Jackie Lavender Bird moderated a brief verbal question and answer session, which addressed various questions about stabilization funds.

- [View the webinar](#)

MMA webinar to address records digitization

A free MMA webinar on March 19 will offer tips for building a sustainable document management strategy and digitizing municipal records.

Elizabeth O'Connell and Yolande Bennett, digital archivists from the [Massachusetts State Archives](#), will discuss the difference between digitized records and "born-digital records," how to prepare files for digitization, and best practices for digitization while complying with [Records Conservation Board requirements](#).

O'Connell and Bennett will also cover how to process and maintain digital



Yolande Bennett



Christopher McClure

collections within an archive.

Christopher McClure, chief information

officer in Watertown, will discuss his city's digital transformation experience and lessons learned in the process. He will also discuss the importance of approaching the process holistically, implementing strategies to reduce the production of paper records, and leveraging state and local expertise.

Appointed and elected municipal officials are invited to [register online](#). The 75-minute webinar will begin at noon.

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

Massachusetts Broadband announces new funding opportunity

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute has announced that funding is available for communities participating in the [Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program](#), as well as other communities working toward digital equity.

The MBI's Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program makes funding available to planning program participants, as well as to municipalities that are not already in the municipal planning program but have a pre-existing digital equity plan or another document that the MBI considers sufficient.

Those communities can apply for a

one-time grant of up to \$100,000 to start up, mobilize and implement digital equity projects at the local level. To be considered for the funding, municipalities must complete a two-step application process by May 31.

The MBI is also continuing to accept applications for the [Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program](#) through April 12.

Several completed plans are [available online](#), including ones submitted by Charlton, East Bridgewater, Lynn, Peabody, Randolph and Watertown. ●



Municipal officials and consultants discuss capacity-building and long-term sustainability of digital inclusion efforts. (Photo courtesy Massachusetts Broadband Institute)

MassDEP to launch Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro-Grant applications

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has announced that the [Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro-Grants](#) have been updated for 2024.

The program provides awards of up to \$10,000 to for-profit and nonprofit organizations, regional authorities, eligible municipalities, and schools and colleges, for short-term waste reduction

projects. To qualify, projects must focus on reducing waste generation and prolonging the lifespan of products via donation, rescue, reuse and/or repair in Massachusetts. Composting and recycling projects are not eligible for this grant.

There are two application deadlines in 2024: May 15 and Nov. 15. A link to the online application will be posted

on April 1 and Oct. 1, respectively, on the [program webpage](#), where a sample application and [grant guidelines](#) can also be found.

For more information, contact Janice Pare at Janice.pare@Mass.gov. ●

CCC

Continued from page 3

guide to determine their compliance, while new stakeholders are encouraged to use the template going forward. All HCAs will be reviewed with the new guidance in place.

On Jan. 31, the MMA and the

[Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association](#) jointly submitted a [letter to the CCC](#) expressing support for the clarity that a draft host community agreement would provide along with concerns about the need for additional clarity for both municipalities and licensees.

The CCC created 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 the coming months. ●

MMA webinar to review Chapter 70 funding formula

The MMA will host a free webinar on March 20 to review key elements of [Chapter 70](#), the major state aid program for public schools.

Brian Allen, the deputy superintendent, chief operating officer, and chief financial officer for the Worcester Public Schools, will cover how the state's foundation budget for education is determined for school districts, and how the "required local contribution" and state aid are determined.

Allen will also discuss how funding levels may change each year based on



Brian Allen

student enrollment, inflation, and the effects of the municipal revenue growth factor on the local contribution.

Allen has worked on both the municipal and school side in Worcester for the past 30

years and is the recipient of numerous state and national awards. For the past

11 consecutive years, his district has received the highest national recognition in school finance for budget transparency and preparation, the [Meritorious Budget Award](#) from the Association of School Business Officials International.

Appointed and elected municipal officials are invited to [register online](#). The 75-minute webinar will begin at noon.

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

Management association and MMHR to hold joint meeting March 21

The Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources will hold their annual joint meeting on March 21 at Lake Pearl in Wrentham.

The agenda features a panel discussion on implementation and negotiations surrounding police body-worn cameras. Speakers will include Dennis Police Chief John Brady; Shrewsbury Police Chief Kevin Anderson; attorney Nick Anastapolous, a partner with Mirick O'Connell; and attorney John Davis, a partner with Pierce Davis & Perritano, representing MIIA, the MMA's insurance service.



Jen Breaker



John Brady



Nick Anastapolous

The meeting is open to all MMMA and MMHR members. The registration fee of \$40 includes coffee and lunch.

The link to register is available at www.mma.org. The non-illness-related cancellation deadline is March 14.

After that date, refunds will only be considered for illness-related cancellations.

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

MassDOT seeks nominations for its Municipal Innovation Award

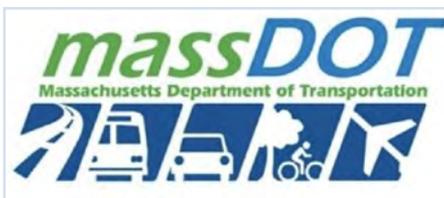
The Massachusetts Department of Transportation is seeking nominations through March 18 for its Municipal Innovation Award.

This year's nominations should focus on safe and equitable transportation.

Any municipality interested in being considered for an award for work external to MassDOT can submit the online [Municipal Project Award Contest Nomination Form](#).

Awards will be judged on the following criteria:

- Submittals should be no longer than 250 words, and should clearly convey



the innovative work performed by the city or town. It should be clear which municipal officials led the innovation, but submittals can include any consultant teams involved.

- The submittal should detail the safe and equitable transportation problem solved by the innovation, and how the innovative practice/project addressed

challenges faced by the municipality.

- The submittal should make clear how other cities and towns could replicate the innovation (an emphasis of the selection committee), and whether the practice/project solution was shared with other cities and towns.

The awards will be presented at the MassDOT's annual Transportation Innovation Conference, which will be held on April 30 and May 1 at the DCU Center in Worcester. The conference is an opportunity for transportation practitioners to share knowledge, sponsor peer-to-peer learning, and collaborate on issues of mutual interest. ●

MMA-Suffolk to hold information session March 13

By Katie McCue

The MMA and Suffolk University will hold an information session about their Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program on March 13 at 10 a.m.

For details about the information session, visit www.mma.org or [click here for Zoom registration](#).

This coming September, the MMA and Suffolk will host the 23rd and 24th sessions of the graduate-level certificate program, which provides a solid grounding in municipal management and covers topics such as human resources management, budgeting and financial management, and strategic leadership.

The program is held over the course of 25 Fridays from September through May. The 2024-2025 certificate programs will be held in Sharon and Pittsfield in a hybrid format; approximately 10 classes will be held in person and 15 classes will be held via Zoom.

The certificate program application is available on the [MMA-Suffolk webpage](#), and the application deadline is April 30. Applicants will be notified of their status by June 1.

Finance seminar

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

The program, held on Fridays, provides an overview of municipal finance in Massachusetts. Students learn about the structure and purpose of local government, municipal budgeting systems and sources of revenue, financial reporting and record keeping, financial management, principles of property assessment, the intersection of human resources and financial resources, and best practices in local government finance.

The application period for the fall 2024 session is open through July 31. The application is available on the [MMA website](#).

Municipal Fellowship

Suffolk University's Municipal Fellowship offers significant financial support to exceptional municipal managers and professionals who attend Suffolk's master of public administration program at its Sawyer School of Business.



The MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar kicks off the orientation for its 14th session on March 1, with a class of 25 students. After this session, the program is expected to have 355 graduates.

The fellowship program, launched in partnership with the MMA in 2021, includes a scholarship of up to \$28,000, while the recipient's 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 [Master of Public Administration program](#) 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 program.

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.



MMA testifies on Municipal Empowerment Act

MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman, left, Lynn Mayor Jared Nicholson, center, and MMA Legislative Analyst Ali DiMatteo testify in support of the Healey-Driscoll administration's Municipal Empowerment Act before the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government on Feb. 27. They discussed the provision to make permanent the pandemic-era allowance for remote and hybrid public meetings. Northampton Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra and Newburyport Mayor Sean Reardon also testified during the hearing.

'Meet DLS' webinar set for March 11

On March 11, the Division of Local Services will hold its annual "Meet DLS" webinar, which is geared toward new local officials but open to all.

During the first half of the presentation, attendees will hear from [DLS](#) staff about the agency's mission and the resources, guidance and information it offers to cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

The second half will offer breakout rooms hosted by the [Bureau of Local Assessment](#), the [Bureau of Accounts](#), and the [Financial Management Resource Bureau](#), who will provide overviews of key concepts and functions that are important to local officials.

[Click here to register for the free Zoom webinar.](#)

In advance of the webinar, the DLS suggests that attendees review the



following items to better acquaint themselves with the subject matter that will be discussed:

- [Introduction to DLS](#): A Youtube video that provides an overview of the agency and the mission of each of its bureaus
- [City & Town New Officials Edition](#): An issue of the DLS's e-newsletter, published last June, that provides an introduction to a variety of municipal finance trainings and resources
- [Foundations in Municipal Finance](#)

[for the New Official](#): A series of virtual training modules that guides participants through a fiscal year

- [Overview of Municipal Government](#): A Youtube video covering the responsibilities of local officials and how they interact in managing municipal operations
- [Proposition 2½](#): A nine-part video series explaining the basic provisions of the law, a fundamental feature of the Massachusetts municipal fiscal landscape
- [Teamwork in town government](#): A web page covering the key players involved in managing a town's finances and the best practices that are common among fiscally stable communities

Contact dlstraining@dor.state.ma.us with any questions. ●

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 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 [Municipal Empowerment Act](#).

Lane Partridge, director of assessing in Barnstable 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.



Chris Wilcock



Lane Partridge



Kenneth Woodland

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 moderated by MSA President Andy Hogeland, a Select Board member in Williamstown.

The registration link and agenda has been posted on the [MMA website](#) and was emailed to MSA members.

Contact: [MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig](#) at acraig@mma.org

ICMA to hold Local Government Reimagined Conference in Boston

The International City/County Management Association will hold one of its Local Government Reimagined conferences at the Sheraton Hotel in Boston April 10 through 12.

The conference will focus on "generative artificial intelligence," featuring regional experts in the field, including Boston Chief Information Officer Santiago Garces.

The schedule and registration details

are available on the [ICMA's website](#).

The ICMA is offering a 20% group registration discount, for members and nonmembers, for two or more attendees from the same community.

For conference attendees, the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association will co-host a group outing to Fenway Park on Thursday, April 11. Group ticket information will be sent to all conference attendees and MMMA members.



Contact: [MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker](#)

MMHR to hold spring webinar on April 25

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources will hold its free spring program webinar on April 25.

Former City Manager Patrick Ibarra, co-founder and partner with the Mejorando Group, will present his workshop “A Healthy Workplace Culture Is the ‘Secret Sauce’ to Success.”

The session will identify how workplace culture affects organizational performance, and present practical steps that municipal human resources



Patrick Ibarra

workforce planning in government. He also supports municipal officials with

professionals can take to develop a culture in which employees can pursue their potential.

With more than 38 years of experience in consulting and management, Ibarra is an expert on succession and

strategic planning and training and education.

The meeting agenda and a registration link will be made available at www.mma.org in the coming weeks and will be emailed to MMHR members.

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

WEMO to hold virtual spring symposium May 3

Women Elected Municipal Officials will hold its annual virtual spring symposium on May 3.

The free symposium will include opportunities for small-group networking, and a session addressing key issues facing women elected municipal officials,

including rising incivility at the local level.

The symposium will run from 9 to 11 a.m. The agenda and a registration link will be made available at www.mma.org and emailed to WEMO members in the coming weeks.

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

Rural affairs director to address MSA’s rural/western Mass. conference

Rural Affairs Director Anne Gobi will be the keynote speaker at the Massachusetts Select Board Association’s annual Rural and Western Massachusetts Conference on Saturday, April 27, in Northampton.

A former state senator representing communities in Worcester and Hampden counties, Gobi has a deep understanding of the challenges facing rural communities, as well as their unique needs. She was appointed to the newly created role by the Healey-Driscoll administration last June and works within the Executive Office of Economic Development.

Gobi will take questions following her presentation.

Following the keynote, a legislative panel focused on rural priorities will be led by Sen. Joanne Comerford, Franklin



Anne Gobi



Sen. Joanne Comerford

Regional Council of Governments Executive Director Linda Dunlavy, and MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman.

The meeting agenda includes a session on creative strategies for affordable housing, featuring panelists from three regional housing organizations: Way Finders, Construct Berkshire, and Rural Development Inc.

Registration and breakfast will open at 8 a.m., and the program will begin at 8:30 and conclude at noon with a networking lunch.

The conference will be held at Hotel Northampton at 36 King St. in Northampton. The cost is \$35.

More information, including a detailed agenda and registration link, will be available at www.mma.org and sent to MSA members in the coming weeks.

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

MMHR to hold annual ‘HR 101’ boot camp on May 9

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources will hold its annual “HR 101” boot camp on May 9 in Northampton.

The boot camp is geared toward newer municipal human resources professionals and those with a background in the private sector. Veterans in the field are

also welcome to attend for a refresher. The conference will run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Hotel Northampton, 36 King St. in Northampton.

The registration fee is \$100 for members and \$120 for nonmembers. The

agenda and registration information will be made available at www.mma.org and emailed to MMHR members in the coming weeks.

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

ATFC to hold spring conference on April 6

Gov. Maura Healey's proposed [Municipal Empowerment Act](#) will be the focus of the Association of Town Finance Committees' spring conference on April 6 at Pine Ridge Country Club in Oxford.

Sean Cronin, senior deputy commissioner at the Division of Local Services of Local Services, will provide an overview

of the legislation and its potential impact on municipal budgets.

MMA Deputy Legislative Director Jackie Lavender Bird will open the meeting with a budget and legislative update. There will be dedicated time for networking and sharing best practices, a tradition at ATFC events.

The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and end

with lunch at 12:30 p.m.

The cost is \$25 for ATFC members and \$40 for all other attendees. Registration information will be available on www.mma.org.

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

NLC's Congressional City Conference is March 11-13

The National League of Cities will hold its annual Congressional City Conference on March 11-13 in Washington, D.C.

The conference gives local leaders the opportunity to meet with influential federal decisionmakers, learn more about leveraging critical federal resources, and discover tools to support and protect their communities. Attendees

can also work with the NLC and their peers from around the country to ensure that their local priorities factor into the national conversation.

The NLC will host pre-conference activities on March 9 and 10, and will hold its "Hill Day" on March 13. Hill Day is an opportunity for elected officials, city staff and state municipal league staff to meet with their U.S. senators and

representatives, build stronger relationships with lawmakers, and advocate for their priorities at the federal level.

For more information, visit ccc.nlc.org. [Registration rate information is available online.](#) ●

Citizen Planner Training Collaborative annual conference is March 16

The Citizens Planner Training Collaborative will hold its 20th Annual Conference on Saturday, March 16, in Worcester.

The conference will feature 18 land use planning-related workshops held over three sessions throughout the morning to midafternoon. Workshop topics include MBTA Communities zoning, climate resilience, Community One

Stop for Growth, new developments in cannabis law, community planning for solar, and permitting and preserving affordable housing units.

Nine of the 18 workshops are eligible for [MIIA Rewards](#) credits. (See the [conference website](#) for details.)

The conference will be held at the College of the Holy Cross, opening at 8

a.m. The final session of workshops will end at 3:15 p.m.

The cost to attend is \$95, and the registration deadline is March 12. The event will include a continental breakfast and a buffet lunch.

For more information and to register, visit the CPTC's [conference page.](#) ●

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Continued from page 2

legislative session. These proposals, if adopted, won't eliminate the need for a renewed approach at the federal level, but they would certainly take a step toward protecting cities and towns in Massachusetts from devastating financial impacts related to climate change.

Beyond these efforts, the MMA is excited to be embarking on a series of webinars for the remainder of 2024 focused

on climate action. The first in this series is scheduled for [March 26](#) and will feature the Commonwealth's first-ever climate chief, Melissa Hoffer. We will soon be publishing a schedule of these webinars for 2024, the topics of which will be balanced between climate change adaptation and resilience approaches and climate change mitigation strategies. Be sure to check out these webinars on www.mma.org or via the [MMA's On-Demand Webinar Library](#).

The MMA will continue to work on Beacon Hill and Capitol Hill to advocate for tools, strategies and resources that will assist local governments as they plan for the myriad challenges presented by climate change. We look forward to standing side by side with you for the work ahead. ●

DEVELOPMENT BILL

Continued from page 4

be charged with developing recommendations to the administration for how to support and grow the state's arts and culture sector.

The second Executive Order establishes

a council tasked with reviewing the existing procurement laws and related processes for public building construction projects, such as state laws relative to surety bonds, to identify barriers to small, emerging, and diverse businesses, and to make recommendations that address them.

The full legislation and key issue briefs will be available on the Executive Office of Economic Development website. ●

Preventive maintenance is key to severe weather

By Jennifer Ranz

The severity and unpredictability of weather has been increasing the risk of damage and disruption in municipalities and continues to impact municipal planning.

Municipal leaders and facilities directors face these growing threats while managing buildings with a wide range of ages, materials and methods of construction.

During a [MIIA-led workshop](#) at the MMA Annual Meeting in January, experts discussed the latest climate data, its impact on the property insurance market, and what municipalities can do now to assess buildings and be prepared.

Megan Hart, global head of analytics and collaborations at Aon, the leading risk mitigation firm, detailed how coastal flooding, extreme rainfall, wildfires, and extreme heat are all connected to climate change — and how rapid population growth in certain geographic areas makes them more likely to experience adverse events.



Ken Wertz, executive director of the National School Plant Management Association, discusses various building considerations during a MIIA-led climate workshop, “Climate’s Impact on the Municipal Property Market,” during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade in January.

Ken Wertz, executive director of the National School Plant Management Association, discussed the importance of factoring in building design and construction during operations and capital planning, as well as staying on top of everyday maintenance. He underscored

the high costs associated with deferred building maintenance — estimated at \$542 billion for public schools across the U.S.

Stephen Batchelder, MIIA’s vice president of claims operations and risk management, noted an increase in convective storms throughout the Northeast, leading to more lightning strikes, power surges, and torrential rainfall that can overwhelm local drainage systems. Because of insurance market volatility, he said, it is critical for municipalities to focus on reducing risks and vulnerabilities.

Preventive maintenance

To be better prepared for weather-related issues, the towns of Cohasset and Foxborough have focused on various aspects of preventive maintenance, including new technologies and collaborative planning strategies.

In Cohasset, local leaders won a Green Communities grant to enhance HVAC systems across schools, upgrading from

■ MIIA continued on 28

New program helps MIIA subscribers with pain reduction

By Jennifer Ranz

Musculoskeletal pain is the most common type of pain experienced by adults in the U.S., with an estimated 39% of adults suffering from back pain, 36.5% from lower limb pain, and 30.7% from upper limb pain, according to [data from the National Health Interview Survey](#).

Because of its impact on patients, both short- and long-term, musculoskeletal pain is also among the top five most common insurance claims seen by MIIA’s Health Benefits Trust.

To help subscribers struggling with this type of pain, MIIA and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts recently launched a new program through a partner, [Hinge Health](#), that provides

personalized plans for each patient designed by a physical therapist and a health coach.

Studies show that regular physical activity strengthens the muscles around affected joints, decreases bone loss, and may help control joint swelling and pain. Regular activity replenishes lubrication to the cartilage of the joint and reduces stiffness and pain.

The Hinge Health program launched with a pilot group last August, and more than 300 municipal employees and dependents participated in the program, using it for help with a range of issues, including back, neck, knee and hip pain, as well as for women’s pelvic health. In January, the program became available to all MIIA Health

Benefits Trust subscribers and their dependents.

MIIA Wellness Project Manager Jayne Schmitz said the success of the program can be attributed to both ease of use and its personal touch.

“Exercises are set up using the mobile app, so you can find them easily each day, and you can communicate directly with your physical therapist and health coach to make any adjustments,” she said.

Participants can use Hinge Health’s motion-tracking technology as they move through exercises to ensure they are on track with form and repetitions. They can access additional health-related information through the app as well.

MMCA webinar to look at parliamentary procedure

The Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association will hold a webinar on parliamentary procedure on April 24.

The free webinar will focus on the rules and procedures that govern how a city council meeting operates, including the role of "Robert's Rules of Order" and individual city council rules.

Marlborough City Council President Michael Ossing will be joined by a city clerk in presenting, with MMCA



Michael Ossing

President and Waltham City Council President John McLaughlin moderating.

"Parliamentary Procedure at Council Meetings: A Practitioner's View" will run from noon to 1:15 p.m.

All city and town councillors are invited

to [register online](#).

The webinar will be recorded and available on www.mma.org and in the MMA's on-demand webinar library.

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

FEDERAL FUNDS

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Federal funds office

The state's Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office is also available to support municipalities as they consider, apply for and implement various federal funding initiatives. The office is leading the [Massachusetts Federal Funds](#)

[Partnership](#), which meets monthly to provide helpful information about upcoming grant opportunities and other federal funds topics.

In order to support municipal efforts, the Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office has created a [Federal Grant Intake Form for Local Governments](#) for communities to notify the office of

in-progress or submitted federal grant applications, as well as projects that could be eligible for federal funding. Additional information for municipalities is available on the [office's website](#), and questions or requests can be directed to FedFundsInfra@mass.gov. ●

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LOCAL AID

Continued from page 1

hearing from our members from across the Commonwealth, from big cities to small towns, that the fiscal challenges this year will be daunting, making our state-local partnership even more critical.”

McLaughlin highlighted the importance of supplementary local road and bridge funding that was included in the fiscal 2024 state budget, and asked legislators to build on the governor’s proposal to set aside a portion of “Fair Share” surtax revenue for this purpose.

Suhoski pointed out that cities and towns provide essential services, including public safety, public works, education, senior services, and snow and ice removal, but that they are limited on property tax collections and rely on state aid to stay strong and viable.

The MMA also submitted [written testimony](#) outlining municipal priorities for the fiscal 2025 state budget. The testimony includes a graph representing the impact of the Great Recession-era cuts to UGGA.

Chapter 70

The governor’s budget proposal, known as House 2, would increase Chapter 70 school aid by \$263 million for fiscal 2025, fulfilling commitments in the Student Opportunity Act, and funding year four of six of the law’s intended implementation schedule.

Chapdelaine noted, however, that two-thirds of operating districts (211 out of 318) would receive only the minimum per-student increase of \$30 in the Student Opportunity Act.

The MMA continued its strong advocacy for minimum aid of \$100 per student to ensure that all districts can at least keep pace with inflation and maintain school services. Bringing all districts up to the \$100 per student threshold would require an additional \$35.4 million.

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

“In cities and towns all across Massachusetts, the increase in local contribution required by Chapter 70 is far above the growth in municipal revenues,” he said. “The result puts a major strain on municipal budgets, regardless of whether they are large beneficiaries of the new SOA rates or minimum aid districts.”

Special Education Circuit Breaker

The MMA expressed support for the governor’s proposal to fund the Special Education Circuit Breaker program at \$492 million. The administration has said that the state will leverage \$75 million that was included for special education in the fiscal 2023 closeout supplemental budget.

Charter schools

The governor’s budget would fund the charter school reimbursement account at \$232 million, intended to meet the commitment in the Student Opportunity Act regarding the state’s statutory obligation to mitigate Chapter 70 losses to charter schools. The MMA noted, however, that charter schools continue to divert a high percentage of Chapter 70 funds away from many municipally operated school districts and place increasing strain on the districts that serve the vast majority of public schoolchildren. The MMA reiterated its call for comprehensive charter school finance reform.

Student transportation

House 2 would fund approximately 80% of regional transportation costs, at \$99 million. Failure to fully fund this account creates a hardship for virtually all communities in regional districts.

Suhoski said 100% reimbursement would be a big help to many rural districts, some of which are sprawling.

House 2 would level-fund reimbursements for transportation of out-of-district vocational students, providing a reimbursement rate of just 17%. The MMA asked the Legislature to fully fund this account.

The governor’s budget would fund the transportation of homeless students under the federal McKinney-Vento Act at 93%, which the MMA also asked the Legislature to fully fund.

Rural schools

House 2 would level-fund rural school

aid at \$15 million. Chapdelaine expressed appreciation for the increases in the account in recent fiscal years, but said it still falls short of the \$60 million recommendation included in the 2022 [report from the Commission on the Fiscal Health of Rural School Districts](#).

PILOT

House 2 would fund payments-in-lieu-of-taxes at \$51.8 million. According to the administration, this amount would hold municipalities harmless from recent valuations.

Surtax funding for local roads and bridges

In addition to her proposed \$200 million in Chapter 90 funding for fiscal 2025, the governor’s budget recommends the use of \$124 million in Fair Share revenue for local roads and bridges, with \$24 million dedicated to rural communities.

McLaughlin noted, however, that cities and towns “needed approximately \$715 million for fiscal 2024 alone to ensure that local roads and bridges are maintained in a state of good repair.”

Given the loss of purchasing power of existing funding sources and other local budget pressures, the MMA respectfully requested at least \$150 million in the state budget for local roads and bridges in fiscal 2025, which would benefit every municipality in the Commonwealth.

Disaster Relief and Resiliency Fund

House 2 would establish a Disaster Relief and Resiliency Fund to provide relief to cities and towns impacted by extreme weather events. The MMA expressed strong support for the fund as an important first step in ensuring that municipalities have resources immediately available to help when disaster strikes.

Budget process

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

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

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

Around the Commonwealth

Springfield

Water utility tries to expand pipeline of future hires

As its industry faces widespread hiring and staffing challenges, the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission hopes that a high school internship program will help attract the next generation of water sector employees.

Last year, the commission established the Pipeline Program (pun intended), an eight-week paid summer internship for Springfield high school students to learn about water-sector careers. The commission is again accepting applications for the summer program, which represents a partnership with the Springfield Public Schools, the Massachusetts Water Works Association, and the wastewater operator Veolia. The commission hopes that the work-based learning experience will convince students to consider a future in water.

“A lot of water infrastructure is out of sight, out of mind, so people don’t always think about those types of jobs or the breadth of all the different careers in the water sector,” said Katherine Shea, the commission’s educational outreach manager. “So in thinking about how we could increase that awareness and give young people a little bit more exposure to the different careers in the water sector, we came up with the idea of giving internships to high school students.”

Like many government-related industries, the water sector has experienced hiring challenges. Shea said Springfield’s commission, which operates independently from the city and has about 250 employees, was responding to the waves of retirements statewide and the struggle to hire in western Massachusetts, where a smaller labor pool stretches out across a larger geographic area. Many of the technical positions also require additional education and licenses, and the commission will need additional qualified staff to run a new drinking-water plant it is building.

Given the critical importance of water-related services, officials have voiced support for efforts to build a workforce pipeline.



Pipeline Program interns from the 2023 cohort tour the secondary treatment aeration basins at the Springfield Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility on Bondi’s Island in Agawam. (Photo courtesy Springfield Water and Sewer Commission)

“Our public health, our quality of life, and our economy depend on the hardworking people that keep our taps flowing, our environment clean, and our fire hydrants at the ready,” Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno said last year in a statement about the program.

The program is open to students who are at least 16 years old, and are in grades 10 through 12. The students receive \$15 an hour, and work 32-hour weeks. From about 45 applications last year, the commission selected 12 students from five of Springfield’s high schools.

The student interns rotate through several departments, learning about topics including engineering, watershed protection, wastewater operations, drinking water operations, laboratory services and water quality, field services, and information technology and cybersecurity. Last year, the students also received mentoring and visited neighboring municipal departments, as well as UMass Amherst and Westfield State University.

The program also features a course, “Introduction to Becoming a Public Water System Operator,” which enables students to take the state Treatment 1 licensing exam, a first-step level.

The commission has paid for the program through its education and workforce development programming and with a contribution from Veolia. Shea said that smaller utilities and municipal departments could easily replicate the program on a smaller scale.

The commission is talking with other local entities about referring interns for internships or roles, she said, and about

the possibility of building a network.

By mid-February, the commission had 40 applications for this summer’s 12 spots, Shea said, with the deadline still nearly two months away. Given that most of last year’s students are still in high school, it will likely take a few years for the effort to show results in its workforce.

“Now these 12 interns are out in the community, and they’re telling their friends and their family and their neighbors, and all that,” Shea said. “I think it’s definitely helping across the city to raise awareness of our water system.”

— Jennifer Kavanaugh

Somerville

City legalizes iconic triple-decker structures

In an effort to increase the inventory and types of housing available in the city, the Somerville City Council last November approved the legalization of triple-deckers, a structural style easily recognizable in the region and across the state.

“The reason we did this was to cover compliance with the MBTA Communities Act,” said City Councillor Matthew McLaughlin, who helped lead the effort. “It just seemed to be perfect timing.”

He said the zoning update “addresses two things: an appreciation for a historic building, and coming into compliance.”

“We are just allowing what is, to be,” he said. “You can now do what is already there.”

The triple-decker style — typically three units stacked on top of each other — became popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s for working class and immigrant families, as the structures allowed for the owner to live in one unit while renting the other two, or for multiple generations of one family to live in the same structure. But communities began to ban the buildings after the state enacted the Tenement House Act in 1912, which was tied to anti-immigrant movements of the early 20th century.

The city re-legalized the structures in 2019 as part of a zoning overhaul, but

■ COMMONWEALTH *continued on 25*

Around the Commonwealth

COMMONWEALTH

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Somerville has revised its zoning to allow triple-deckers, a structural style that's common in the city and elsewhere in Massachusetts.

there were stipulations: new three-unit buildings could only be built next to an existing one, and one unit had to be affordable, even when a third unit was being added to an existing two-unit building.

McLaughlin called the 2019 ordinance “a compromise,” but added that it failed to result in new housing.

“It was too stringent of a restriction for anyone to do,” he said.

Last November’s update means that a three-unit building can be built as of right anywhere in the city — not just the traditional triple-deckers, but any building with three units.

“We’re facing an affordable housing crisis,” McLaughlin said. “Most of the people who grew up here don’t live here anymore. No one can afford it.

“One of the solutions we have is to change zoning and allow more housing to be built. I’m proud of what we have done, but it is interesting to see how difficult it can be.”

Somerville was one of 12 “rapid transit” communities that had until the end of 2023 to adopt zoning changes that would bring them into compliance with the [MBTA Communities Act](#) and encourage the development of multifamily housing near public transit.

Along with allowing triple-deckers, the city also passed amendments to repeal a rule that prohibited more than four people who are unrelated from living in the same house without a permit, and to remove a special permit process for all structures on steep slopes.

— Meredith Gabrilka

New Bedford

City eyes salt marsh construction for riverfront park

With visions of a salt marsh along the Acushnet River, New Bedford hopes that an underused stretch of parkland will soon offer enhanced recreation, new wildlife habitat, improved environmental justice for local residents, and another means of addressing climate change.

Working with a nonprofit, Groundwork Southcoast, the city has hired a firm to conduct a feasibility study and develop design and construction plans to remove a reed-ringed pond and build a salt marsh in Riverside Park. The city received more than \$93,000 through the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program to cover the project’s initial phase.

“New Bedford has always been so closely connected to the water,” said Mary Rapoza, New Bedford’s director of parks, recreation and beaches. “Most of the waterfront is built up, and there aren’t a lot of places where we can do this kind of work to recreate the salt marshes that would have normally been there. So this is a really great opportunity to recreate that salt marsh.”

The salt marsh would give the nearby North End neighborhood greater access to the water, and would better protect the neighborhood from flooding, Rapoza said.

“One of the biggest benefits is the storm-water management,” Rapoza said. “It is a tidal river, and that neighborhood does experience flooding with heavy rains and high tides. So the salt marsh will help alleviate some of that because salt marshes are basically big sponges.”

Rapoza said the salt marsh would enhance a park that serves as a gathering spot for a neighborhood of largely Central American and Cape Verdean residents, an area filled with triple-decker homes and small backyards that offer little room for outdoor living. As a result, residents have embraced the 22-acre park, which includes a community garden and features a Central American-themed food court on Sundays, she said.



The city of New Bedford is looking to remove the reed-ringed pond in Riverside Park and build a salt marsh. (Photo courtesy city of New Bedford)

But while plenty of park amenities attract visitors, the existing pond has had the opposite effect. When the park was built two decades ago, the river was part of a federal Superfund site, and the pond was designed to serve as a buffer between people and the contaminated water. But the pond hasn’t functioned as planned, and the surrounding 10- to 12-foot invasive phragmite reeds impede visibility, create safety concerns and encourage illegal dumping.

About a year ago, the city was approached about removing the phragmites by Groundwork Southcoast, which has undertaken numerous projects in Riverside Park over the past seven years, including managing the community garden, planting native plants, and using goats to remove invasive plants. But Groundwork Southcoast’s proposed phragmite removal prompted experts to decide that the pond itself needed to go, and that a salt marsh would be preferable, especially with the Superfund cleanup expected to wind down by next year. Already, the cleanup has brought back herring, egrets and ospreys, Rapoza said.

Once the current phase of the salt marsh project has been completed, Rapoza said, New Bedford will seek grant funding to support the construction costs, and hopes to complete the salt marsh by the end of 2026. She said the city won’t know the construction cost until the analysis is finished and officials decide exactly how big the salt marsh will be.

New Bedford might also build a boardwalk through the marsh, so that people can enjoy it while it helps protect the city. As climate challenges mount, parks such as Riverside increasingly offer residents

■ COMMONWEALTH continued on 32

People

The city of Chelsea recently announced new hires for its management team.



Michael Mason Jr.

Michael Mason Jr. will become the deputy city manager for finance on April 1. Since early 2019, Mason has served in the Arlington Public Schools, first as the chief financial officer and as assistant superintendent of

finance and operations since January 2023. Previously, he worked for the Chelsea Public Schools as the assistant business manager and then business manager, and in an earlier stint there he worked on grants accounts payable for the district. He has also worked as a research finance specialist for Partners HealthCare and in various roles for Rite Aid. He has a bachelor's degree in accounting and finance from Salem State University, and a master's degree in business administration from Boston University.



Devon Fields

Devon Fields, a former MMA staff member, will become Chelsea's deputy city manager for operations on March 4. Fields has been assistant town administrator for operations in Brookline since August 2022, after

serving as the town's administrative services director starting in October 2019. Previously, she spent four years at the MMA as a senior member services coordinator. She was also a member of the city of Boston's Spark Council from 2017 to 2018, a graduate assistant at Bridgewater State University, an intern for the Bridgewater Fire Department, an intern in the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, and an intern in the office of Sen. Michael Rodrigues. She has a bachelor's degree in political science from Eckerd College and a master's degree in public administration from Bridgewater State University.

The city also recently announced the hiring of **Bernabe Rodriguez** as its director of constituent services as of Feb. 5.



Paige Duncan

Paige Duncan became the town manager in Foxborough on Feb. 1, after serving the community for nine years.

Duncan had already been the town's leader since last summer, after the

previous manager, **John Coderre**, stepped down. She was initially appointed as the acting assistant town manager, and then was named the acting town manager in August.

Duncan had served for eight years as Foxborough's director of land use and economic development. Previously, she served as the town planner in Wrentham from 2006 to 2015, and worked as a town planner in Bellingham and Charlton, and as an assistant planner in several communities. She had also worked as a senior planner at Beals and Thomas from 1995 to 2001, and has been an adjunct professor at Framingham State University. She has a bachelor's degree in geography, with a concentration in planning, from Framingham State University, and a master's degree in community planning from the University of Rhode Island.



Brian Domina

Brian Domina will become the new town administrator in Hampden on March 11.

Domina has been the town administrator in Whately since July 2016. Previously, he worked for

seven years as the land use attorney and the senior land use planner for the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. He has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Northeastern

University, and a law degree from the Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University.



Bob Markel

In Hampden, Domina replaces **Bob Markel**, who started as Hampden's interim administrator in September 2019 and was named as administrator two years ago. Markel, who previously served two terms

as mayor of Springfield and seven terms as a Springfield Councillor, had served as the town administrator in Norfolk and Ipswich, and has worked as an interim administrator in eight towns since retiring from Ipswich. Last month, he joined the Joint Labor-Management Committee as the senior staff representative for management.



Walter Ramsey

After 14 years of serving the community, **Walter Ramsey** will become the new town administrator in Montague on July 1.

Ramsey joined Montague as town planner in 2010, and became the assistant town administrator in 2022. He has a bachelor's degree in urban geography, and a master's degree in regional planning, both from UMass Amherst.



Steven Ellis

Ramsey will take the place of **Steven Ellis**, who was town administrator for the past seven years. Ellis, who previously worked as director of the UMass Donahue Institute's Applied Research and Program Evaluation

Group, said he expects to focus on consulting and advocacy with state agencies

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People

PEOPLE

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and municipalities, similar to his work on the state's Economic Development Planning Council. He plans to serve in Montague until the end of June.



Ari Sky

Ari Sky became Watertown's first chief financial officer on Feb. 5.

Sky had served as the town administrator in Lakeville since May 2021, after serving as New Bedford's chief financial officer

for eight years. Earlier in his career, he spent many years working in Virginia, including more than four years as the director of management and budget for Fauquier County and 11 years as a budget officer for Loudoun County. He had also served as the borough manager in Yeadon, Pennsylvania; management analyst for Arlington County, Virginia; budget management analyst for Prince George's County in Maryland; and legislative assistant for the U.S. House of Representatives.

Sky, who has served on the MMA's Fiscal Policy Committee, has a bachelor's degree in politics and history from Brandeis University and a master's degree in public administration from American University.



Andrew Koziol

Andrew Koziol has been named the director of West-East Rail, an effort to extend passenger rail service from Boston to Worcester, Springfield and Pittsfield.

Koziol has more than 15 years of transportation planning experience. In June 2023, he became director of rail and transit at the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. Before joining

MassDOT, Koziol worked for 12 years at the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, where he collaborated with the MBTA and Amtrak on rail service and capital planning. His experiences there included managing the planning and design of passenger rail stations, short- and long-range service planning on the Northeast Corridor, and obtaining federal grants for rail initiatives. Previously, Koziol spent three years working as a transportation analyst with the Cape Cod Commission.

A Massachusetts native, Koziol has a bachelor's degree in management and economics from UMass Amherst and a master's degree in city and regional planning from Rutgers University.



Charles Coleta

Charles Coleta joined the MIIA Health Benefits Trust on Feb. 12 as an enrollment representative.

Coleta most recently worked as a credentialing specialist for Bay State Physical Therapy, a role

he started in August 2022. Previously, he worked as a provider enrollment specialist at Atrius Health and as an auditor at Change Healthcare. He has also worked as a market research associate at Investor Global Services, as a sports and athletic assistant director at Bird Street Community Center, and as a middle school tutor. He has a bachelor's degree in political science from Boston College.



Ronald Cormier

Ronald Cormier, known as the "Dean of the Gardner City Council," died on Jan. 28 at age 81.

Cormier had just started serving his 10th term on the council at the time of his death. He served two decades as an at-

large councillor after serving as a Ward

3 councillor from 1980 to 1996. Over the years, he served in many roles in Gardner, including as council president, chair of the Gardner Redevelopment Authority, and a member of the Gardner Airport Commission.

He received bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Fitchburg State University, and spent a quarter century teaching in the Fitchburg public schools. He served as an elementary school vice principal for six years before his retirement in 2002. He and his wife, **Marcelle Cormier**, later came out of retirement for two years to serve as co-principals of a Catholic school in Gardner.

Cormier's son **Craig Cormier** currently serves on the Gardner City Council.

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



Local leaders discuss municipal empowerment bill

During the Feb. 13 meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission, Easthampton Mayor Nicole LaChapelle thanks the administration for filing the Municipal Empowerment Act, which would allow for greater efficiency at the local level. "The local options are game changers for small communities," she said.

MIIA

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an outdated 20-year-old system. The higher-efficiency system allows for remote monitoring and temperature adjustments, helping to guard against pipe freeze-ups and related flooding.

Cohasset also participates in MIIA's Hartford Steam Boiler Sensor program, which uses a mobile phone app to enable real-time, remote monitoring of onsite sensors that detect flooding and temperature variances. The sensor program has already paid off, by alerting staff to a leaky pipe in a crawlspace at the police station.

"When we can go in quickly and fix something within an hour," said Facilities Director Nick Berardi, "it makes all the difference in preventing any further damage."

Prone to power outages because of its coastal location and the recent increase in windstorms, Cohasset has also enhanced its generator program. The town repurposed what was once an old, full-building generator into a trailer-mounted portable power source, and sourced and secured a contract with a company that guarantees additional similar units will be available when

needed.

Foxborough has had a permanent building committee in place for 30 years to review building designs and determine what works best for the community and for building resiliency.

School Building Administrator Bill Yukna said the committee, which includes architects, engineers, plumbers, and other skilled trades professionals, has been critical in making sound decisions and ensuring that building projects meet or exceed LEED and other standards.

"Every community should have this in place to keep projects on track, especially when things get complicated," he said.

Foxborough's facilities department focuses on regular, preventive maintenance such as clearing drains, trimming trees away from power lines, and inspecting HVAC equipment to ensure preparedness for storms, Yukna said. The town has also been progressive about getting generators outfitted on all buildings, so heating systems can run during power outages.

With risk management grants from MIIA, Foxborough purchased a drone system to help with roof inspections on inaccessible areas of some town

buildings, as well as sensor systems to detect temperature changes and prevent water damage caused by burst pipes.

Best practices

Following examples from Cohasset and Foxborough, municipalities can incorporate technology and collaborative strategies into local planning to be better prepared for extreme weather — and for the changing landscape of the insurance market.

The following are some best practices:

- Embrace technology, and invest in monitoring systems that provide real-time alerts.
- Perform regular maintenance on a set schedule and with storm preparedness in mind.
- Upgrade HVAC systems and other infrastructure when possible, to energy-efficient and resilient alternatives.
- Leverage committees with diverse professional expertise to oversee infrastructure decisions and standards.

Visit the [MIIA website](#) for more information about MIIA's risk management program and offerings. ●

BREAKFASTS

Continued from page 1

Municipal officials from every community are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to discuss issues of importance with MMA staff and legislators. Attendees are also urged to contact their local legislators and invite them to attend.

At these free meetings, a light breakfast and coffee will be provided at 8:30 a.m. Introductions will begin shortly thereafter, followed by presentations and a Q&A session. The meetings will end by 10:30 a.m.

The first Legislative Breakfast Meetings of the spring series were held on March 1 in Greenfield and North Andover.

The remaining meetings will be held as follows:

March 8

- Holyoke, 8:30-10:15 a.m., Massachusetts Green High

Performance Computing Center, 100 Bigelow St.

- Rockland, 8:30-10:15 a.m., Rockland Council on Aging, 317 Plain St.

March 15

- Wareham, 8:30-10:15 a.m., Wareham Town Hall Auditorium, 54 Marion Road
- Westborough, 8:30-10:15 a.m., Forbes Municipal Building, Great Hall, 45 West Main St.

MMA members are asked to [register online](#).

For more information, visit www.mma.org or contact Daniel Yi at 617-426-7272, ext. 125, or dyi@mma.org.



Administration explains 'municipal empowerment'

Danielle Cerny, chief of staff at the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, discusses the proposed Municipal Empowerment Act during the Feb. 13 meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission. Cerny highlighted the 30-plus provisions that would benefit municipalities, and said the package was a direct result of input from local leaders.

Classified Advertisements

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Council on Aging Outreach Coordinator Town of Chatham

The town of Chatham is seeking a vibrant, enterprising and compassionate human and social services professional to become the next Council on Aging (COA) Outreach Coordinator to work with Chatham's older adults, families and caregivers and provide assistance by assessing needs for service and making the appropriate referrals. This benefits and pension eligible position is 35 hours/week. Starting biweekly salary is \$2,302.30-\$2,348.50 (\$59,859.80-\$61,061 annually), with 3% cost of living salary increase scheduled for July 1. View the full job description and qualifications at chatham-ma.gov. Interested applicants should send their cover letter and resume in one PDF to jobs@chatham-ma.gov. Deadline for the first review is March 14. ADA/EO/AEE

Public Health Administrator Town of Sherborn

The town of Sherborn seeks qualified applicants for the full-time, benefitted position of Public Health Administrator. This department head-level position is responsible for providing professional, administrative direction and support to Board of Health staff and volunteers, including an elected board. Managing all aspects of municipal public health programming, including collaboration with other town departments and outside agencies, communications with the public, and budget management. Ensuring compliance with local, state, and federal regulations and progress on submitted applications and related actions. Using a variety of office and online software systems to carry out Board of Health functions. This position requires a bachelor's degree in public health or related field or an equivalent combination of education and public health experience. Knowledge of septic systems and wells for drinking water preferred. Please indicate pertinent certifications held and willingness to obtain any outstanding. A full job description can be found on the town's website at www.sherbornma.org/jobs. Salary Range: \$75,000+, depending on qualifications and experience. Email cover letter and resume to health@sherbornma.org and HR@sherbornma.org. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and the position will remain open until filled. Sherborn is an equal opportunity employer.

Town Planner Town of Chatham

Come join Team Chatham! The town of Chatham is seeking a driven, energetic professional to be our next Town Planner. The Town Planner coordinates, implements and manages the town's planning actions to balance growth and development, with a strong focus on the preservation of community character and coastal resources. This benefits and pension eligible position is 40 hours per week and includes evening meetings. Starting annual salary is \$89,814.40-\$101,129.60. [View the full job description \(PDF\)](#) for more information and qualifications. Interested applicants should send their cover letter and resume in one PDF to jobs@chatham-ma.gov. Deadline for the first review of candidates is March 13. ADA/EO/AEE

Town Manager

Town of Clinton, Connecticut

The town of Clinton, Connecticut (pop. 13,300),

invites candidates to apply for the Town Manager position. The Town Manager is responsible to the Town Council for the proper administration of all town affairs as outlined in the town charter. The Town Manager is the Chief Executive Officer who oversees and manages all municipal service functions and day-to-day operations of the town. Contact Ms. Frank for a full profile about the position (first screening date is March 15). Ms. Randi Frank, Randi Frank Consulting, LLC, 7700 Hoover Way, Louisville, KY 40219; 203-213-3722. Email resume and cover letter to randi@randifrank.com. www.randifrank.com

Senior Planner - Economic Development City of Salem

Interested in helping create sustainable and equitable communities? The city of Salem seeks qualified and highly motivated professionals to join the 14-person Planning and Community Development Department. Duties include working on near and long-term economic development strategic planning initiatives; managing projects; preparing grant applications; and working with residents and neighborhood groups. Ideal candidate is experienced project manager with excellent problem-solving and collaboration skills who enjoys advancing complex public sector initiatives. Three or more years' professional work experience and master's degree in planning or related discipline preferred. Job description at www.salemma.gov/human-resources/pages/employment-opportunities.

Experienced Litigation Attorney (Civil Litigation)

Pierce Davis & Perritano LLP

Pierce Davis & 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 Massachusetts 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. Featured benefits: Medical insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, life and disability insurance, 401(k) plan with employer match, commuter benefits, and flexible spending accounts.

Full-Time Planner, Transportation Department

Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

Seeking a full-time Planner for the Transportation Department. Duties include multidisciplinary, complex local and regional planning assignments. Experience with traffic and roadway analysis, basic understanding of transportation planning principles and concepts, and knowledge of pavement management systems and concepts are a must. Minimum job requirements: Bachelor's degree and two years' experience in transportation planning, local or urban planning, or related field; or acceptable combination of education and experience. AICP is a plus. Additional qualifications required for higher level positions. See full job descriptions and salaries at www.mrpc.org. Send resume and cover letter to MRPC by email to mrpc@mrpc.org (open until filled). EEO/AA

Finance Director

Town of Millis

The town of Millis is seeking an experienced and innovative leader to serve as the town's next Finance

■ CLASSIFIEDS *continued on 30*

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 (Beacon 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 (Beacon 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 published in mid-July.

April Beacon

Deadline: March 26
Publication: April 1

May Beacon

Deadline: April 25
Publication: May 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 www.mma.org for details.

Classified Advertisements

CLASSIFIEDS

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Director. The Finance Director will serve under the administrative direction of the Town Administrator and Superintendent of Schools. The Finance Director is the key financial liaison between the town and schools and serves as the senior advisor to the Finance Committee. The Finance Director oversees the Accounting, Assessing, and Treasurer/Collector Departments. Responsibilities include preparation of an operating budget of approximately \$45,000,000 as well as financial planning analyses and long-range financial forecasting. A successful candidate must possess strong management, planning, analytical and problem-solving skills; must be proficient in municipal accounting, auditing, and financial reporting skills; must be able to communicate effectively with internal and external parties; must have self-confidence to exercise independent judgment. Must be a certified governmental accountant (CGA), as designated by the Massachusetts Municipal Auditors and Accountants Association. The town of Millis offers a competitive benefits package, including health, dental, group and optional life insurance, flexible spending account and generous paid time off. Full job description available at www.millisma.gov/home/pages/employment-volunteer-opportunities. Starting salary commensurate with experience, \$130,000-\$150,000. Resume and letter of interest should be submitted by email to townadministrators@millisma.gov. Applications accepted through March 25.

Principal Resiliency Planner

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission seeks candidates for the position of Principal Resiliency Planner to join our Regional Collaboration and Community Planning Department (RCCP). The position requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree in community and/or urban planning, public policy, public administration, environmental science, natural resource management, or similar concentration with some relevant work experience in climate resiliency or energy planning. Interested candidates can view the full description at cmrpc.org/about-us/career-opportunities. Salary Range: \$64,360 to \$80,000 commensurate with experience. Apply to: jobinquiry@cmrpc.org.

Conservation Agent

Town of Sturbridge

The town of Sturbridge, a vibrant community in south central Massachusetts, seeks an exceptional and qualified individual for the full-time position of Conservation Agent. Reporting to the Town Administrator, the Agent plans, directs, and coordinates the activities of the Conservation Department/Commission, including preparing land management plans, monitoring projects, and working with the public. Position range is \$72,984 to \$102,180, anticipated hiring range is \$72,984 to \$86,000, DOQE. For complete description and requirements, visit the town's website at www.sturbridge.gov/your-government/pages/job-opportunities. Submit cover letter, resume and relevant certification(s) to Robin A. Grimm, Ph.D., Town Administrator, 308 Main St., Sturbridge, MA 01566. Electronic submissions preferred to rgrimm@sturbridge.gov. Sturbridge is an EOE.

Civil Engineer II

City of Newburyport

The Department of Public Services (DPS) Engineering Division is seeking a person to provide civil engineering assistance to the City Engineer, with particular focus on stormwater management. The Engineering Division provides technical assistance to the DPS and other city departments for all civil engineering-related matters including, but not limited to, water, sewer, roadway, stormwater, site development and other public works functions. The Engineering Division reports to the DPS Director and DPS Deputy Director. This is a full-time salaried position with a schedule of Monday through Friday 7 a.m.-3 p.m. The salary is \$86,000. Please review the full job description on the city of Newburyport website for more information on detailed requirements and essential functions: www.cityofnewburyport.com. Required Qualifications: Education, Training and Experience: Bachelor of Science or Science Technology degree in civil engineering or related field from an ABET-accredited institution required. Four to six years of increasing responsible general civil/site engineering design experience in utilities, roadway/highway design, stormwater management systems, and site development preferred. Experience in construction phase services preferred. Current Massachusetts driver's license with no driving-related restrictions. Must be able to successfully pass a CORI check. Any interested party should send a cover letter and resume to Director of Human Resources Newburyport City Hall, 60 Pleasant St., PO Box 55, Newburyport, MA 01950 or email to employment@cityofnewburyport.com. The city of Newburyport is an equal opportunity employer. The city of Newburyport does not discriminate in hiring or employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, genetic information, national origin, ancestry, disability, veteran status or membership in the armed services, marital status, or any other protected category under federal or state law.

Part-Time Clerical Position

Town of Braintree

Braintree Retirement Board seeks a detail-oriented person to fill a part-time, non-benefit position for 19 hours per week. This position has the potential for job growth. The candidate must be a high school graduate, be proficient in basic grammar and have excellent math skills. The candidate must be willing to be flexible and occasionally alter hours or work additional hours as needed. This position requires phone skills, interpersonal and effective communication skills to assist members of the retirement system. The primary function of this position is to support and supplement the two full-time staff members. Strong office skills, familiarity with Microsoft Excel and Word is desired. For a complete job description, contact Dennis Gallagher, Director at dgallagher@braintreema.gov. Salary: \$27.83/hour to start; CORI and pre-employment physical is mandatory; Braintree is an equal opportunity employer. Resumes and cover letters must be submitted to dgallagher@braintreema.gov or can be mailed to Braintree Retirement Board, 74 Pond St., 2nd Floor, Braintree, MA 02184. Resumes being accepted until March 20.

Director of Planning and Community Development

City of Easthampton

The city of Easthampton is a small city in western

Massachusetts with a thriving and vibrant community, increasing economic growth, expanding housing production, and a focus on enhancing all forms of infrastructure. The city is seeking a skilled professional to fill the Director of Planning and Community Development role to help the city fulfill established goals and create a vision for the future. The ideal candidate will have experience overseeing staff, applying for and managing grants, and fostering a sense of community. Salary Range: \$80,000-\$95,000 annually. Schedule: Monday-Thursday; 37.5 hrs/week. To see the full position posting and apply, please visit www.easthamptonma.gov.

Health Inspector

Town of Ludlow

The town of Ludlow is seeking a qualified candidate to fill the position of Health Inspector. Position is responsible for conducting all inspections for the town pursuant to federal food codes, Massachusetts sanitary code, Massachusetts Title V codes, Massachusetts housing codes, as well as local regulations and bylaws. This is a full-time, benefitted position. Base pay ranges from \$31.49-\$38.05 per hour. Position is open until filled. For a complete job description and application instructions, please visit our website: www.ludlow.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2369/Health-Inspector.

Town Planner

Town of Erving

The town of Erving, Massachusetts, is seeking community minded candidates for the full-time, benefitted position of Town Planner to perform routine or semi-routine, but detailed or complex, administrative duties and supports the day-to-day operation of planning, land use, economic development, coordinating both short- and long-range plans, and grant funded activities. The ideal candidate will hold a baccalaureate degree in a discipline related to planning, grant strategies, or business development; with a minimum of three to five years as a Town Planner or experience in public sector planning; and must demonstrate a track record of substantive level of responsibility with grant applications, planning projects, and project management. Anticipated hiring range is \$34.47/hour to \$36.57/hour and is commensurate with education and experience. Increases are granted as determined by the Select Board and voted at Town Meeting, in accordance with classification and pay plans/personnel policies. Excellent benefits include vacation leave, sick leave, military leave, 12 paid holidays, three paid personal days, dental insurance, vision insurance, and health insurance with a current employer contribution of 84%. Interested candidates can obtain the position description and employment application by visiting: www.erving-ma.gov/employment. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

Housing Director

Town of Provincetown

The Housing Director reports to the Town Manager. They are responsible for leading initiatives that promote and enhance Provincetown's housing goals and policies, managing the town's housing programs, advancing projects that create long-term housing and supporting economic stability while providing guidance and support to several housing advocacy boards, committees, and groups. This position starts with a scale of \$100,000 to \$130,000+, depending on qualifications. For more information, visit www.provincetown-ma.gov/6/Employment or contact hr@provincetown-ma.gov.

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Classified Advertisements

CLASSIFIEDS

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Director of Planning and Economic Development

Town of Plainville

The town of Plainville is seeking a highly motivated and skilled professional to lead our Planning Department as the Director of Planning and Economic Development. This pivotal role is responsible for steering the implementation of the town of Plainville master plan, overseeing short- and long-term land use plans, and guiding community development efforts to ensure smart growth and sustainable development within our community. The Director provides essential technical assistance to key town boards, including the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, and Select Board, under the appointment and direction of the Town Administrator. This position demands a proactive leader who will navigate the complexities of land use issues, development review processes, and community planning with a strategic and comprehensive approach, adhering to Massachusetts general laws, town policies, bylaws, and federal regulations. The ideal candidate will possess a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in planning, public policy, or a related field, complemented by AICP certification (preferred but not required) and 10 years of progressively responsible experience in land use planning and/or economic development, with a preference for municipal experience or a combination of experience and education. This role requires a thorough understanding of municipal land use and planning regulations, the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships, and superior communication and organizational skills. The Director will oversee the Planning Division's annual budget, establish departmental goals, pursue grant opportunities, and serve as a liaison to businesses, development communities, and various governmental agencies. Regular attendance and some evening meetings are required, along with occasional outdoor inspectional fieldwork. Join our team and contribute to shaping the future of Plainville, ensuring a balanced and prosperous development that aligns with our community's values and goals. The town of Plainville is committed to equal opportunity, pay equity, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you are a visionary leader with a passion for community planning and development, we encourage you to apply for this exciting opportunity to make a significant impact in the town of Plainville. For more information, please see the town's website posting at www.plainville.ma.us/Jobs.aspx.

SERVICES

Municipal Energy Services

Through the MMA's MunEnergy program, MMA members have access to an energy contract designed exclusively for Massachusetts cities and towns. The MunEnergy program offers access to energy experts at Constellation, a vetted municipal energy contract, and options for sustainability programs. Energy professionals at Constellation, the MMA-endorsed supplier for MunEnergy, work with municipalities to manage electricity costs for the long-term. Constellation is also on the forefront of sustainability programs and provides financial support to the MMA for its

promotional and marketing efforts. To learn more, visit www.mma.org/munenergy. To be notified about MunEnergy events, send contact information for the person on your team who handles energy for your city or town to energy@mma.org.

Municipal Accounting and Consulting Services

Our outstanding team specializes in municipal financial consulting and outsourced accounting. Since 2008, we have worked with many Massachusetts cities and towns with interim accounting, special projects, fraud risk assessments, financial forecasts, and budgeting. We also provide permanent outsourced accounting solutions, which have proven successful for many years. Please contact Eric Kinsherf at eric@erickinsherfcpa.com or visit our website erickinsherfcpa.com for further information.

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.

Tax Title Legal Services

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

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.

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.

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.

Labor Counsel Services/Municipal Human Resources Specialists

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

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

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.

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Classified Advertisements

CLASSIFIEDS

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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 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.

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; mmaginc@gmail.com.

General Consultant, Recruiting and Special Studies

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

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.govhrjobs.com.

Town Counsel Services

KP | Law is a municipal law firm. With offices in Boston, Hyannis, Lenox, Northampton and Worcester, we serve as town counsel to more than 125 towns throughout Massachusetts, from Provincetown to

Williamstown, and as special counsel to another 90. For more than 30 years, we have devoted ourselves to municipal law and have become experts in the defense of all areas of municipal trial matters. We have specialists in all areas of municipal law and maintain an environmental and land use law department that is on the cutting edge of planning, zoning and conservation. KP | Law is highly sensitive to the limited legal services budgets of Massachusetts communities and thus has highly competitive billing rates to give your town the best quality legal counsel in the most cost-efficient manner. There is never a need for special counsel. Our breadth and depth of experience helps keep our cost per opinion to a minimum and enables us to service our clients quickly and efficiently, and is consistent with our commitment to excellence. For 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.

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 Bartlett St., Suite 186, Andover, MA 01810; 978-474-0200; hrcsconsulting@comcast.net; or visit www.hrcsconsultinginc.com. WBE certified. ●

COMMONWEALTH

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safe recreational spaces and a respite from rising temperatures, said Maura Valdez, Groundwork Southcoast's executive director.

"Our park spaces are not going to become less valuable as time goes on," Valdez said. "They are going to become more and more valuable."

— Jennifer Kavanaugh

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



Road funding discussed at LGAC

Gardner Mayor Michael Nicholson, left, and Adams Select Board Member Christine Hoyt discuss the importance of road funding during the Feb. 13 virtual meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission. Nicholson thanked the administration for filing a two-year Chapter 90 bond bill, at \$200 million a year, to help keep roads in good repair. "Chapter 90 is really how we get some of our local road projects done," he said. Hoyt thanked the administration for the supplemental local roads funding it proposed in the state budget for rural communities, which have extensive road miles but are limited in their ability to generate municipal revenue.

Calendar



The Beacon

Massachusetts Municipal Association

3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108

MARCH

- 5 MMA webinar**, procurement best practices, 12-1 p.m. Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore
- 7 Women Leading Government**, conference, 9:15 a.m.-3 p.m., Devens Common Center, Devens. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker
- 8 Massachusetts Select Board Association**, webinar on local property tax exemptions, 12-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig
- 19 MMA webinar**, digitizing municipal records, 12-1 p.m. Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore
- 20 MMA webinar**, Chapter 70, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore
- 21 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 Denise Baker or MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

26 MMA webinar, “Inspiring Climate Action” series, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

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

APRIL

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

For more information, visit www.mma.org

6 Association of Town Finance Committees, spring conference, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Pine Ridge Country Club, North Oxford. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

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

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

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

10-12 ICMA Local Government Reimaging Conference, Sheraton Boston Hotel. Contact: lgr.icma.org/boston

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

24 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors’ Association, webinar, “Parliamentary Procedure at Council Meetings,” noon-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

25 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, webinar 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

27 Massachusetts Select Board Association, Western and Rural Massachusetts Conference, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., Hotel Northampton, Northampton. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

MAY

3 Women Elected Municipal Officials, spring symposium webinar, 9-11 a.m. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

9 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, boot camp, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., The Hotel Northampton, Northampton. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

14 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors’ Association, board meeting, 8:45-9:45 a.m., Forbes Municipal Building, Westborough. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

14 MMA Board of Directors, 10-11:15 a.m., Forbes Municipal Building, Westborough. Contact: MMA Executive Director’s office

14 Massachusetts Select Board Association, board meeting, 2:15-3:30 p.m., Forbes Municipal Building, Westborough. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

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.

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