# The Beacone

Vol. 51, No. 5

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

May 2024

# House OK's \$58B state budget bill

#### By Jackie Lavender Bird

The House of Representatives has approved a \$58 billion state spending plan for fiscal 2025 that would increase the main discretionary local aid account by 1% over the current year while significantly increasing Chapter 70 school aid, in part by raising minimum new aid to \$104 per pupil.

The House's budget bill, approved on April 26, would also use funds from the Fair Share income surtax to support supplemental local road and bridge funding.

The House spent three days on its budget debate, after consolidating nearly 1,500 proposed amendments into seven categories.

#### UGGA

The House adopted the recommendation of the House Committee on Ways and Means for a 1% increase in Unrestricted General Government Aid, which would increase the account by \$12.7 million over fiscal 2024.

The MMA maintains that the House's

# Inside

Gov. signs law with shelter funds, outdoor dining	5
EPA sets drinking water PFAS limits4	ŀ
Clean energy siting group issues report5	5
MMA/MMLA comment on CCC's equity bylaw6	;
MMA Webinars1	1
Mass Innovations23	5
Around the Commonwealth24	Ļ
People26	5
Classifieds29	•
Calendar 34	Ļ

proposed increase does not reflect the fiscal realities facing cities and towns in the current economic climate, and will continue to advocate for a larger increase as the budget process continues.

#### **Chapter 70**

The House budget would increase Chapter 70 education aid by \$271 million over the current fiscal year, for a total of \$6.86 billion. The House budget would continue to fund the Student Opportunity Act on its intended schedule.

In recognition of the challenges faced by minimum-aid-only school districts, the House provided \$37 million of surtax revenue to raise the minimum new aid amount from \$30 per student to \$104. This strong statement by the House will benefit 228 of 318 public school districts. This increase to Chapter 70 minimum aid is a top priority for cities and towns, and this investment would have a tremendous impact on schools across the Commonwealth.

#### **Charter schools**

The House included \$199 million for

charter school mitigation payments, which would cover 100% of the state's statutory obligation as outlined in the Student Opportunity Act.

#### **Special Education Circuit Breaker**

The House budget includes \$492 million for the Special Education Circuit Breaker account, matching the governor's budget proposal. While this is a slight decrease from fiscal 2024, both budget plans look to leverage \$75 million included in the fiscal 2023 closeout supplemental budget to fully fund the state's obligation.

#### **Rural school aid**

The House budget includes \$7.5 million for rural school aid for eligible towns and regional school districts, which is half of the amount included in the state budget for the current year.

The rural schools grant program helps districts facing declining enrollments to identify ways to form regional school districts or regionalize certain school services to create efficiencies.

**BUDGET** continued on 20

# Legislature sends transportation bond bill to governor

#### By Adrienne Núñez

A transportation bond bill that includes \$200 million for the Chapter 90 local road and bridge program for fiscal 2025 and \$175 million for specified additional infrastructure programs has been sent to the governor for her signature.

The House and Senate passed identical bills early in April, but needed to enact the bill with roll call votes because it authorizes borrowing. Those votes happened on April 24 in the House and April 25 in the Senate.

The governor is expected to sign the bill and file a companion bond terms bill, which must go through the legislative process before funding can be made available to communities.



The Legislature has sent to the governor a \$375 million transportation bond bill that would fund road and bridge work.

In addition to funding for the <u>Chapter</u> <u>90 reimbursement program</u>, the \$375 million bond bill includes \$25 million for a supplemental road maintenance program favoring rural communities,

**TRANSPORTATION** continued on 18

#### 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.

#### **Executive Committee**

John McLaughlin, MMA President and MMCA President Councillor, Waltham

Jamie Hellen, MMA Vice President Town Administrator, Franklin

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

Ruthanne Fuller, MMaA First Vice President Mayor, Newton

Andrew Hogeland, MSA President Select Board, Williamstown

Nicole LaChapelle, MMaA President Mayor, Easthampton

John Mangiaratti, MMMA First Vice President Town Manager, Acton

Debra Roberts, MSA First Vice President Select Board, Stoughton

Kevin Sullivan, ATFC First Vice President Finance Committee, Hanson

Brendan Sweeney, MMCA First Vice President Councillor, Beverly

Melinda Tarsi, ATFC President Industrial and Development Committee, Pelham Kristi Williams, MMMA President

Town Manager, Westborough Adam Chapdelaine (non-voting)

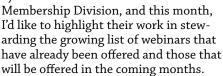
MMA Executive Director

Ted Bettencourt, Mayor, Peabody Lisa Blackmer, Councillor, North Adams Paul Bockelman, Town Manager, Amherst Denise Casey, Deputy Town Manager, North Andover Stephen Cavey, Select Board Member, Stoughton Lisa Feltner, Councillor, Watertown Claire Freda, Councillor, Leominster Josh Garcia, Mayor, Holyoke Jennifer Glass, Select Board Member, Lincoln Christine Hoyt, Select Board Member, Adams Afroz Khan, Councillor, Newburyport Aaron Langlois, Select Board Member, Oakham Andrea Llamas, Town Administrator, Northfield Breanna Lungo-Koehn, Mayor, Medford Kevin Mizikar, Town Manager, Shrewsbury Irwin Nesoff, Select Board Member, Hull Mike Nicholson, Mayor, Gardner Brad Riley, Councillor, Easthampton Moises Rodrigues, Councillor, Brockton Robert Sullivan, Mayor, Brockton Kevin Sweet, Town Administrator, Wrentham Michelle Wu, Mayor, Boston

# **Executive Director's Report**

### MMA offers robust training for municipal officials

More often than not, I dedicate this column to key legislative and policy issues facing local government. Though critically important, legislative advocacy, as most of you know, is just one part of the impactful work that the MMA does to assist municipalities across the Commonwealth. Another part of this work is performed by the Communications and



These webinars have been designed and developed with you, local officials, in mind. We know that you are facing many and varied issues on a daily basis and, often, you need quick access to resources, answers and advice in regard to solving some of the thorny challenges that you face. We also know that you are very busy and not always able to dedicate time to traveling to meetings or training on various topics. It's for these reasons that we offer our webinars in a 60- or 75-minute format during the lunch hour.

These webinars are also recorded, and can be viewed when it's convenient for you, via the MMA website or MMA On-Demand, which is a sortable and searchable library of archived webinars. With MMA On-Demand, members can



By Adam Chapdelaine

save relevant training content for later viewing, browse "101" bundles, and purchase premium content.

Already in 2024, we've offered a robust lineup of webinars, all of which have been well-attended, covering a range of timely topics that are directly responsive to the challenges you're facing in your communities.

Some of these offerings have focused on administration and finance-related topics such as Chapter 70: Understanding the Funding Formula for Education. Municipal Finance 101: Budgeting and Best Practices, and Perfecting Your Procurement Process: Best Practices and Lessons Learned.

Additional offerings range from Flag Flying Policies and Requests: What Municipalities Need to Know to Digitizing Municipal Records: Guidelines for Getting Started, to Parliamentary Procedure at Council Meetings: A Practitioner's View.

We also offered a two-part series focused on navigating difficult conversations: Empathetic Dialogue in Volatile Times and Practical Tips for Productive Dialogue.

Additionally, we have embarked upon a series of climate-focused webinars, the "Inspiring Climate Action" series, which DIRECTOR'S REPORT continued on 20

# Beacon

May 2024 | Volume 51, Number 5 Copyright © 2024, Massachusetts Municipal Association

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

**Massachusetts Municipal Association** 

Twitter and Facebook: @massmunicipal

617-426-7272 · www.mma.org

Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association

3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108

**Membership** Director Candace Pierce Adam Chapdelaine Full Circle Design

TheBeacon (ISSN 0199-235X) is published monthly, except for a combined July-August issue, by the Massachusetts Municipal Association, 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108. The MMA is composed of the Massachusetts Select Board Association, the Massachusetts Mayors' Association, the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, and the Association of Town Finance Committees.

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

# Gov. signs law with shelter funds, outdoor dining

#### By Ali DiMatteo

Gov. Maura Healey has signed a fiscal 2024 supplemental budget bill that provides funding for the state's emergency shelter system, places new limits on shelter stays, and codifies pandemic-era authorizations related to outdoor dining and to-go cocktails.

The \$426 million bill was enacted by the House and Senate on April 25, a day after it was released by a House-Senate conference committee. The governor signed it on April 30.

The new law codifies local licensing authority for permits for expanded outdoor dining and allows to-go cocktails with take out food orders, excluding beer and wine. Both of these popular pandemic-era provisions had expired on April 1.

The law appropriates \$251 million from the state's transitional escrow account to fund ongoing emergency shelter needs through the end of fiscal 2024, while allowing another \$175 million to be pulled from the account for fiscal 2025. The transitional escrow account was created in recent fiscal years when the state realized substantial surplus revenue.

The law establishes a nine-month limit



Gov. Maura Healey has signed a fiscal 2024 supplemental budget bill codifying pandemic-era authorizations related to outdoor dining and to-go cocktails.

on the length of stay for families in emergency shelters. Families are eligible for up to two 90-day extensions if they meet certain requirements, including if they are employed, in a training program, pregnant or disabled. The law allows for a further hardship waiver in certain circumstances, but these must be certified by the state housing secretary.

Some of the law's shelter funding would be dedicated to workforce development, with the goal of helping families exit the system, including \$10 million for an approved training program.

Roughly 7,500 families are enrolled in the state's emergency assistance shelter

The new law codifies local licensing authority for permits for expanded outdoor dining and allows to-go cocktails with take out food orders, excluding beer and wine. Both of these popular pandemic-era provisions had expired on April 1.

program, according to the administration's <u>shelter data dashboard</u>, with about half of them living in overflow accommodations in hotels and motels in communities across the state.

On March 18, Healey filed an additional fiscal 2024 supplemental budget bill aimed at funding human services and early education programs. The second bill, totalling \$535 million, would be funded primarily through federal reimbursements, using just over \$88 million in state spending. That bill is now with the House Committee on Ways and Means. ●

### **Rural Roadway Funding now available to communities**

#### By Adrienne Núñez

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has announced that \$25 million in supplemental funding included in a fiscal 2024 transportation bond bill is now available to municipalities for road and bridge repair and construction.

By statute, the <u>Rural Roadway Funding</u> <u>Program</u> will be distributed to all communities through a formula that favors rural communities, with apportionments based 20% on road miles, 20% on population, and 60% on whether a community is considered rural. For this program, rural communities are defined as having a population of less than 10,000 and a population density of fewer than 500 people per square mile.

On April 9, MassDOT said apportionments have been added to each city and town's Chapter 90 account. The funding must be spent according to <u>Chapter 90</u>

\_\_\_\_\_

rules and procedures, with no spending deadline.

The Rural Roadway program provides significant supplemental support for many rural communities, in some cases matching or even exceeding a community's typical Chapter 90 apportionment. In communities that have very limited tax bases and ability to generate additional revenue — but many miles of local roads — the additional funding can be transformational to support keeping local roads and bridges in a state of good repair.

#### Fiscal 2025

The transportation bond bill currently before the Legislature, for fiscal 2025, includes \$200 million for Chapter 90, \$150 million in authorizations for transportation-related accounts, and a \$25 million authorization to continue the Rural Roads Funding Program. The House and Senate both passed the bill this month, but it awaits final enactment before it can be sent to the governor for her approval.

Additional supplemental funding for municipal roads and bridges has been proposed in the fiscal 2025 state budget process. The <u>budget bill proposed by</u> <u>the governor in January</u> included \$124 million in supplemental support. <u>The</u> <u>budget plan released by the House</u> <u>Ways and Means Committee</u> on April 10 proposed \$25 million to supplement Chapter 90, funded through Fair Share surtax revenues.

The MMA is advocating for at least \$350 million in discretionary funding for municipal roads and bridges in fiscal 2025. With \$225 million set to be enacted through the transportation bond bill, supplemental aid is sought through the state budget process.

# **EPA sets national limits on PFAS contamination**

#### By Josie Ahlberg and John Ouellette

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has issued the first-ever national, legally enforceable drinking water standard to protect communities from exposure to harmful per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as "forever chemicals."

The new standards represent the most significant step to protect public health under the <u>EPA's PFAS Strategic Roadmap</u>. The EPA says the final rule will reduce PFAS exposure for approximately 100 million people, prevent thousands of deaths, and avoid tens of thousands of serious illnesses. Exposure to PFAS has been linked to deadly cancers, impacts to the liver and heart, and immune and developmental damage to infants and children.

The EPA's announcement on April 10 complements the Biden administration's <u>government-wide action plan</u> to combat PFAS pollution.

The EPA is also making unprecedented funding available to help ensure that all people have clean and safe water, announcing nearly \$1 billion in newly available funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to help states and territories implement PFAS testing and treatment at public water systems and to help owners of private wells address PFAS contamination. The funding is part of a \$9 billion investment through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to help communities with drinking water that is impacted by PFAS and other emerging contaminants. An additional \$12 billion is available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for general drinking water improvements,



New federal drinking water rules aim to protect against exposure to "forever chemicals."

including addressing emerging contaminants like PFAS.

#### **New limits**

The EPA is establishing legally enforceable levels for several PFAS known to occur individually and as mixtures in drinking water. This rule sets limits for five individual PFAS: PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFHxS, and HFPO-DA (also known as "GenX Chemicals").

The rule also sets a limit for mixtures of any two or more of four PFAS: PFNA, PFHxS, PFBS, and HFPO-DA. The enforceable level for mixtures will use a Hazard Index. (See the EPA's <u>Hazard Index Fact</u> <u>Sheet</u> for details.)

The following are the Maximum Contaminant Levels (enforceable levels) for each compound:

- PFOA: 4.0 parts per trillion (ppt)
- PFOS: 4.0 ppt
- PFHxS: 10 ppt
- PFNA: 10 ppt
- HFPO-DA: 10 ppt
- Mixtures containing two or more of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA and PFBS: 1 Hazard Index



#### Mayors focus on energy, environment

María Belén Power, left, undersecretary of environmental justice and equity, and Katherine Antos, undersecretary of decarbonization and resilience, discuss their work at the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs during the April 24 meeting of the Massachusetts Mayors' Association in Taunton. They spoke about state grants, and programs to address climate equity, decarbonization, resilience and mitigation.

#### Compliance

The EPA estimates that between about 6% and 10% of the 66,000 public drinking water systems subject to the new rule may have to take action to reduce PFAS to meet the new standards.

All public water systems have three years to complete their initial monitoring for these chemicals, and they must inform the public of the level of PFAS measured in their drinking water. Where PFAS is found at levels that exceed the new Maximum Contaminant Levels, systems must implement solutions to reduce PFAS in their drinking water within five years.

The EPA says the new limits are achievable using a range of available technologies and approaches, including granular activated carbon, reverse osmosis, and ion exchange systems.

The federal agency says it will be working closely with state co-regulators in supporting water systems and local officials to implement the new rule. The EPA hosted a series of webinars in April to provide information to the public, communities, and water utilities about the final PFAS drinking water regulation.

For more information, visit the EPA's <u>PFAS drinking water regulation webpage</u>. The EPA has also published a <u>toolkit of</u> <u>communications resources</u> to help drinking water systems and community leaders educate the public about PFAS, where they come from, their health risks, how to reduce exposure, and the new EPA rule.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection recommends that public water systems review their PFAS monitoring results and contact their regional PFAS representative if levels exceed the new thresholds to schedule technical assistance meetings and discuss next steps. The regional representatives are: Western, Timothy Strzepa, Timothy. Strzepa@mass.gov; Central, Robert Botswick, Robert.Bostwick@mass.gov; Northeast, Amy LaPusata, Amy.Lapusata@ mass.gov; Southeast, William Schwartz, William.Schwartz@mass.gov.

For additional assistance, contact the MassDEP's Drinking Water Program at program.director-dwp@mass.gov with the subject "PFAS," or call 617-292-5570.

MassDEP also has a <u>PFAS web page</u> and has issued a <u>notice to all public water systems regarding the new EPA regulation</u>.

# **Clean energy siting group makes recommendations**

#### By Adrienne Núñez and Josie Ahlberg

The Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting has published its recommendations for reforms to the siting and permitting processes associated with clean energy infrastructure.

Gov. Maura Healey established the special commission last September to develop recommendations to reduce barriers to the development of clean energy infrastructure — particularly generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure — that will be necessary to meet the goals of the Commonwealth's <u>Clean</u> <u>Energy and Climate Plan</u>, which calls for significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050.

Massachusetts will need to double electricity from solar photovoltaic generation, install 3,200 megawatts of offshore wind, and install more than 2,500 megawatts of additional energy storage by 2030, according to the <u>commission's</u> <u>report</u>.

Also needed are the transmission and distribution infrastructure necessary to interconnect these resources and deliver electricity to customers.

The <u>special commission</u> was tasked with developing recommendations 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 commission met for about seven months, held two public hearings, and received more than 1,500 public comments. Its recommendations on administrative, regulatory and legislative changes to existing permitting and siting procedures were submitted to the governor on March 29.

#### **Commission's areas of concern**

The commission's report identifies three main areas of concern:

1. Community engagement and protections for health, safety and community livability: There must be meaningful community engagement at impactful times, as well as clear information about health and safety impacts.

2. Environmental protections: Siting and permitting reforms must consider



A special commission has released recommendations to reform the siting and permitting processes for clean energy infrastructure.

the future of natural and working lands, climate resiliency, biodiversity, and environmental equity and justice.

3. Process inadequacies: State and local governmental bodies are understaffed and under-resourced to reach climate goals, and current siting and permitting processes have redundancies, as well as differences across communities. Local and municipal interests, regulations, and statutes can be misaligned, and opportunities for appeals can cause project delays.

A central theme of the recommendations is to consolidate approval processes into one central permit approval process.

The commission's recommendations include:

- Defining clean energy infrastructure
- Reforming the <u>Energy Facilities</u> <u>Siting Board</u> and processes in other jurisdictions
- Reforming local permitting processes
- Prioritizing siting by creating a methodology to identify preferred areas for clean energy infrastructure while avoiding, minimizing and mitigating siting impacts in areas of environmental and land use concern
- Requiring "pre-filing" information and community engagement from project applicants

State laws lack a clear, current definition of clean energy infrastructure, so the special commission has offered language to define anaerobic digestion facilities, clean energy infrastructure, clean generation and storage infrastructure, clean transmission and distribution infrastructure, and solar and wind facilities. The

commission also identified key types of facilities and various thresholds associated with who has jurisdiction.

The commission recommended that "larger" energy projects be under the jurisdiction of a reformed Energy Facilities Siting Board, and "smaller" energy projects remain under the jurisdiction of municipalities through a reformed process. Small projects include solar generation of less than 25 megawatts and energy storage of less than 100 megawatt hours.

#### **Proposed new process**

The commission recommends that a process be established for the Energy Facilities Siting Board to issue a single consolidated permit for large clean energy infrastructure projects, which would be equivalent to the issuance of the current Certificate of Environmental Impact and Public Interest, as well as all state, regional and local permits required for construction and operation. Affected municipalities would be required to submit statements of recommended permit conditions, with an opportunity for public comment.

The new EFSB would include municipal representation and would require additional staffing to support its work.

The commission recommends that the new EFSB finalize permit decisions within six to 15 months of application.

The process would include a required pre-filing engagement process followed by a completeness determination, public notice, public hearing, procedural conference, procedural order, statements of recommended permit conditions, EFSB adjudication and evidentiary hearings, a tentative decision, comments, final decision, and constructive approval.

For small clean energy infrastructure projects, the commission recommends mandating a consolidated local-level permitting process, which would encompass all local permits required for construction and operation. Additional state, regional or federal permits would not be included, and may be required to be obtained outside of the local process.

#### New oversight of local process

The report recommends establishing a Division of Energy Siting and Permitting, housed within the Department of Energy

**SITING** continued on 28

# MMA, MMLA weigh in on CCC's equity bylaw/ordinance

#### By Ali DiMatteo

The MMA and the Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association jointly submitted <u>comments to the Cannabis</u> <u>Control Commission on April 25</u> raising serious concerns about the CCC's draft <u>Model Municipal Equity Bylaw or</u> <u>Ordinance Template</u>.

The comments address issues including the proposed timeline, conflicting governance, ambiguities, and burdensome requirements for municipalities.

"Municipalities are eager to be good-faith partners with cannabis licensees and support equity [within] their borders," the MMA and MMLA wrote in their conclusion, "but they cannot bear the onus of creating equity within the industry, a responsibility that is better served by regulators and those within the industry."

The CCC published the draft template on April 2 and accepted public comment through April 25. two years ago (<u>Chapter 180 of the Acts</u> of 2022) requires the CCC to develop policies and procedures to ensure that those who have been disproportionately harmed by the enforcement of marijuana laws are guaranteed fair and equitable access to the industry and to promote their full participation. This work includes advisory guidelines, best practices and minimum acceptable policy standards.

The CCC's equity guidance states that municipalities that host cannabis retailers, whether recreational or medical, will need to take one of three recommended actions in order to comply with the new standards:

- Adopt the Model Municipal Equity Bylaw or Ordinance once it is finalized by the CCC
- Adopt their own bylaw or ordinance to exclusively permit social equity businesses for a period of three years
- Create a local approval process for equity applicants on a one-to-one

basis, approving other applicants only after a social equity business has begun operations and half of licensees operating in the municipality are social equity businesses

The CCC's model equity bylaw/ordinance would require the municipality to:

- Post its local requirements, process and contacts related to local cannabis license approval
- Create a municipal equity plan for its cannabis licensing
- Create policies and procedures to ensure equity applicants are identified for preference

The model would also require municipalities to fulfill a number of "equity standards," including providing translators or interpreters, as well as certain contract flexibilities.

The CCC is reviewing the comments it received on its model equity bylaw/ordinance and is expected to vote on a final template at its next meeting on May 9.

#### The comprehensive cannabis law enacted

# **Administration releases Priority Climate Action Plan**

#### By Josie Ahlberg

The Healey-Driscoll administration has filed a Massachusetts Priority Climate Action Plan that identifies some of the "most effective and implementation-ready" ways that the state and municipalities can reduce pollution during an upcoming implementation process.

The plan is the first of two deliverables required from the state by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as part of the planning phase for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program.

The two-stage CPRG program will use nearly \$5 billion in Inflation Reduction Act funds to plan for and later deploy greenhouse gas reduction strategies.

The <u>state's PCAP</u>, prepared in partnership with the Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, was submitted to the EPA in March. It is not intended to replace or override existing climate and clean energy plans, but to supplement them and prepare Massachusetts for federal funding opportunities.

The Massachusetts PCAP identifies greenhouse gas reduction measures in five key sectors:

- **Transportation:** includes adoption of zero-emission, medium- and heavyduty vehicles, adoption of zero-emission light-duty vehicles, and the increase of alternatives to personal vehicle use
- **Buildings:** focuses on increasing building efficiency and the decarbonization of heating systems
- **Power:** recommends the development of new renewable energy facilities, the implementation of building-scale renewables, and maximizing use of clean energy
- Natural and Working Lands: highlights implementation of naturebased solutions
- **Waste:** includes reduction of organic waste through composting

The administration released a <u>straw pro-</u> <u>posal</u> for the Priority Climate Action Plan in January and accepted public comment through Feb. 15.

A Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, or CCAP, will be the next deliverable required to continue the planning process, which will allow Massachusetts to be eligible to receive implementation grants in the future. The CCAP will provide additional



John Rogan, who works for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region 1 Air and Radiation Division, discusses the Climate Pollution Reduction grant program during an <u>MMA webinar in March 2023</u>.

information on both near-term and longterm greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. This plan must be submitted to the EPA by July 1, 2025.

The MMA hosted an introductory <u>webinar</u> <u>on the CPRG program</u> in March 2023, which is available through <u>MMA On-</u> <u>Demand</u> (requires login) or on <u>www.mma.</u> <u>org</u>.

PCAPs from other states and details on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program are available on the <u>EPA's program</u> <u>website</u>. Questions on the federal program can be directed to CPRG@epa.gov.

# **Administration launches 'Climate Action' campaign**

#### By Josie Ahlberg

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has launched a statewide media campaign intended to raise awareness about the impacts of climate change, as well as opportunities for individual and collective action.

The goal of the "Everyone Can Take Climate Action" campaign is to provide resources to help residents shift behaviors to mitigate their environmental impacts.

The campaign's sections highlight strategies for various areas of everyday life:

- In Your Home addresses home energy assessments, weatherization, airsource heat pumps and heat pump water heaters, leveraging incomebased energy assistance programs and federal tax credits for home improvements, and managing flooding and stormwater.
- On the Go focuses on the transportation sector, which accounts for a significant portion of carbon emissions, by addressing electric vehicle adoption and the buildout of necessary charging infrastructure,



A new climate action media campaign encourages residents to shift behaviors and lessen environmental impacts.

and highlighting how public transportation, bikes, e-bikes, and e-scooters reduce individual and collective emissions.

- From the Sun promotes residential solar energy or subscribing to a local community solar farm, both of which advance clean energy and reduce electricity bills.
- In Your Yard promotes planting and maintaining trees to remove carbon emissions from the air, provide shade, and store water to reduce inland flooding.

Resources on the <u>Everyone Can Take</u> <u>Climate Action website</u> include information about regional impacts of climate change, statewide climate plans, and community and statewide resilience initiatives.

#### MMA climate webinars

The MMA is hosting its own "Inspiring Climate Action" webinar series throughout 2024 to explore how climate change impacts municipalities and how municipal officials and staff can take action.

The first three webinars, held on March 26 and April 18 and 30, are available through <u>MMA On-Demand</u> (requires login) or on <u>www.mma.org</u>:

- <u>Inspiring Climate Action: A Fireside</u> <u>Chat With Climate Chief Melissa</u> <u>Hoffer</u>
- <u>Inspiring Climate Action: From</u> <u>Planning to Practice</u>
- <u>Inspiring Climate Action: Effective</u> <u>Community Engagement Strategies</u>

Upcoming webinars will focus on how municipalities can promote climate resilience and mitigation work, as well as decarbonization efforts, stretch and specialized energy codes, and more.

## \$1.4B awarded for wastewater, drinking water infrastructure projects

#### By Josie Ahlberg

The Healey-Driscoll administration has announced more than \$1.4 billion in funding for 168 projects that will help improve water quality, upgrade or replace aging drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, and support energy efficiency measures for water treatment facilities.

The grants and low-interest-rate loans, announced on March 26, include \$932 million for 49 individual clean water construction projects and \$503 million for 50 drinking water construction projects.

The funds are made available by the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and the Clean Water State Revolving Fund through the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust.

The investments will contribute to projects such as PFAS treatment plants,



More than \$1.4 billion in state funding will support upgrades or replacements for aging drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, as well as energy efficiency measures for water treatment facilities.

> water system expansions, rehabilitation of key infrastructure, improvements to wastewater pumping stations, sewer expansions, and stormwater management systems. Twenty projects will promote renewable energy, energy efficiency, or green infrastructure elements to align with the goals of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's <u>Clean Energy Results</u> <u>Program</u>.

- <u>2024 intended use plan for Clean</u> <u>Water SRF awards</u>
- <u>2024 intended use plan for Drinking</u> <u>Water SRF awards</u>

Sixty-nine Asset Management Planning projects were awarded grants totalling \$8 million. The Asset Management Planning Grant Program helps municipalities and public water systems and districts to complete, update, or implement an asset management program for wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water utilities. According to the program website, this program provides grants with a maximum award of \$150,000 or 60% of the total eligible project cost, whichever is less.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection is expected to open the next round of solicitations for proposals for the SRF program by May 15. <u>The MassDEP website has more</u> <u>information on SRF programs</u>.

# Sen. Markey offers help for 'green' school projects

U.S. Sen. Ed Markey is reminding school districts that do not file federal taxes that they are eligible for some fully refundable credits this fiscal year under the Inflation Reduction Act, particularly for green infrastructure (e.g., installing heat pumps or buying electric vehicles).

Schools may also be eligible to access other grants and credits through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act).

Markey's office has created guides that compile information on the tax credits and grants available related to the <u>Green</u> <u>New Deal</u>, <u>Infrastructure Investment</u> <u>and Jobs Act</u> and <u>Inflation Reduction</u> <u>Act</u>.

The office recently hosted a presentation on direct "elective pay" (the provision that allows schools and other tax-exempt entities to receive refundable tax credits) with the Department of Treasury.

With elective pay, tax-exempt and governmental entities that do not owe federal income taxes are, for the first time, able to receive a payment equal to the full value of tax credits for building qualifying clean energy projects or making qualifying investments. Unlike competitive grant and loan programs, in which applicants may not receive an



Some school districts are eligible for credits this fiscal year under the Inflation Reduction Act for green infrastructure such as heat pumps.

award, elective pay allows entities to get their payment if they meet the requirements for both elective pay and the underlying tax credit. Applicable entities can use elective pay for 12 clean energy tax credits.

The following are some additional related resources:

- IRS.gov/ElectivePay
- IRS: Elective Pay FAQs
- <u>CleanEnergy.gov/DirectPay</u>
- IRS: Credits and deductions under the IRA
- <u>White House Inflation Reduction Act</u> <u>Guidebook</u>

The World Resources Institute's <u>Electric</u>

impacted by the

transition away

from fossil fuels

Transformation

Task Force, bring-

holders including

nesses, labor, and

municipalities,

utilities, busi-

ing together stake-

Lavinson will also

convene an Energy

School Bus Initiative offers free online resources and free technical assistance to school districts adding electric school buses to their fleets. The institute has worked with Boston Public Schools and would be happy to work with other districts around the state.

#### <u>UndauntedK12</u> has <u>re-</u>

sources and a fact sheet on federal funding available to schools through the IRA and IIJA. The organization has interest in work-

ing with more Massachusetts school communities.

The Department of Energy has opened applications for the 2024 <u>Renew</u> <u>America's Schools Prize</u>, which will award \$180 million to districts across the country engaging in strategic partnerships to build capacity and implement energy upgrades at K-12 schools, lowering energy use and costs, improving indoor air quality, and fostering healthier learning environments.

Questions on any of these programs may be directed to Sade\_Nabahe@markey.senate.gov or Katherine\_Morfill@markey.senate.gov.

## **Director takes helm at new Office of the Energy Transformation**

#### By Josie Ahlberg

On May 1, Melissa Lavinson began her role as executive director of the new Office of the Energy Transformation.

The office was created to support and implement the ongoing clean energy transition. Its responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that the Commonwealth's electrical infrastructure, regulations, and supply chain are prepared for increased electric demand
- Working with electric and gas utilities to create a coordinated approach to the transition, with a focus on reliability, safety and affordability for all parties
- Developing a roadmap to prepare and empower the businesses and thousands of workers who will be



Melissa Lavinson

supply chain partners to assist in the acceleration of this work and to identify roadblocks to progress.

"Melissa Lavinson joins our team with close working relationships with the utilities and unions and will be able to build quick consensus as we make the transition away from fossil fuels," Gov. Maura Healey said in a prepared <u>statement announcing the appointment</u> <u>in March</u>. "She'll be able to translate our policy goals into real-world actions."

The Office of the Energy Transformation will be housed within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

Lavinson's new role is the first position of its kind in the nation. She previously worked at National Grid, New England, where she served as head of corporate affairs.

# EPA awards \$156M to state for Solar for All program

The Healey-Driscoll administration has announced that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will be awarding \$156 million to Massachusetts under the Solar for All competition, a \$7 billion program that is part of the Inflation Reduction Act's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

With the funding, the Massachusetts Solar for All program expects to deploy 125 megawatts of solar capacity, provide a 20% reduction in energy costs to more than 31,000 low-income and disadvantaged households, support 2,800 clean energy jobs, and decrease annual carbon emissions by 70,500 tons, according to the administration. The federal funding is expected to mobilize an estimated \$286 million in other private capital.

In a statement on April 22, Gov. Maura Healey called the Inflation Reduction Act "a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fund state climate action" and said Massachusetts is "leading the pack once again."

"We've adopted a strategy that combines housing affordability and climate policy," she said, "supporting our residents in accessing the important cost and health benefits that come with solar energy."

A coalition led by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources and including the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, MassHousing, and the Boston Housing Authority submitted the state's application. Massachusetts, qualifying as a Medium Program, received one of the largest state awards and the largest award in New England. The governor thanked President Joe Biden's administration and the state's congressional delegation for their support.

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll highlighted the team approach.

"Instead of dozens of small applications coming from our state competing against each other, we worked with over 80 stakeholders and communities to put forward a single strong application," she said. "That's the power of partnership in a high-stakes federal competition."

The <u>Solar for All</u> program will be available to all Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities across Massachusetts to maximize program participation and impact in historically underserved communities.

"With Solar for All, the people most deeply impacted by extreme weather and pollution will be at the front of the line for clean, affordable, locally produced energy," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper. "Residents will be able to look around their communities and see tangible benefits of the clean energy transition thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act solar panels on roofs, local workers with good-paying jobs, and cleaner air for us all to breathe."

Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer said Solar for All will build on other initiatives like the Massachusetts Community Climate Bank to leverage public and private funds to promote housing affordability and



The Massachusetts Solar for All program expects to achieve 20% in energy cost savings for more than 31,000 low-income and disadvantaged households.

clean energy.

Energy Resources Commissioner Elizabeth Mahony will oversee the program.

Planned components of the Massachusetts Solar for All program include a residential interest-free loan initiative, a residential lease initiative, a public affordable housing procurement initiative, a private affordable housing financing initiative, and a low-income community shared solar initiative. The program will include funding for technical assistance, education, outreach, quality assurance, and workforce training.

Solar for All will combine the state's solar energy and building decarbonization expertise at DOER and MassCEC with the housing finance and development expertise of MassHousing and Boston Housing Authority. In addition, the collaboration leverages the state's creation

**SOLAR** continued on 25

Law Enforcement

Only MMA mem-

bers may register

for this webinar.

Members include

ed officials from

the state. Media

members are not

MMA member

appointed or elect-

communities across

Liability categories.

# MMA to host 'Municipal Law 101' webinar on May 8

The MMA and the municipal law team at Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Lehane will host a boot camp for municipal officials on May 8.

Attorneys Peter Mello, Madison Harris-Parks, and Karis North will review key regulatory concepts, including ethics, the public record law, and the open meeting law — essential rules that influence daily operations at the local level.

The 75-minute webinar will begin at noon.

This webinar is open to newly appointed and elected municipal officials, as well as veterans. <u>Registration is available</u> <u>online</u>.



Karis North

This webinar qualifies MIIA members for 0.25% credit under the fiscal 2024 MIIA Rewards program under the Public Officials Liability, School Board Liability or



Madison Harris-Parks



Peter Mello

permitted to attend.

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

# MSA conference covers rural issues, priorities

#### By Anneke Craig

The Massachusetts Select Board Association held its eighth annual Rural and Western Massachusetts Conference in Northampton on April 27.

Rural Affairs Director Anne Gobi opened with a keynote presentation reviewing rural priorities in the governor's budget, the Municipal Empowerment Act, and the administration's economic development plan and bond bill.

Gobi acknowledged the advocacy efforts of attendees and their dedication to addressing the unique challenges facing rural communities.

"In your world, it's not just one note you're dealing with," she said. "It's constant ... and you have to make symphonies!"

Gobi's colleague, Rural Programs Manager Mallory Sullivan, gave an overview of development opportunities available to rural cities and towns through the <u>Community One Stop for</u> <u>Growth</u> portal. She highlighted successful projects from previous years, including the demolition of aging and hazardous buildings in Erving and the creation of a community wood bank for low-income residents in Buckland.

She reminded attendees about the June 5 deadline for the current application period.

During the second session, Sen. Joanne Comerford, MMA Legislative Analyst Adrienne Núñez, and Franklin Regional



Rural Affairs Director Anne Gobi discusses the state's priorities for rural communities during the Massachusetts Select Board Association's Rural and Western Massachusetts Conference on April 27 in Northampton.

Council of Governments Executive Director Linda Dunlavy gave updates on a number of rural legislative and budget priorities, such as funding for a state disaster relief program, public health, water and sewer infrastructure, and affordable housing.

"We know that Massachusetts wants housing, and that we have to grow to survive and do it smartly," said Comerford. "We can make it better ... and have to make it better, for western communities."

In the third and final session of the day, representatives from several regional organizations discussed creative strategies for advancing affordable housing.

June Wolfe, housing director at Construct Berkshire, discussed the unique factors that have driven the



#### **MMCA** focuses on council procedures

Athena O'Keeffe, Amherst's clerk of the council, left, and Marlborough City Council President Michael Ossing discuss parliamentary procedure and council rules during an April 24 <u>webinar</u> hosted by the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association. They discussed placing, moving, referring and voting on agenda items, public comment, the role of the president and clerk, and code of conduct. O'Keeffe and Ossing offered their experience with special meetings, motions to reconsider, consent agenda use, and the use of recess.



Sen. Joanne Comerford gives updates on several rural legislative and budget priorities during the Massachusetts Select Board Association's Rural and Western Massachusetts Conference on April 27 in Northampton.

housing crisis in western Massachusetts, including aging housing stock and "millennial valley" — or the disproportionately low population of young people.

Keith Fairey, executive director of Way Finders, and Gina Govoni, executive director of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority and Rural Development Inc., discussed case studies from successful rural housing projects in South Hadley and Greenfield.

Fairey urged attendees to take advantage of current local and state-level momentum on housing solutions, including the governor's proposed Affordable Homes Act, and to continue advocating for their communities.

"The time is now," he said, "and the solutions are known."

The MSA event was co-sponsored by several regional organizations, including the Rural Policy Advisory Commission, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, and Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts.

MSA President and Williamstown Select Board Member Andy Hogeland opened the conference with a reflection on the progress made on rural representation and equity since the MSA's first rural conference was held, which was made possible by the advocacy efforts of those in attendance.

"All of the progress we've made ... didn't exist eight years ago," he said. "All that we've done is because of all that you've done." ●

# **MMA Webinars**

# **'Climate Action': Planning**

The MMA on April 18 hosted the second session in its "Inspiring Climate Action" webinar series, exploring how climate change impacts municipalities, focusing on various approaches to climate action planning.

"From Planning to Practice" discussed how climate plans can help communities garner public support, lay the groundwork for funding, and unify departments and committees around common goals.

Easthampton Conservation Agent Cassie Tragert said her city's <u>climate action plan</u> is essential for internal guidance and accountability.

"This is a great tool for volunteer boards and committees, who have a wide range of experience and expertise," she said. "It will also provide continuity amid staff changes."

Beverly Sustainability Director Erina Keefe and Salem Sustainability and Resiliency Director Neal Duffy reviewed their cities' <u>"Resilient Together" plan</u>, including priorities and lessons learned following implementation.

"Not every municipality will need a full, comprehensive climate action plan," Keefe said. "However, a general baseline helps support decision making and allocations of limited staff and financial resources."

When considering a joint climate action plan, Duffy added, it's important to work with a community of similar size and demographics.

"Support and collaboration are also important," he said. "Your

# **Tips for difficult conversations**

An MMA webinar on April 2 reviewed how to have productive conversations amid tension and volatility.

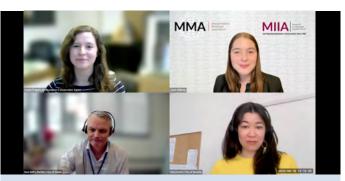
Sharon Select Board Chair Kiana Pierre-Louis, who's also assistant dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Northeastern University, began by reviewing the foundational content explored in the <u>first Conflict Conversations webinar in January</u>. She defines a "difficult conversation" as anything that can be hard to talk about.

"In today's world, everything feels so polarizing," she said. "Conflict doesn't feel good, but you must challenge yourself to sit in that discomfort.

"Difficult conversations, at their core, are rarely about getting the facts right," she continued. "They are about the conflicting perceptions and interpretations of the values of the conversation."

When navigating conflict, the greatest challenge is understanding how feelings are managed and internalized. Pierre-Louis said it's important to assume positive intent, keep an open mind, and explore compromise whenever possible.

Pierre-Louis moderated 15 minutes of questions and answers, which addressed inquiries about conflict styles, accusatory



Municipal officials discuss climate action planning during the second session in the MMA's climate webinar series. Panelists included, clockwise from top left, Easthampton Conservation Agent Cassie Tragert, MMA Legislative Analyst Josie Ahlberg, Beverly Sustainability Director Erina Keefe, and Salem Sustainability and Resiliency Director Neal Duffy.

Date: April 18 Length: 75 minutes

VIEW WEBINAR 7

partner should serve as an expansion of your internal staff and resources."

MMA Legislative Analyst Josie Ahlberg moderated 30 minutes of questions and answers, which addressed inquiries about stakeholder resistance, hiring a sustainability consultant, and applying for grant funding.

– Lily Rancatore



Sharon Select Board Chair Kiana Pierre-Louis discusses how municipal leaders can navigate difficult conversations in these especially polarizing times.

Date: April 2 Length: 60 minutes

VIEW WEBINAR 7

language, and how to have difficult conversations across power dynamics.

– Lily Rancatore

# **MMA Webinars**

# 'Climate Action': Community

The MMA on April 30 hosted the third in a series of climate change webinars, focusing on how to develop effective community engagement efforts.

Julie Gagen, sustainability coordinator in Weston, and Michele Paul, director of resilience and environmental stewardship in New Bedford, shared best practices for engaging different populations in climate planning and adapting to community needs.

"Stakeholder engagement can be daunting," Gagen said, "but the benefits are profound. It helps build trust, increase credibility, and foster innovation."

She said engaging the community in local efforts is essential because "lived experience is higher quality data than anything you can observe or measure."

Paul recommends meeting people where they are.

"Identify who's missing from the process and engage them," she said. "Join an existing meeting, walk the neighborhood, or use social media to get youth involved."

She added that "people aren't going to come to one meeting and be completely on board." It's important to "move at the speed of trust," she said.

"Have conversations with your residents about what worked and what didn't, and learn from them," she said.

MMA Legislative Analyst Josie Ahlberg moderated 30 minutes of questions and answers, addressing inquiries about connecting disengaged residents, working with business districts, and managing climate efforts without dedicated staff.

# Digital equity planning, programs

An MMA webinar on April 22 with the Massachusetts Broadband Institute discussed a process for verifying data in order to deploy federal funds to expand broadband access across the state, as well as timely MBI programming to help bridge the digital divide.

MBI Director and General Counsel Michael Baldino began with the <u>Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Challenge</u> <u>Process</u>, which is an important step in the deployment of \$147 million to expand broadband access. The MBI is required to facilitate a process to challenge the <u>Federal Communication</u> <u>Commission's National Broadband Map</u> and identify all locations that are not served.

"As a part of the state's <u>Internet for All plan</u>, the BEAD program is designed to increase access to eligible and affordable high-speed internet," he said.

MBI Senior Program Director Jody Jones said the BEAD Challenge Process "is a crucial step in ensuring the accuracy of data and maps before funds are allocated."

Jones reviewed who can submit challenges to the data, how organizations can register to become eligible entities, and the anticipated timeline.

"We anticipate the Challenge portal will open for registration



MMA Legislative Analyst Josie Ahlberg, top left, Michele Paul, top right, director of resilience and environmental stewardship in New Bedford, and Weston Sustainability Coordinator Julie Gagen discuss strategies for effective community engagement efforts around climate action.

Date: April 30 Length: 75 minutes

VIEW WEBINAR 7

The next wave of "Climate Action" webinars will be held in June, focusing on federal funds, decarbonization and energy codes, and electric vehicles. Details and registration links will be posted on the MMA website and emailed to members in the coming weeks.

– Lily Rancatore



Michael Baldino, left, director and general counsel at the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, and MBI Senior Program Director Jody Jones discuss the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Challenge Process.

Date: April 22 Length: 45 minutes

VIEW WEBINAR 7

in May," she said, "and MBI will publish the broadband availability map in June."

Baldino and Jones moderated 15 minutes of questions and answers, which addressed inquiries about BEAD qualifications, the timeline for MBI's map publication, and technical assistance available for communities.

#### – Lily Rancatore

# **Administration opens Destination Development grants**

The Executive Office of Economic Development and the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism have opened the <u>Destination Development</u> <u>Capital Grant program</u> for fiscal 2025.

The competitive grant program will award funds to strengthen the state's economy through destination development projects that enhance tourism sustainability and have the potential to increase non-resident visitation. Preference will be given to projects related to climate resiliency, rural communities, cultural districts, and the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.

The program is included in the Healey-Driscoll administration's economic development bond bill, the Mass Leads Act, as a strategy to support capital improvements at tourism assets across the state. The administration anticipates funding the fiscal 2025 program at up to \$5 million through the capital budget.

Economic Development Secretary Yvonne Hao said the Destination



Applications for the state's Destination Development Capital Grant program are due by May 31.

Development Capital Grant program reflects the administration's commitment "to boosting Massachusetts as a top-tier travel destination while advancing our economic goals."

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, a former mayor of Salem, a renowned tourism destination, said she's familiar with "the transformative impact of tourism on our communities."

"We're excited to see how the DDC grant program will continue to strengthen our economy," she said.

Applications will be accepted for projects that include plans to expand, construct, restore or renovate Massachusetts tourism destinations and attractions. Applicants must demonstrate how the project will work to promote the tourism goals of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism and the Regional Tourism Councils.

Municipalities are among those eligible to apply.

The fiscal 2025 program opened on April 22, and applications are due by May 31. Projects must be completed by June 30, 2025.

Applications must be submitted through the <u>Massachusetts Office of Travel and</u> <u>Tourism's Online Application Portal</u>.

Grant awards are anticipated to be announced in June 2024.

<u>Guidelines and eligibility information</u> <u>are available online</u>. ●

### MassDOT to launch online grant management tool on May 2

#### By Adrienne Núñez

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announced that it will launch an online grant management tool for municipalities called Grant Central on May 2.

Cities and towns can use the portal, spearheaded by MassDOT's Highway Division, to apply for program funding, submit project requests, and submit expense reimbursement requests.

Starting on May 2, according to MassDOT, all Chapter 90 project requests will be submitted through Grant Central (which replaces MaPIT).

Additional programs that will soon use Grant Central include:

- Complete Streets
- Local Bottleneck Reduction
- Municipal Pavement
- Municipal Small Bridge
- Shared Streets and Spaces

Beginning in mid-May, cities and towns will be able to use the portal to apply for grant programs as regularly scheduled grant rounds open. MassDOT will continue to communicate with municipalities about application deadlines for programs as the details become available.

MassDOT is encouraging municipal representatives that are responsible for community grant applications and reimbursements to register for one of its training sessions (conducted via Zoom). Sessions were held on April 23, 25 and 29, and three more are scheduled in May:

- May 2, 3 p.m. registration
- May 7, 9 a.m. registration
- May 9, 3 p.m. registration

User guides will soon be available to help with the transition to a new process.

MassDOT is also seeking feedback through a <u>Grant Central Readiness</u> <u>Survey</u>. MassDOT said survey data will help with communication and training efforts.

Questions can be directed to the MassDOT Grants Team at MassDOTGrantCentral@dot.state. ma.us.

### EOHLC seeks comments on draft plan for CDBG, other programs

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities is accepting comments on its draft one-year Action Plan for federal fiscal 2024 for a range of federal programs (<u>CDBG</u>, <u>HOME</u>, <u>ESG</u>, <u>HOPWA</u> and <u>HTF</u>).

In accordance with <u>federal regulations</u>,

the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities has posted a <u>draft</u> <u>Annual Action Plan</u>.

The EOHLC held a public hearing on April 18 and will accept written comments through May 6 prior to finalizing and submitting the plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Written comments may be sent to louis.martin@mass.gov. ●

# **New Cooling Corridors will expand tree plantings**

In celebration of Arbor Day, Gov. Maura Healey on April 26 announced a new program to expand tree planting in environmental justice communities across Massachusetts.

Cooling Corridors will prioritize projects that help reduce local heat islands, facilitate urban heat mitigation, and increase the regional tree canopy.

Cooling Corridors will complement <u>Greening the Gateway Cities</u>, which operates in 23 of 26 gateway cities across the state to increase the urban tree canopy. Cooling Corridors will target environmental justice communities outside of gateway cities that are contending with extreme heat and poor air quality.

Healey was joined by Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper, Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Brian Arrigo, and Chicopee Mayor John Vieau at an elementary school in Chicopee to celebrate the 40,000th Greening the Gateway Cities-planted tree and announce the new Cooling Corridors program.

"Our Greening the Gateway Cities program and the new Cooling Corridors



A new state program will seek to expand tree planting in environmental justice communities across Massachusetts.

initiative help bring down the temperatures in urban areas, saving residents energy costs, increasing property values, and creating good-paying local jobs," Healey said.

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll added that tree planting is "the only energy-efficiency program where almost all of the investments stay in the local economy" through the hiring of local planting crews and planting of trees from local nurseries.

Cooling Corridors will support tree-planting initiatives by municipalities, nonprofits and other organizations. The program will target walking routes in areas that suffer from extreme heat, such as urban heat islands and hotspots, within environmental justice neighborhoods.

Greening the Gateway Cities began in Chelsea, Holyoke and Fall River, and has expanded into 23 of the original 26 gateway cities. Trees are planted by the DCR with crews hired from local communities. The program plants trees ranging from six feet to 10 feet in height, with a goal of covering 5% of the target neighborhoods in new tree canopy cover.

In high-density urban neighborhoods, planting an average of five trees per acre (roughly one third of a block) will provide benefits to 15 to 25 households, depending on building density. Planting this number of trees will increase canopy by an estimated 1% in eight years and 5% in 30 years.

Tree planting is an important strategy as the climate warms. Trees near a home provide shade to structures, significantly lowering surface temperatures, while trees up to 1,500 feet away from a home still provide a benefit. Additionally, in the winter months, mature tree trunks and branches help to randomize wind patterns and decrease heat loss by air infiltration in poorly insulated homes.

# Cybersecurity Summit to feature interactive tabletop exercise

The fourth <u>Massachusetts Municipal</u> <u>Cybersecurity Summit</u>, to be held in Worcester on May 8, will feature an interactive tabletop exercise to provide participants with a better understanding of what happens during a cybersecurity incident.

Participants will be able to assume a role in a fictional organization affected by a cybersecurity incident, and discuss and practice incident response in a safe, no-fault environment. They will also be given tools and guidance on how they can facilitate simple tabletop exercises



within their own organization.

The free summit, hosted by the <u>MassCyberCenter</u>, will bring together municipal officials, local stakeholders and cybersecurity experts to discuss combating emerging threats, bolstering defenses, and responding to cybersecurity incidents.

Attendees will hear from experts on

how to identify and mitigate municipal cyber threats and vulnerabilities, learn about tools and resources to help bolster defenses, and see a demonstration of the CyberTrust Massachusetts Security Operations Center that provides essential cybersecurity services to Massachusetts municipalities. (The center was funded through a \$2.3 million state grant <u>announced last October</u>.)

The summit will run from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the DCU Center, 50 Foster St., Worcester. <u>Registration is available</u> online.

## Massachusetts Broadband Institute offers funding for equity

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute is making funding 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. ●

# MSA to hold free training for newly elected members

The Massachusetts Select Board Association will hold a free training for newly elected select board members on Friday, June 7, in Devens.

Meeting topics include:

- An introduction to the open meeting and public records laws, presented by attorney Janelle Austin, a shareholder at KP Law, who will cover the key components of these key laws and discuss how they affect the work of select board members.
- A Municipal Finance 101 workshop led by Jessica Sizer, a town councillor in Palmer and a project manager at the Division of Local Services' Financial Management Resources Bureau. Sizer will discuss the role of select boards in municipal finance, and provide budgeting tips and organizational



Jessica Sizer



skills. She will also discuss the resources available to municipalities through the Division of Local Services.

Attendees will also have opportunities to network with colleagues and hear from a panel of veteran select board members.

Registration and breakfast will begin

at 8:30 a.m. The program will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m. Lunch will be served.

The full agenda will be posted on www. mma.org and emailed to MSA members with a registration link in the coming weeks.

The training is targeted to newly elected select board members, but any select board member is welcome to attend for a refresher.

Newly elected select board members are encouraged to share their contact information with the MMA (by email to database@mma.org) in order to receive information about Select Board Association events.

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

### MMA webinars will showcase impact of arts, culture in communities

The MMA will host two webinars this spring with the Mass Cultural Council discussing how arts and culture can drive growth and enrich municipalities.

The first webinar, on May 28, will discuss the mission, vision and impact of the Mass Cultural Council. Panelists will discuss how communities can support and promote the arts by appointing staff to a local cultural council, and how they can build <u>cultural districts</u> through community initiatives, such as planning and zoning.

The second webinar, on June 18, will highlight how arts and culture contribute to a vibrant and creative community. Officials from municipalities with thriving cultural communities will share how they have used arts and culture to increase their community pride. Panelists will discuss how to build public support for culture, celebrate different traditions and talents, and promote economic opportunity within cities and towns.



Michael Bobbitt

Lisa Simmons

Speakers from the Mass Cultural Council will include:

- Executive Director Michael Bobbitt
- Lisa Simmons, program manager, Communities Initiative
- Carolyn Cole, program officer, **Communities** Initiative
- Timothea Pham, program officer, Communities Initiative, Festivals and Projects

Municipal speakers will be announced in the coming weeks.



Carolyn Cole



Timothea Pham

Local officials are invited to register online. When registering, members may choose to attend one or both webinars.

Only MMA members may register for these webinars. Members include appointed or elected officials from MMA member communities across the state. Media members are not permitted to attend.

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

# MassDEP launches Reduce, Reuse, Repair grant applications

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has updated the Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro-Grants 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. The online application and grant guidelines are posted on the program webpage.

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

# MMA webinar to discuss municipal branding process

A free MMA webinar on June 12 will review a municipal branding project from concept to design to implementation.

Panelists will discuss pros, cons, insights and challenges related to developing and using a new municipal brand.

Amesbury Mayor Kassandra Gove will share why she initiated a branding project and how it benefits her city. She'll discuss how community surveys were used during the planning process, and how a municipal brand can have a positive impact on economic development.

John Magnifico, owner of Magnifico Design, will discuss his process for creating the Amesbury brand. He'll provide insight into developing an RFP for an external design partner, defining what municipalities should include and budget considerations.



Caitlin Thayer

Kassandra Gove

Former Amesbury Communications Director Caitlin Thayer will discuss how to implement municipal branding across departments, communicate about the brand internally and externally, and ensure that brand guidelines are followed. She'll highlight the pros and cons of using a municipal brand in community communications.



Sean Dugan

The 75-minute webinar will begin at noon. <u>Registration</u> <u>is available online</u>.

Only MMA members may register for this webinar. Members include appointed or elected officials from MMA member communities across

the state. Media members are not permitted to attend.

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

# MMHR spring meeting discusses healthy workplace cultures

#### By Anneke Craig

Building a healthy workplace culture was the focus of the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources annual virtual spring meeting on April 25.

Patrick Ibarra, co-founder and partner at the Mejorando Group, led the workshop "A Healthy Workplace Culture is the 'Secret Sauce' to Success." He opened by discussing the "new employer-employee contract" emerging as employees return to the office post-pandemic and younger generations enter the workforce.

"People shop culture," he said. "Those [younger] generations ... to them it's life-work balance, not work-life balance. They want to enjoy not only the work they do, but also the people with whom they work."

Given this new and growing interest in workplace culture, Ibarra urged participants to reflect on the prevailing cultures in their own municipalities and departments.

"Are you, your community, and your workforce changing as fast as the world around us?" he asked.

Participants broke into small discussion groups to identify and share the aspects of their workplace cultures that both drive and hinder success.

In the second half of the workshop, Ibarra outlined a framework of 10



Patrick Ibarra, co-founder and partner at the Mejorando Group, discusses how to build a healthy workplace culture during the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources annual virtual spring meeting on April 25.

dimensions that comprise workplace culture, including employee wellness, teamwork, and performance management. He also shared strategies for transitioning workplace cultures from the norm to the preferred.

One of the strategies he recommended was conducting a "pulse check" with employees to understand a municipality's baseline workplace culture and identify areas for improvement.

.....

First, employees answer anonymous questions to help determine what is

"People shop culture. Those [younger] generations ... to them it's life-work balance, not work-life balance. They want to enjoy not only the work they do, but also the people with whom they work." – Patrick Ibarra

already helping them succeed and what should change to improve their success. Then, they identify common answers and organize them as a group.

The pulse check exercise not only helps to identify opportunities for improvement, Ibarra said, it also includes employees in the process of positive cultural change.

"If you want to redesign, reset, reformat a culture, it's helpful and productive to get a sense of where the strong points are, and where are the brittle points," Ibarra said. "It's no different than what a doctor does. Look at the symptoms. Describe your condition. Then prescribe the solution." ●

# Sen. Spilka is keynote for WEMO spring symposium

Senate President Karen Spilka will be the keynote speaker for the annual Women Elected Municipal Officials virtual spring symposium on May 3.

Spilka will engage in a fireside chat with WEMO Vice Chair Yolanda Greaves, who's also the vice chair of the Select Board in Spilka's hometown of Ashland.

The Senate president will reflect on the challenges of serving as a woman in a top leadership position, and discuss her experience navigating disagreements on contentious issues during her career.

Spilka is widely recognized for her policy work on key social issues in Massachusetts, including mental health, juvenile justice, and caregiving. In January, the MMA honored her, along



Sen. Karen Spilka

Kathy Eckles

with House Speaker Ron Mariano, with an MMA Legislator of the Year award, recognizing her leadership during the COVID pandemic and work on the fiscal 2024 state budget.

The free WEMO symposium will also feature a civil discourse workshop led by Kathy Eckles, an associate and project manager with Essential Partners. Eckles will cover the steps of a "dialogue design" process — from preparation to facilitation and follow-up — that attendees can implement in their work with municipal boards and committees. The session will provide opportunities for large- and small-group learning.

The symposium will run from 9 to 11 a.m., and will include opportunities for small-group networking. In the coming weeks, the agenda will be available at <u>www.mma.org</u> and will be emailed to WEMO members with a registration link.

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

### WEMO to host National Women's Equality Day webinar on May 23

Women Elected Municipal Officials, a member group of the MMA, will host a webinar on May 23 to discuss opportunities for municipalities to celebrate National Women's Equality Day, which marks the anniversary of the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote.



Gloucester Councillor Valerie Gilman, the chair of WEMO, will discuss lessons learned from her city's first National Women's Equality Day celebration last August. Gilman was involved in organizing the event,

Valerie Gilman

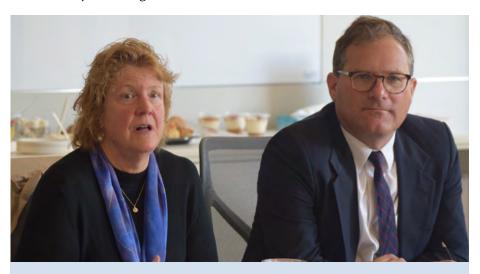
which included a city proclamation, remarks from co-organizer and activist Amy Shapiro (a Gloucester resident), and a panel discussion with local women leaders.

Shapiro will join Gilman during the webinar and share her experience as a co-organizer and speaker at the celebration. They will discuss Gloucester's plans for Women's Equality Day in 2024 and offer tips for communities that wish to organize their own. The one-hour webinar will begin at noon and include a brief question and answer session.

More information and a registration link will be emailed to WEMO members in the coming weeks.

National Women's Equality Day is celebrated each year on Aug. 26. The 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920.

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



#### **Climate chief briefs MMA committees**

Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer, left, and Deputy Climate Chief Jonathan Schrag speak to local officials during an April 10 meeting of two MMA policy committees — Energy and the Environment, and Public Works, Transportation and Utilities — at the MMA office in Boston. Hoffer discussed the challenges and opportunities related to meeting the Commonwealth's 2030 and 2050 climate goals. Schrag provided an overview of the Inflation Reduction Act Direct Pay provision and its implications for municipalities. (Download his presentation)

# **MMA-Suffolk program updates**

The MMA and Suffolk University will host a second session of the new Municipal Human Resources Seminar this fall due to overwhelming demand for the inaugural seminar in April.

The Municipal Human Resources Seminar covers human resources management, policies and practices specific to Massachusetts cities and towns.

Topics include hiring and onboarding, benefits administration, policy development, collective bargaining, and employee reviews and evaluations.

Students also review relevant labor laws and best practices in municipal human resources management.

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

The fall seminar will be held via Zoom over the course of five Fridays, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dates for the fall seminar are Sept. 20 and 27, and Oct. 4, 11 and 18. The cost is \$875.

The application for the fall seminar is available on the <u>MMA website</u> and is due by June 30. This is a competitive application process; applicants will be informed of their status by the end of July.

#### Municipal Finance Management Seminar

Applications are being accepted through July 31 for the fall session of the MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar.

The five-week finance program, held on Zoom on Fridays, provides an overview of municipal finance in Massachusetts.



Students gather online on April 4 for the inaugural program of the MMA-Suffolk Municipal Human Resources Seminar. The program has 27 students.

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 is available on the <u>MMA</u> website.

This is a competitive application process; applicants to the fall municipal finance seminar will be informed of their status by the end of August.

Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management

In September, the MMA and Suffolk University will launch the 23rd and 24th programs of the Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management in a hybrid format, with in-person classes in Pittsfield and Sharon.

The graduate-level academic program provides a solid grounding in municipal management, covering 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 application period has closed for the Pittsfield and Sharon programs.

The application period will open in February for the 2025 programs, which are being planned as hybrid programs based in Barnstable and Winchester.

#### Questions

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

#### TRANSPORTATION

Continued from page 1

and \$150 million for the following six existing transportation-related programs:

- Municipal Pavement Program
- <u>Municipal Small Bridge Program</u>
- <u>Complete Streets</u>

- Municipal Bus Enhancement Program
- Mass Transit Access grant program
- Municipal/RTA Electric Vehicle Fleets
  program

The bill introduces a formula to guide the disbursement of the rural road-focused funding for fiscal 2025, recommending that the distribution be weighted 20% on local road mileage, 20% on population, and 60% on whether the municipality is considered rural.

Last year's transportation bond act created the new <u>Rural Roadway Funding</u> <u>Program</u>, which has <u>recently been apportioned for fiscal 2024</u>.

# 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, but veterans in the field are also welcome for a refresher.

#### **Program features**

- Paul Scott, vice president of the Unemployment Tax Management Corporation, will provide an overview of municipal unemployment benefits and claims, and the pitfalls that HR professionals should avoid.
- Ed Mitnick, executive director of Just Training Solutions, will lead a workshop on conducting workplace investigations, covering key HR roles and best practices during both internal and external investigations.





Paul Scott

Ed Mitnick

- Mary Beth Bernard, principal of HR Key Solutions and an MMHR past chair, will lead a workshop sharing tips for developing strong job descriptions, and discussing how to use them to aid recruitment, evaluation, classification and more.
- The program will conclude with a roundtable discussion series on HR best practices facilitated by veteran MMHR members.



Mary Beth Bernard

The boot camp will run from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Hotel Northampton, 36 King St. in Northampton. A light breakfast and lunch will be served.

The registration fee is \$100 for mem-

bers and \$120 for nonmembers. The agenda and registration information will be made available at <u>www.mma.org</u> and emailed to MMHR members in the coming weeks.

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

### MGFOA to hold annual conference on May 6 in Boylston

The Massachusetts Government Finance Officers Association will hold its annual conference on May 6 at Tower Hill Botanic Gardens in Boylston.

Meeting sessions include:

- "Modernizing Government Delivering Better Government Through Innovation and Technology," led by Boston Chief Information Officer Santiago Garces, who will discuss Boston's plans to use artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance public services
- "Inflation Reduction Act" led by <u>UndauntedK12</u> co-founder Sara Ross, who will provide an overview of the IRA's clean energy tax credits and share how school construction

and modernization projects in Massachusetts and across the country are taking advantage of these unlimited, non-competitive federal funds for clean energy

Sean Cronin, senior deputy commissioner at the Division of Local Services, will provide his annual update.

Attendees will also be able to participate in reinventing government roundtable discussions with their peers. Topics will include how to use AI today and in the future, and life after ARPA.

The meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. with registration and a continental breakfast. Lunch and MGFOA updates will be from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.



The registration fee is \$40. <u>Click here for</u> <u>online registration and meeting details</u>. Payment can be made online, by sending a check to MGFOA Treasurer Arti Mehta (P.O. Box 102, Sharon, MA 02067), or by bringing a check to the meeting. ●

### Women Leading Government to meet on June 26

Women Leading Government, an initiative of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, will meet on June 26 in Boylston.

WLG events are open to all staff in appointed positions in local government.

The event will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Cyprian Keyes Country Club. The cost is \$25, including a light breakfast and lunch.

The agenda and registration link will be available later this month on <u>www.mma.</u> <u>org</u>.

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

#### BUDGET

Continued from page 1

The MMA will continue to advocate for fulfilling the <u>recommendations of the</u> <u>Commission on the Fiscal Health of Rural</u> <u>School Districts</u> last July to fund this account at \$60 million.

#### **School transportation**

The House budget would fund regional school transportation aid at \$99.7 million, an increase of \$2 million over the current year. This amount represents approximately 84% of anticipated claims, according to the most recent estimates from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The budget would level-fund the account for transportation of homeless students under the federal McKinney-Vento program at \$28.6 million, representing approximately 71% of estimated claims.

The House budget does not have a line item for out-of-district vocational transportation, which was funded at \$1 million for fiscal 2024.

#### PILOT

Matching the governor's proposal, the House bill would fund payments-in-lieuof-taxes (PILOT) for state-owned land at \$51.8 million, an increase of \$334,000. This amount is expected to hold communities harmless from recent valuations.

#### **Electronic Lottery**

An outside section in the House bill would authorize an online Lottery (iLottery), with \$75 million of the resulting new revenue targeted to early education programs.

The MMA continues to advocate for online Lottery proceeds to be solely used for the Lottery's intended purpose, which is funding the Commonwealth's revenue sharing through Unrestricted General Government Aid. This is consistent with the Lottery's mission and is necessary to protect a vital revenue stream that accounts for the overwhelming amount of discretionary local aid that cities, towns and taxpayers rely on to fund essential municipal and school services and balance local budgets.

#### Disaster Relief and Resiliency Fund

The House included an outside section that would establish a permanent Disaster Relief and Resiliency Fund to provide relief to municipalities impacted by extreme weather events. A separate section would direct the state's comptroller to transfer \$14 million from any consolidated net budget surplus for fiscal 2025 to the Disaster Relief and Resiliency Fund.

#### Surtax investments

Fiscal 2025 is the second year that revenue from the Fair Share amendment surtax will be allocated.

The House bill would use \$1.3 billion to invest in education and transportation needs, including the following:

• Supplemental local road and bridge funding: \$25 million — separate from the annual Chapter 90 bond authorization

- Green School Works: \$10 million for a grant program launched in fiscal 2024 to provide financial support to public school districts to install or maintain clean energy infrastructure (administered through DESE)
- Universal School Meals: \$190 million to continue the Universal School Meals program, which allows all Massachusetts students to eat for free at school, regardless of household income

#### Next steps

The state budget process now moves to the Senate, where the Ways and Means Committee is expected to release its recommendation in early May, and debate and adoption are expected later in the month.

The House and Senate will then need to reconcile their two budget plans before sending a final bill to the governor for her consideration by the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1.

During the remainder of the budget process, the MMA will work to build on the progress in the House's proposal by advocating for a greater increase in Unrestricted General Government Aid, maintaining the increase in Chapter 70 minimum aid, increasing supplemental funding for local roads and bridges, and protecting local aid with regards to iLottery proceeds.

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Continued from page 2

will continue for the rest of this calendar year. The first installment, <u>A Fireside</u> <u>Chat with Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer</u>, was held in late March, and the second and third installments, <u>From Planning</u> to Practice and <u>Effective Community</u> <u>Engagement Strategies</u>, were held in April.

Many more webinars are planned for the coming months, and details can always be found in the <u>MMA Events Calendar</u> and on the <u>webinars page</u>. Currently

scheduled topics include Promoting Civil Discourse at Town Meeting, Municipal Law 101, Information on the Mass Cultural Council, and Municipal Branding.

The MMA website is continually updated as webinars are planned and added to the schedule. I strongly encourage all municipal officials to take advantage of these resources, and to feel free to let us know about topics that they would like to see addressed in future webinar programming.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't offer

tremendous credit and thanks to the MMA staff that makes this all possible. Staff from across the organization assist with the development of webinar programming, but MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore, under the guidance and leadership of Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce, are the backbone that make all of these webinars as excellent as they are. I offer my most sincere thanks to both of them for their great work on this resource. Nonprofit Locally based Member driven

Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association www.emiia.org | 617.426.7272

Serving Massachusetts' communities since 1982

# Time is right for unemployment fraud protection

#### By Jennifer Ranz

With the Commonwealth in the midst of a major Department of Unemployment Assistance modernization process, it's a good time for municipalities to assess their practices related to fraud protection and take steps to mitigate risks.

The first phase of the state's Employment Modernization Transformation has been live since September 2023, while the second phase is expected to roll out in January 2025.

Phase 1 focused on updating systems related to wage reporting and payroll functions, and Phase 2 will update the more complex processes for claims and appeals.

"The pandemic led to a huge uptick in the number of unemployment claims filed around the country and showed that every state's system was outdated, overwhelmed and in need of modernization," said Paul Scott, vice president at the Unemployment Tax Management Corporation, which provides unemployment services to many MIIA members and other Massachusetts employers.

Scott added that all states have either modernized their systems or are in the process of doing so. Municipalities are advised to prepare for system changes that will come with the <u>Employment Modernization</u> <u>Transformation</u> and be on heightened alert for fraudulent activity.

"Unfortunately, whenever states implement a new system, criminal organizations are aware and frequently try to attack it," Scott said.

When <u>Connecticut's new system</u> went live in 2022, for example, about 80% of claims filed within the first several months were fraudulent, Scott said.

Municipalities are generally targeted disproportionately for fraudulent claims, Scott noted, because of the prevalence of long-term, high wage-earning employees such as police officers, firefighters, and teachers. Massachusetts pays the highest weekly benefit rate (\$1,033), making employers around the Commonwealth more vulnerable to fraudulent claims.

During the most recent tax season, municipalities also saw an influx of fraudulent claims where employees received U.S. Internal Revenue Service notifications that their refunds were being withheld because of unpaid unemployment taxes (although they had not filed unemployment themselves).

#### What municipalities can do

Scott said municipalities should be extra vigilant for fraud and liabilities, particularly because one unemployment claim can cost an employer nearly \$31,000.

Additionally, municipalities can prepare for the modernization process by making sure they are <u>registered in the new</u> <u>system</u> and have established online access. They can also get familiar with the program and explore ways to streamline processes where possible.

As a priority, municipal employers should have a solid documentation process in place to avoid liability for ineligible claims. This process should always include securing a letter of resignation that clearly cites the reason why the departing employee is leaving.

Municipalities can also make sure they are leveraging the Commonwealth's "reasonable assurance" provision, which deems school department employees ineligible for benefits if provided with reasonable assurance of returning the following school year.

Additionally, municipalities can apply for certain staff positions — such as lifeguard, recreation program worker, and athletic coach — to be classified as "seasonal" through the state's seasonal

MIIA continued on 27

#### Fraud spike expected

#### **MIIA Rewards deadline is May 20**

The deadline for MIIA members to submit materials for consideration for <u>MIIA's fiscal 2024 Rewards program</u> is just weeks away, on May 20 (with no extensions).

Members must submit documentation for all risk management-related activities they wish to have considered for Rewards credits.

In order to get credit, MIIA members should provide documentation on all locally directed training programs. MIIA tracks participation in MIIA-sponsored regional and onsite training programs, so it is not necessary to submit documentation for these programs.

Through the Rewards program, MIIA members have the opportunity to earn credits toward their municipal insurance premiums for the following fiscal year by participating in risk management and best practices-related trainings throughout the year.

Training sessions cover a range of topics, including work zone and chainsaw safety, asbestos awareness, building maintenance, and cybersecurity, as well as policy-related courses on topics such as discrimination, labor laws, and open meeting law guidelines.

Over the past 21 years, members have earned a total of \$44.8 million in premium credits through the Rewards program.

Visit the <u>MIIA website</u> for details about the Rewards program, including how to submit documentation and a list of trainings that may count toward premium credits.

# **USDOT** seeks applications for Safe Streets and Roads

The U.S. Department of Transportation is accepting applications for the third year of the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program.

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) is funded through the <u>Bipartisan</u> <u>Infrastructure Law</u>, which pledged \$5 billion to be awarded between 2022 and 2026, of which \$3.3 billion is still available.

The program funds regional, local and tribal initiatives to reduce roadway deaths and serious injuries.

There are two types of grants: Planning and Demonstration, and Implementation. <u>Planning and</u> <u>Demonstration Grants</u> are used to develop or enhance a comprehensive safety action plan, and <u>Implementation Grants</u> are used to execute specific infrastructure, behavioral or operational projects

# Let us know about your local news

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

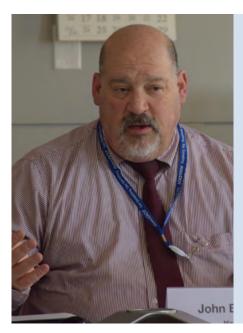


The Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program is intended to reduce roadway deaths and serious injuries.

and strategies outlined in an existing Action Plan to address roadway safety issues. A <u>USDOT web page</u> provides a series of questions to help applicants decide which SS4A grant type to apply for.

In order to accommodate varying stages of applicant readiness, there are three deadlines for Planning and Demonstration Grants: on April 5, May

If your community has launched a new program or initiative, or has found a unique solution to a common problem, please let us know by filling out our new Local News Tips form on the MMA website.



#### Policy committees review environmental regulations

John Bechard, deputy chief engineer for project development at the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, discusses proposed waterways and wetlands regulations from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection during a meeting of two MMA policy committees Energy and the Environment, and Public Works, Transportation and Utilities at the MMA office in Boston on April 10. Bechard discussed key points in the regulations that could affect municipal roadway projects. The regulations propose changes to stormwater management, as well as development in coastal and inland flood zones.

16 and Aug. 29. Applications received on or before each deadline are reviewed and evaluated separately from those at a previous deadline. Only one award will be provided per applicant.

The deadline for Implementation Grants is May 16 at 5 p.m.

The <u>SS4A Notice of Funding</u> <u>Opportunity</u> is available online.

To apply, use the following Valid Eval Links (applications must be submitted here, not through grants.gov):

- <u>Planning and Development Grants</u>
- Implementation Grants

In fiscal 2023, Massachusetts received a total of 15 awards for \$22.2 million in funding. Nationwide, USDOT awarded nearly \$900 million for 620 separate awards, most of which (92%) were Planning and Demonstration Grants.



#### ATFC discusses municipal empowerment

Sean Cronin, senior deputy commissioner at the Division of Local Services, speaks with local officials during the Association of Town Finance Committees' Spring Conference on April 6 in Oxford. Cronin discussed the Healey-Driscoll administration's proposed Municipal Empowerment Act. The meeting also featured a budget and legislative update by MMA Deputy Legislative Director Jackie Lavender Bird.

# **Mass Innovations**

### Eight communities advance municipal fossil fuel bans

#### By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Five years after the first town meeting attempt to limit fossil fuel hookups in building projects, municipal fossil fuel-free bylaws have started becoming a reality in Massachusetts communities.

As of late April, following numerous town meeting votes, home rule petitions, attorney general opinions, legislative actions and regulatory updates, eight communities have received state approval to roll out bylaws limiting the use of fossil fuels in major renovations and new construction.

Brookline — the first community on the East Coast to attempt such a ban following a 2019 Town Meeting vote — started enforcing its bylaw on Feb. 20.

"I think the community is elated to be at the forefront of this work that it has been trying to do for so long," said Brookline Town Manager Chas Carey. "But now this is really ... where we have to do the hard work of implementing this."

Brookline is participating in the state's <u>Municipal Fossil Fuel Free Building</u> <u>Demonstration Program</u>, which allows up to 10 communities to limit fossil fuel infrastructure. Lawmakers created the program as part of a 2022 climate and clean energy law, after Brookline's Town Meeting actions failed to clear legal review by the Attorney General's Office, and after Brookline and other communities pursued home rule petitions seeking the ability to regulate fossil fuel infrastructure at the local level.

Acton, Aquinnah, Arlington, Cambridge, Concord, Lexington and Lincoln have also gotten the final go-ahead to proceed with their bylaws. Aquinnah's bylaw took effect on Jan. 1, and several more have since gone into effect. Bylaws in Concord and Lincoln will start on June 22.

As these laws have progressed, Brookline's Building Department has reached out to other building departments to compare notes, said Paul Campbell, Brookline's deputy building commissioner.

Applications from additional communities are pending. Newton received conditional approval in December, pending a



The towns of Acton, Arlington and Lexington have teamed up to create a website to explain new fossil fuel-free building rules.

state determination regarding its compliance with the MBTA Communities law, according to the Department of Energy Resources.

West Tisbury withdrew its application due to its inability to meet the program's housing production thresholds, but Somerville and Northampton submitted applications to fill the 10th slot.

The bylaws of participating communities remain works in progress. The bylaws are similar, but vary in their language, and the DOER has recommended revisions in some.

Lexington Town Meeting updated its bylaw language in early April, and Concord Town Meeting was expected to take up revisions in late April to address DOER recommendations.

Lexington's participation in the program continues a tradition of environmental action, according to Select Board Member Mark Sandeen. Lexington was one of the first to adopt the <u>stretch energy</u> <u>code</u> back in 2010, and its work with the DOER helped inspire adoption of similar codes nationwide. As with previous efforts, public outreach will be key, Sandeen said.

"I think the number one thing that we're going to need to do is to provide resources to help people make these decisions on their own and feel comfortable that they're making a good decision for their home," Sandeen said.

The fossil fuel-free program also comes as the state's building rules have undergone

significant changes in just a few short years, including updates to the state's base energy code and stretch energy code, and the addition of the <u>Specialized</u> <u>Opt-In Stretch Energy Code</u>, which allows municipalities to adopt even stricter local building codes.

Municipalities now face the challenge of explaining these changes. In Brookline, officials said they are connecting stake-holders to town documents and website information, and to the <u>DOER's website</u>, and are planning to use \$20,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds for training about fossil fuel-free compliance.

Acton, Arlington and Lexington joined forces to launch a <u>website</u> explaining the local fossil fuel-free rules and providing information on the Specialized Opt-In Stretch Energy Code. The fossil fuel-free bylaws in Lexington and Acton took effect on March 21, and Arlington's will begin on May 21.

"Our hope is that this will streamline the process for builders and developers, who can find the information in one site, including details on the new building code and the incentives for new building construction or major renovations to be fossil fuel-free," said Andrea Becerra, Acton's sustainability director. "In addition, collaboration between three different communities simplifies the process internally as well. We no longer have to build multiple resources from scratch."

Talia Fox, Arlington's sustainability manager, said the collaboration makes sense because the towns' development is similar in scale. She said this program will help reduce building emissions now and avoid costly retrofits in the future.

"We are also eager to learn from our experiences in the demonstration program," she said, "and share those learnings with communities around the state and the country."

This regular column highlights innovative approaches and strategies Massachusetts municipalities are using to deliver services and solve problems. If you know of a Mass Innovation that could be featured in this column, email us at innovations@mma.org.

# Around the Commonwealth

### Northampton

#### **Community hub will build** resilience downtown

As Northampton confronts homelessness and the effects of climate change, the city is converting a long-shuttered church into a "community resilience hub" to address weather-related challenges and economic inequality.

The city paid \$3.2 million for the former First Baptist Church on Main Street last year, with renovation plans for a daytime center serving homeless residents, community meeting space, emergency shelter capacity, and centralized community services. City officials this spring have been holding a series of public forums to update residents about the project and get feedback.

The <u>resilience hub</u> grew out of a desire to maintain inclusivity — meeting the needs of the city's homeless residents and respecting their right to be downtown, while addressing the safety concerns of downtown businesses and their customers, said Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra.

"This has been a conversation that Northampton has had for many years," she said. "We have a very vibrant downtown. We have a downtown that really respects that everybody is a part of our community, and we have a strong history and culture of public space. ... But there was still an interest in — how can we work together in the community to address some of these issues?"

The answer came in the form of a downtown church that had been closed since 1993. The previous owner had been renovating the 14,500-square-foot building for a wedding and entertainment venue, but those plans didn't work out. When officials finally got inside the building, Sciarra said, they saw extensive upgrades, including the setup for a commercial kitchen, plumbing, and an elevator shaft.

"It was a remarkable moment to walk in and see what had been hidden for years," Sciarra said.

Given the building's proximity to downtown businesses, the library and



Northampton is working to convert a long-shuttered downtown church into a community resilience hub. A local agency, Community Action Pioneer Valley, will manage the resilience hub. (Photo courtesy Jones Whitsett Architects/ Berkshire Design Group)

Smith College, officials said, the location is highly visible and accessible. It also helped that the church had little appeal to other potential buyers. As Northampton recovered economically from the pandemic, the city didn't want to displace potential businesses from prime real estate, said Carolyn Misch, the city's planning and sustainability director.

"There are not a lot of people looking for old churches to do their next big thing," Misch said. "We knew that if the city didn't take this property, it could sit vacant for another 30 years for someone to come along."

On the building's first floor, the hub's commercial kitchen will serve meals, and people will have access to wifi, showers, laundry, places to rest, and centralized social services. The city will use the second floor for emergency shelter during climate emergencies, and for vaccine clinics, performances, art exhibits, public meetings and other community gatherings. The third floor will house the Division of Community Care, which provides an unarmed public safety response to people in crisis.

Northampton is exploring geothermal technology for both the resilience hub and the nearby library. The project will also tie into a larger redesign of Main Street to make it more walkable and safer for pedestrians and bicyclists, Sciarra said. That work is expected to begin in fall 2025.

The city hopes to complete renovations by late 2025, depending on finances. Northampton is exploring grant \_\_\_\_\_

opportunities, and the project is also seeking donations. The city already used American Rescue Plan Act funds toward the building purchase.

Sciarra said she hopes that the new hub will help promote community interconnectedness.

"It's not a segregated, separate space," Sciarra said. "This is going to be a community space that everyone uses, and everyone who uses this building is a part of this community."

— Jennifer Kavanaugh

### Beverly

#### **City uses opioid settlement** funds for social services position

The Beverly City Council in February approved the use of national opioid settlement funds to create a new health department position dedicated to helping residents access and navigate resources available to those struggling with substance use disorder.

The city is expecting to receive \$1.8 million over the next 14 years from the opioid settlement, and \$107,020 from fiscal 2023 has been appropriated into a new opioid special revenue fund.

The new position is expected to have an initial annual salary of between \$75,000 and \$85,000.

"Everyone agreed that adding a position to the city would make a meaningful impact, having someone residents could reach out to directly to help navigate the services available," said Health Director Laura DelleChiaie.

When determining how best to use the funds, Mayor Mike Cahill brought together DelleChiaie, the police chief and the schools superintendent.

"We looked at where we already have services related to mental health," DelleChiaie said. "We had many assets within the public school system and a jail diversion program in the police department, and have a social worker with the Council on Aging, but we didn't have a person dedicated to the general

COMMONWEALTH continued on 25

# **Around the Commonwealth**

#### COMMONWEALTH

Continued from page 24

population, ages 18 to 59. They weren't being directly served unless they had a kid in schools or were involved with the Police Department."

In order to best determine how the substance use crisis was affecting the community, DelleChiaie said she looked to <u>Beth Israel Lahey's Community</u> <u>Health Needs Assessment</u> from fiscal 2022. Hospitals are required to conduct the assessment every three years.

The assessment revealed that Beverly residents had a relatively high rate of substance use disorder-related inpatient discharges — 114 per 100,000 patients versus the state average of 53 per 100,000 patients — and related emergency room visits — 722 per 100,000 patients versus the state average of 343. Beverly's mental health admissions for youths was also higher than the state average.

In addition to consulting with city departments, DelleChiaie consulted with the Be Healthy Beverly collaborative and built a diverse coalition to brainstorm possible uses for the funds. With additional support from the Board of Health and the City Council, Cahill approved her request and brought it to the council.

"Use and partner with the groups and coalitions already doing this work in your community to help you,"

SOLAR

Continued from page 9

of the Massachusetts Community Climate Bank in June 2023.

"Solar for All will deliver a major boost for the state's decarbonization goals and timelines, while ensuring that low-income and disadvantaged communities equitably benefit from clean energy initiatives," said MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine. "The MMA applauds the Healey-Driscoll administration for its strategic and team-based efforts to win this historic funding, and thanks the Massachusetts congressional delegation for their unwavering support." ●



Beverly City Hall

DelleChiaie recommended. "You're going to get a lot of opinions from different backgrounds, which is great, but getting everyone to consensus is important having the data to look at and see how this would work."

The city also got about 100 responses to a community survey asking about how the settlement funds should be used. Responses were split between using the funds on treatment options and access to city resources, DelleChiaie said, so the new position was designed to help accomplish both, by assisting residents in accessing treatment and resources.

"The biggest asset for me ... was getting all our offices on one page and agreeing that this is the best method," DelleChiaie said.

The city is now <u>advertising for the new</u> <u>position</u>. The department is looking for someone with a background in social work, master's level education, and licensure — ideally someone who is already in the field, or has experience in opioid use disorder. The city is also interested in candidates who are bi- or multilingual, but it is not a requirement.

"The position will be doing a lot of surveying in the community and an assessment of what resources we do have, and will keep track of that to help residents [as well as] building partnerships and advocacy in getting those residents what they need," DelleChiaie said.

The city is also looking at using settlement funds to purchase naloxone boxes in key locations around the community.

DelleChiaie advised smaller communities that don't get a lot in settlement funds to look into partnerships.

"That might work for smaller communities to partner up and combine funds to make a meaningful impact," she said. "Substance use disorder doesn't know geographic boundaries, if it's happening in your community it's happening in others."

#### – Meredith Gabrilska

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.



### Students learn about municipal careers

Devon Fields, left, the deputy city manager for operations in Chelsea and a former MMA staff member, discusses the impact of municipal government in residents' everyday lives, and the fun and challenges of her role, during an April 19 visit to the MMA. She spoke to graduate and undergraduate students from the School of Public Policy at UMass Amherst, who learned about the importance of municipal government and the MMA's mission, operations, and advocacy efforts.

# People



Matthew Kraunelis

serving in the town. Kraunelis started in Reading in 2015

nearly nine years of

Kraunelis became

the town manag-

er in Reading on

March 25, after

as the director of administrative services, and was promoted to assistant town manager in November 2022. In

Matthew

December, he became the acting town manager after Town Manager Fidel **Maltez** left to become the city manager in Chelsea.

Previously, Kraunelis served for more than three years as deputy chief of staff for the Massachusetts Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation, six years as the mayoral chief of staff in Methuen, five years as assistant general counsel for the Department of Mental Health, and several years as an attorney in private practice. He also served for six years as a city councillor in Methuen, starting in January 2000.

Kraunelis has a bachelor's degree in English and political science from Merrimack College, and a law degree from Suffolk University.



Brad Brothers

Brad Brothers became the new town manager in Palmer on April 1.

Previously, Brothers served for two years as the assistant town manager in Plymouth, after a year and half as the school business

administrator in Plymouth, four years as the chief operations and finance officer for the Carver Public Schools, and four years as the business manager for the Palmer Public Schools.

He has a bachelor's degree in business administration, management and operations from American International College; a master's degree in business administration from Bridgewater State

University; and a master's degree in educational leadership and administration from Worcester State University.

In Palmer, Brothers replaces **Ryan** McNutt, who left the position in October. Police Chief **Christopher Burns** served as the interim town manager.



Megan Savage ioined MIIA's Risk Management Team on April 1 as a senior risk manage-

ment trainer. She previously worked for eight years for the town of Barnstable. starting as the

Megan Savage

safety officer for the Public Works Department, and becoming the townwide safety officer in 2020. She has also been an adjunct faculty member at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy and at Massasoit Community College.

In the private sector, she has been a health and safety officer and a field and project engineer. She has a bachelor's degree in marine safety environmental protection from Mass Maritime, and a master's degree in public administration from Suffolk University. She also completed the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program, as part of the 2019-2020 cohort in Barnstable.



George McGurn

George McGurn died on April 5 at age 79. He had served on the Select Board since 2017. McGurn even-

Egremont Select

Board Chair

tually made his permanent home in Egremont, a

.....

Berkshires town along the New York state border, but his professional career took him everywhere from Boston, New York and Washington, D.C., to Moscow and Tbilisi, Georgia. His roles included program manager for the

New York City Bureau of the Budget, dean of the Boston University School of Management, general manager of the Morozov Project in Moscow for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, senior advisor at the Center for Enterprise Restructuring and Management Assistance in Tbilisi. regional specialist for the Institute for Defense Analyses in Washington, D.C., and professor of globalization at the Moscow State University Graduate School of Business.

McGurn had degrees from the University of Notre Dame, Columbia University and the Instituts d'études politiques in Paris. Under the languages section of his LinkedIn profile, McGurn listed five: French, Russian, Thai, Japanese and Georgian.

Ray DiPasquale, a former Springfield city councillor, mayoral candidate and School Committee member who served as college president at several institutions in the Northeast, died on April 4 at age 74.

DiPasquale ran for mayor of Springfield in 1991. He was president of Massasoit Community College in Brockton at the time of his death, after serving as president of Clinton Community College in New York and the Community College of Rhode Island, and as a vice president at Springfield Technical Community College and at SUNY Brockport in Brockport, New York.

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

# New select board members elected

The following are new select board members elected in annual town elections from March 26 through April 24.

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

Andover: Kevin Coffey, Ellen Townson Belmont: Matthew Taylor Billerica: Dina Favreau Blackstone: Michael Sweeney Burlington: Sarah Cawley Canton: Patricia Boyden Chelmsford: Patrick Maloney Chilmark: Jeffrey Maida Concord: Cameron McKennitt, Wendy Rovelli Dartmouth: Christopher O'Neil Dighton: Mark Pacheco Fairhaven: Andrew Romano, Andrew Saunders Hamilton: Rosemary Kennedy Harvard: SusanMary Redinger Harwich: Peter Piekarski Holbrook: Kevin Costa Lynnfield: Alexis Leahy Middleborough: Teresa Farley, William Pike Millville: Joseph Baker Natick: Linda Wollschlager Needham: Joshua Levy Oak Bluffs: Mark Leonard Royalston: William Chapman Swansea: Michael Beaudette Tewksbury: Eric Ryder Wakefield: Douglas Butler, John Carney Ware: John Desmond, Terrance Smith Wenham: Karen Anger West Bridgewater: Marcie Lee Winchester: Bill McGonigle

#### MIIA

Continued from page 21

certification program thereby making them exempt from unemployment benefits.

Municipal leaders should also know how the appeals process works, as well as how to watch out for charging errors.

The appeals process consists of three levels, starting with determination by a local office adjudicator, progressing to a hearing before a Review Examiner, with testimony and evidence taken, and then to final review of testimony and exhibits by the Board of Review. Scott said employers should participate in all three levels of the appeals process and send first-hand witnesses to hearings.

Employers should closely review all monthly statements to catch common charging errors such as fraudulent amounts (in excess of those allowed by statute), extended benefits, and overpayments related to part-time employees who have lost employment elsewhere.

Municipalities may want to access third-party resources to help navigate the complexities of the system. As part of its Unemployment Services Program, MIIA offers risk mitigation training, claims auditing and management, and all related processing. MIIA partners with UTMC to provide participants with claims management services, and with First Nonprofit Companies to provide human-resources-related unemployment services and operations support.

For more information on

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



### MMA's legislative interns sign off

The MMA's legislative interns this spring — Alessio Pressamarita, left, Saniya Verma, center, and Michael Hemeon — pose in the House of Representatives chamber on April 29. Since starting at the MMA in late January, the interns, all students at UMass Boston, became involved in various aspects of the legislative team's work, including going to the State House, attending meetings, conducting research, and co-writing articles for The Beacon.

#### SITING

Continued from page 5

Resources, which would oversee the local process initiative. Staff would include at least four regional coordinators to support municipalities.

The DOER would be responsible for setting regulations related to the consolidated local permit process.

The special commission recommends that the DOER generate:

- A uniform set of baseline health, safety and environmental standards related to clean energy infrastructure
- A common standard application
- Minimum pre-filing requirements, including recommendations for hybrid hearings with sufficient public notice
- A determination on how to apply site suitability guidance to be developed by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs to better understand and evaluate resource areas for quality, development potential, and general social and environmental impacts, and a mitigation hierarchy to be applied during the permitting process

- Common standards to be used in approval in the event that a municipality triggers constructive approval through inaction
- Clarification of responsible parties subject to various enforcement actions

The commission further recommends that local decisions on permit applications be rendered within 12 months of receipt of a complete application. If no decision is made by the deadline, the project would be considered approved.

Within 30 days of the local decision, applicants or other parties could request adjudication by the director of the EFSB. Decisions made by the director could be appealed to a single justice of the Supreme Judicial Court. The EFSB would be responsible for setting regulations for the adjudication process.

#### **Other points**

The commission did not reach a consensus on several topics directly and indirectly related to the siting and permitting process, such as the role of <u>Massachusetts Environmental Policy</u> <u>Act</u> processes in a reformed permitting process. Other recommendations address appeals reforms, a public information campaign, model zoning bylaws, technical assistance, incentives for solar canopies, Department of Public Utilities review of interconnection delays, and more.

Acton Town Manager John Mangiaratti represented the MMA on the special commission.

- The MMA advocated for:
- An optional local consolidated permitting process guided by incentives for participating municipalities
- Creation of guidance on health and safety implications of clean energy infrastructure, to support municipal officials in protecting the health of the community while demystifying topics of concern to residents

Many of the special commission's recommendations require legislative approval, and the MMA will be working with the administration and the Legislature as next steps are considered over the next few months.

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

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

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



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



SIGN UP TODAY

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

#### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

#### Fire Chief

#### **Town of Groton**

The town of Groton (pop. 11,226) seeks qualified candidates for the position of Fire Chief (non-civil service). The Fire Chief serves as a "strong chief" in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 48, Section 42. The Chief works under the policy direction of the Select Board and the daily administrative direction of the Town Manager and manages a current budget of \$1,160,261. The chief supervises a department consisting of nine career firefighters/EMTs (including a Deputy Chief and four Lieutenants), up to 35 call firefighters/EMTs, and an administrative assistant. The preferred candidate will possess a bachelor's degree in fire science or related field; Massachusetts certified EMT; 10 years of progressively responsible related experience, including experience with a combination full-time/on-call-volunteer department, experience in fire code compliance and life safety activities, five years of experience in a supervisory position, and five years of command experience within an emergency services organization; or any equivalent combination of education and experience and abilities to perform essential functions of the job. Salary and other benefits will be negotiated, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Applicants should send a cover letter and resume by email to humanresources@grotonma.gov or to Melisa Doig, Human Resources Director, Town of Groton, 173 Main St., Groton, MA 01450. Deadline for applications: May 17. The town of Groton is an equal opportunity employer.

#### Local Inspector Town of Westport

The town of Westport, Massachusetts, is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Local Inspector. High school graduation and five years of experience in the supervision of building construction or design; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Massachusetts driver's license and Massachusetts certification as a local inspector of buildings, and the ability to maintain certification by attaining continuing education credit is required. Certification by BOCA, CABO and state is also required. Knowledge of all state and local building codes and regulations. Knowledge of building construction methods, materials, equipment, and tools of the trade. Knowledge of the uses and characteristics of building materials. Some knowledge of the principles of management. General knowledge of engineering principles relating to structures. General knowledge of materials, equipment and procedures essential for safety. Works under the general direction of the Building Commissioner; works in accordance with state and local laws and regulations. The rate of pay is \$25.26 for FY24 and \$26.02 for FY25; 40 hours per week. For a full job description, visit www.westport-ma.com under "Town Resources, Employment Opportunities." Send resume and letter of interest by email to employment@westport-ma.gov. Deadline is when the position is filled.

#### **Equipment Operator/Skilled Laborer** Town of Barre

Immediate full-time opening: the town of Barre DPW – Highway Department is seeking qualified applicants for the immediate full-time position of Equipment Operator/Skilled Laborer. Applicants must have a valid Massachusetts driver's license Class A (CDL), hoisting engineer license Class 2A/4G with DOT medical examination certification. A full job description with minimum requirements and employment application is available at <u>www.townofbarre.com</u>. This position is a union position and the current classification is a PW-2 with a minimum hourly rate of \$24.77/hour and the maximum hourly rate of \$30.02/hour. Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest and an employment application to: Town of Barre DPW, 441 Wheelwright Road, Barre, MA 01005. For further information, please contact the DPW Administrative Assistant, Shannon O'Connor, at 978-355-5013 or by email at dpw@townofbarre.com. AA/EOE

#### Senior Center Director Town of Blackstone

The town of Blackstone is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Senior Center Director. This is a full-time position for 33.5 hours per week with an excellent benefit package. Under the direct supervision of the Town Administrator, the Senior Center Director must be able to implement the mission, vision and values of the Council on Aging and facilitate strategic and operational planning with the COA Board and staff. Perform responsible, professional, and administrative work initiating, developing, and conducting programs, and providing human and social services to Blackstone elders. The Director oversees the transportation, nutrition, outreach departments and volunteers. The successful candidate shall have a minimum of an associate degree from an accredited college in human services, psychology, gerontology, or related field preferred, or some combination of education and relevant experience with over two years' experience working with senior citizens, over two years' relevant management experience and over two years' experience working with finances or budgets. Send a cover letter, with resume and application to the Office of the Town Administrator, Chad Lovett, Town Administrator, 15 St. Paul St., Blackstone, MA 01504, or email hr@townofblackstone.org. Preference to those who apply by May 6.

#### Part-Time Town Accountant Town of Granby

The town of Granby is seeking a Town Accountant. Municipal experience preferred. Position is part-time for 20 hours per week. Compensation up to \$60,000 per year depending on qualifications, education and experience. The town is an equal opportunity employer. Application and job description are available from the Select Board's Office, 10-B W State St., Granby, MA 01033 or by calling 413-467-7177. Position will remain open until filled.

#### IT Systems Administrator Town of Falmouth

The town of Falmouth IT Department has recently been restructured, and we are pleased to re-advertise for the IT Systems Administrator position with a new pay range and a sign-on bonus of up to \$5,000. The expected starting pay is \$81,036.80-\$92,622.40, and the full salary range goes up to \$109,470.40 (\$111,675.20 as of July 1). The IT Systems Administrator is a Tier 3-level, exempt position with opportunities for professional development and advancement within the department. This position works 40 hours per week, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This position works primarily on site however, there are some limited opportunities for remote work. There is also an occasional need to assist with off-hour scheduled maintenance and emergencies. Please apply directly through the town's website at <u>www.falmouthma.</u> gov/723/Current-Job-Openings.

#### Town Planner

#### Town of Lee

The town of Lee, Massachusetts (pop. 5,788), is seeking qualified applicants for the full-time position of Town Planner. Requirements include a bachelor's degree in community planning with experience; a master's degree, with experience, is preferred; or any equivalent combination of education and experience. The maximum negotiable annual salary is \$80,000 with full benefits.

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

#### Member rates

- \$100 for first 100 words; \$100 for each additional block of up to 100 words
- Rate for one format only (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.

#### June Beacon

Deadline: May 24 Publication: June 3

#### Summer Beacon Deadline: July 11

Publication: July 17

#### Placing an ad

You may use our convenient online form at <a href="http://www.mma.org/municipal-marketplace/add-listing/">www.mma.org/municipal-marketplace/add-listing/</a>.

#### For more information, call Amanda Brangwynne at the MMA at 617-426-7272, ext. 107.

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

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

#### **CLASSIFIEDS**

Continued from page 29

Visit <u>berkshireplanning.org/category/solicitations</u> for a full job description and application instructions. No phone calls. Applicant screening will begin immediately. AA/EOE

#### Truck Driver/Laborer Town of Groton

The town of Groton Department of Public Works is seeking qualified applicants for a 40 hour/week Truck Driver/Laborer. The position pays \$20.87-\$27.78, based on experience. Operates a variety of motor-driven vehicles and equipment, including trucks, light tractors, etc., in the provision of public works services. Assists in the snow and ice removal operations. Required to perform duties during off-duty hours, including when called from standby status for emergencies. All other related work as required. High school diploma or equivalent; plus at least two years of prior experience with trucks in construction and maintenance work; or any equivalent combination of education and experience, which provides the required knowledge, skills or ability. Must possess a valid Class B (CDL) license, with a good driving record. Ability to interact in a positive and effective manner with employees and the general public. Pre-employment physical; drug/alcohol screening, both pre-hire and randomly; CORI check; driver history checked upon hire. To apply, please complete a job application and submit to, Human Resources Director, Town Hall, 173 Main St., Groton, MA 01450 or by email to mdoig@ grotonma.gov. For questions, please call 978-448-1145. Job description is available on request. Deadline for applications is May 10. The town of Groton is an equal opportunity employer.

#### Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer

#### **Town of Sturbridge**

The town of Sturbridge is recruiting for a full-time Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer in the Building Department. This is an exempt position and the successful candidate will be responsible for reviewing plans for building construction, alterations, or any designated structures; issuing building permits; calculating/collecting fees; supervising the maintenance of associated records; and inspecting buildings, among other responsibilities. A bachelor's degree in a field related to building construction and/or design; or at least five years of experience in supervision of building construction or design, or any combination of education and experience. General knowledge of the accepted requirements for building construction, fire prevention, lighting, ventilation and safe egress; general knowledge of other equipment and materials essential for safety, comfort, and convenience of the occupants of a building or structure. An unrestricted Massachusetts construction supervisor's license is required. At a minimum, must be certified as a local inspector and must be able to obtain certification as a building commissioner or inspector of buildings within 18 months of hire. This also requires a valid Massachusetts Class D driver's license. The pay range for the position is between \$72,984 to \$98,599 per year. For a copy of the complete job description and an application, please visit <u>www.sturbridge.gov/</u> your-government/pages/job-opportunities. Interested parties should send a letter of interest and resume to Michelle Garman, Executive Assistant, 308 Main St., Sturbridge, MA 01566 or mgarman@

sturbridge.gov. Position open until filled. The town of Sturbridge is an EOE.

#### Water Foreman

#### **Town of Paxton**

The town of Paxton is seeking a skilled and experienced Water Foreman to join our team. This position offers a full-time schedule of 40 hours per week and works under the general supervision of the Director of Public Works. As a benefited position, the successful candidate will receive a comprehensive benefits package. Please complete an application and submit it, along with a cover letter and resume, to hr@ townofpaxton.net or mail to: Town Hall, 697 Pleasant St., Paxton, MA 01612. The position will be open until filled, with priority given to applications that were received by May 1. Visit <u>www.townofpaxton.net/</u> <u>community/pages/employment-opportunities</u> for more information.

#### Building Commissioner/Zoning Enforcement Officer Town of Worthington

The town of Worthington (population 1,200) is seeking to fill the position of Building Commissioner/ Zoning Enforcement Officer. Qualifications include: a minimum of five years of experience in the supervision of building construction/design or, in the alternative, a four-year undergraduate degree in a field related to building construction/design, or a combination of education and experience, which would confer equivalent knowledge and ability, as determined by the BBRS. Shall have general knowledge of the accepted requirements for building construction, fire prevention, light, ventilation and safe egress, as well as a general knowledge of other equipment and materials essential for safety, comfort and convenience of the occupant of a building or structure. Must be certified as building commissioner/inspector of buildings by the BBRS or have a prior approval letter from the BOCC or BBRS to obtain certification, as defined in 780 CMR 110.R7. Must have a valid Class D driver's license. This is a part-time position; 12 hours a week. Pay range: \$33-\$39 per hour. Detailed job description can be found here: docs.google.com/document/d/1DURzIpx\_U-EIa1ddsuXZQsHiWWoCw\_1G/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=111270427003763858270&rtpof=true&sd=true, and on the town's website: www. worthington-ma.us. Please mail your letter of interest, resume and references for all related positions held in the past five years to: Worthington Selectboard, PO Box 247, Worthington, MA 01098 or email to: selectboard@worthington-ma.us. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. No phone calls please. The town of Worthington is an equal opportunity employer.

#### Assistant Town Administrator Town of Hudson, New Hampshire

The town of Hudson, N.H., is accepting resumes for the position of Assistant Town Administrator. Coordinates the administrative functions of the Land Use Division. Preferred skills include human resources experience. Requires a bachelor's degree in public administration, planning, engineering, finance or closely related field and a minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible experience, or equivalent combination of education and experience. Must be computer literate. Salary DOQE, plus excellent benefits. Complete job description available at <u>www.</u> <u>hudsonnh.gov</u>. Submit resumes by May 10 to Town Administrator, Town of Hudson, 12 School St., Hudson, NH 03051. EOE

#### Town Manager Town of Berwick, Maine

Berwick, Maine (8,000 pop.), is seeking a creative, proactive, community leader to serve as its next Town Manager. Berwick is situated on the Salmon Falls River, which is the border between Berwick and the city of Somersworth, New Hampshire. Portland is an hour away, while Boston is less than an hour and a half. The Maine and New Hampshire sea coasts are a short drive away. The entertainment, business, health, educational and cultural opportunities offered by the region are exceptional. The seacoast area has often been named on the list of top tourist destinations and places to live in the U.S. The Town Manager reports to a five-member Select Board. Like many towns in Maine, it is a Town Meeting form of government. The annual town operating budget is \$10.4 million, excluding schools. The town employs 47 full-time and approximately 55 part-time and seasonal staff. The successful candidate will have strong experience in local government operations, personnel management, labor relations, and community-based problem solving. Strong interpersonal, listening, written, and verbal skills required. The town of Berwick requires a bachelor's degree in a related field, five to 10 years of progressive experience in municipal government, or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Special consideration will be given to applicants with a master's degree in public administration. The town offers a generous benefit package along with a salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. A complete job description can be found on the town of Berwick website. Interested candidates who have a passion for serving local government and its citizens are invited to submit a letter of interest, resume, and three references in confidence to betsy@hrmaineconsulting.com or Betsy Oulton, HR Maine Consulting, LLC, 2 Country Lane, Falmouth, ME 04105. This position remains open until a qualified candidate is selected

#### Truck Driver/Skilled Laborer Town of Barre

The town of Barre DPW Highway Department is seeking qualified applicants for the immediate full-time position of Truck Driver/Skilled Laborer. Applicants must have a valid Massachusetts driver's license Class B (CDL) with DOT medical examination certification and a hoisting engineer license Class 2B with DOT medical examination certification. A full job description with minimum requirements and employment application is available, at www.townofbarre.com. This position is a union position and the current classification is a PW-1 with a starting hourly rate of \$22.37/hour and the maximum hourly rate of \$27.12. Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest and an employment application to: Town of Barre DPW, 441 Wheelwright Road, Barre, MA 01005. For further information, please contact the DPW Administrative Assistant, Shannon O'Connor, at 978-355-5013 or email dpw@townofbarre.com. AA/EOE

#### **HVAC** Technician

#### Town of Concord

The Concord Facilities Division is looking for an experienced professional HVAC Technician to join their team. The incumbent will have experience in designing HVAC infrastructure, its maintenance, preventative care, emergency repairs and manage large-scale HVAC projects. Must possess a current Massachusetts refrigeration license, oil burners' license, sheet metal license,

CLASSIFIEDS continued on 31

#### CLASSIFIEDS

Continued from page 30

EPA certification, hot works certification and a valid Massachusetts driver's license. Five years of progressively responsible related experience, including experience in installing, diagnosing, repairing, maintaining or coordinating repair of a variation of different HVAC and boiler equipment. Starting rate: \$36.49-\$43.79/ hour, DOQ. For more information, visit <u>www.concordma.gov/jobs</u> or call HR at 978-318-3025. EEO

#### Assistant DPW Director Town of Northborough

Northborough seeks qualified applicants for the position of Assistant DPW Director. Responsibilities include sewer, water, highway, facilities and engineering management, and developing operating and capital budgets. Provides assistance to land use boards. Experience in solid waste collection budgeting, snow and ice operations, preparation of bid specifications, civil engineering and infrastructure construction preferred. Requires bachelor's degree in civil engineering or related field and seven years of related experience or any equivalent combination. Anticipated hiring range between \$103,000 to \$110,000, DOQ, with comprehensive benefits. AA/EOE. Job description here. Email resume and cover letter with "Assistant DPW Director" in the subject line to: townadmin@town. northborough.ma.us. Position open until filled.

#### **Director of Facilities** Woburn Public Schools

Woburn Public Schools is currently seeking a Director of Facilities to support the academic mission of the school system. The Director will be responsible for ensuring a safe, clean, and healthy learning and teaching environment for all users, including supervising maintenance and administrative staff as well as outside contractors, and working with principals to supervise custodians. Education and experience: bachelor's degree in business or facilities management, master's degree preferred. Minimum of seven years of related professional experience with a minimum of five years of supervising numerous employees at different locations and shifts. Certificates and licenses: Massachusetts construction supervisor's license (or other building trade license) is desirable. Massachusetts certified public purchasing official (MCPPO) is required or must be obtained within one year. Designated person certificate for (AHERA) Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act. OSHA 30 training is desirable. Salary range is \$130,000 to \$140,000, DOQ. A full job description is available at: woburn.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=1355. We encourage anyone who is interested and qualified for this position to apply and become a part of our team in supporting the academic mission of Woburn Public Schools. To apply for this position, send application materials, cover letter and resume to hr@woburnps.com or apply directly on TalentEd.

#### Engineering/Project Manager City of Revere

The city of Revere is hiring for an Engineering/Project Manager. This position is responsible for providing engineering support in the areas of water distribution, wastewater collection, stormwater collection, street and sidewalk improvement, traffic management, land survey, instrumentation and control, and geographic information systems (GIS) update and maintenance. Interested candidates should apply online at <u>www</u>. <u>revere.org/jobs</u>. Please submit a resume, cover letter and salary requirements with your application.

#### Retirement Administrator

#### Town of Fairhaven

The Fairhaven Retirement Board is looking for an experienced Administrator to ensure continued leadership and management of the town's retirement system. The person will work under the strategic direction set by the board while maintaining systems accountability in accordance with Massachusetts general laws. Please visit <u>www.fairhaven-ma.gov/human-resources/pages/employment-opportunities</u> for a detailed job description and qualifications. If interested, please send a resume and cover letter to hr@fairhaven-ma.gov. EOE/AA

#### Assistant Town Manager Town of Reading

The town of Reading is accepting applications for the position of Assistant Town Manager. Assists the Town Manager with the general administration of the town's general government operations and serves as the Acting Town Manager in the Town Manager's absence. Implements town projects, initiatives and strategic objectives as established by the Town Manager and the Select Board. Hiring range: \$122,179.20-\$141,689.60 annually. Schedule: 40 hours per week, Monday-Thursday; Friday's off. For a more complete description, please visit our website. To apply, please submit a job application to jobs@ci.reading.ma.us. The town of Reading is an equal opportunity employer.

#### Senior Planner - Housing and Sustainability Town of Reading

The town of Reading is accepting applications for the position of Senior Planner – Housing and Sustainability in the Public Services Department. At the direction of the Community Development Director, the Senior Planner provides high level technical and administrative support related to community development activities. This includes current and long-range land use, sustainability, and redevelopment planning. Hiring range: \$73,222.50-\$80,359.50 annually. Schedule: 37.5 hours per week, Monday-Thursday; Friday's off. For a more complete description. please visit our website. To apply, please submit a job application to jobs@ci.reading.ma.us. The town of Reading is an equal opportunity employer.

#### Senior Planner - Economic Development Town of Reading

The town of Reading is accepting applications for the position of Senior Planner – Economic Development in the Public Services Department. At the direction of the Community Development Director, the Senior Planner provides administrative and high level technical work that supports and advances the town of Reading's economic development activities, strategies, and goals; supports new growth initiatives; and works with multiple stakeholders to strategically position the town to sustain and evolve regionally in economic development. Hiring range: \$73,222.50-\$80,359.50 annually. Schedule: 37.5 hours per week, Monday-Thursday; Friday's off. For a more complete description, please visit our website. To apply, please submit a job application to jobs@ci.reading.ma.us. The town of Reading is an equal opportunity employer.

#### Town Treasurer Town of Brookfield Brookfield is seeking qualified applicants for the

.....

full-time position of Town Treasurer. Responsibilities include managing the town's investments, cash, debt service, tax title, bond issuance and administration of payroll, including fringe benefits and related personnel requirements. Municipal financial experience is essential; working knowledge of municipal procedures and state/federal laws relevant to the position; ability to develop internal procedures. At least three years of municipal experience required; must be bondable and become certified within three years. Salary commensurate with experience. Current appropriation is \$80,498.62. Job description at <u>brookfieldma.us</u>. Submit cover letter and resume to: selectmen@brookfieldma.us. Open until filled. EO/AAE

#### SERVICES

#### **Municipal Energy Services**

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

#### **Tax Title Legal Services**

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

#### 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

**CLASSIFIEDS** continued on 32

#### CLASSIFIEDS

Continued from page 31

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

#### Executive Recruiting, Management and Governance Consulting Services

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

#### Executive 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.

#### **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

#### **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.

#### Mass Notification System for Municipalities

Are you able to reach your residents when you need to? My Town Alert helps keep your community informed, prepared, and engaged every day. A mobile app that enables instant, widespread communication in seconds. Many communities use expensive calling or texting services, or rely on third party social media platforms to get out critical official information. Town Alert is a cost-effective, simple way to alert your entire community in seconds. No ads. No data collection. Simple and fast setup. Predictable pricing. Free nine month trial. Contact Eric Ciborowski Jr., info@townalert.com, 207-713-4302, www.town-alert.com, 300 Congress St., Suite 405, Quincy, MA 02169.

#### **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.

# 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 <u>erickinsherfcpa.com</u> for further information.

# 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.

#### Public Management Consultants

MMA Consulting Group Inc. provides consulting services to cities, towns, and other public agencies. We specialize in public safety/emergency response (police, fire, EMS) issues, the design and administration of assessment centers, structured oral panels, and recruitment of police and fire executives. For information, contact Mark Morse, President, MMA Consulting Group Inc., 101 Court St. #7, Plymouth, MA 02360; 508-746-3653; mmacginc@gmail.com.

#### **Municipal Support Services**

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

#### **Human Resources Consulting**

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

#### Organizational Development and Conflict Resolution

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

#### **Town Counsel Services**

Harrington Heep LLC provides Town and Special Counsel services to help build and implement local programs that serve community needs. We have the expertise you require, based on decades of real-world experience. We take the time to understand your

**CLASSIFIEDS** continued on 33

#### CLASSIFIEDS

Continued from page 32

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.

#### Executive Recruiting, Interim Staffing, Human Resources and Management Consulting

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

# 'Community One Stop' applications due by June 5

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, <u>Community</u> <u>One Stop for Growth</u> 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

<u>Program</u>, 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
- <u>Urban Agenda Grant Program</u>
- Massachusetts Downtown Initiative
- <u>Rural and Small Town Development</u> <u>Fund</u>
- Housing Choice Grant Program
- Community Planning Grant Program
- HousingWorks Infrastructure Program
- Brownfields Redevelopment Fund

- <u>Site Readiness Program</u>
- <u>Underutilized Properties Program</u>
- <u>Collaborative Workspace Program</u>
- <u>Real Estate Services Technical</u> <u>Assistance</u>

Fiscal 2025 applications must be submitted between May 6 and June 5, 2024. Expressions of Interest were due by April 30.

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 <u>One</u> <u>Stop website</u>.



#### Rural conference addresses housing

Keith Fairey, executive director of Way Finders, discusses case studies from successful housing projects in South Hadley and Greenfield during the Massachusetts Select Board Association's Rural and Western Massachusetts Conference on April 27 in Northampton. He joined June Wolfe, housing director at Construct Berkshire, and Gina Govoni, executive director of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority and Rural Development Inc., on a panel to discuss creative strategies for advancing affordable housing.



### Students dig into solid waste

Abby Barnicle, left, and Katie Adee, students from Suffolk University's Environment and Policy Law Clinic, discuss solid waste issues during a meeting of two MMA policy committees — Energy and the Environment, and Public Works, Transportation and Utilities — at the MMA office in Boston on April 10. They discussed their research on the current solid waste management landscape, including implications and recommendations for municipalities. Their report will be completed later this spring.

# Calendar

#### MAY



Women Elected Municipal

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

MMA webinar, municipal law 8 101, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

**Massachusetts Municipal** 9 Human Resources, boot camp, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., The Hotel Northampton, Northampton. Contact:

MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

#### **Massachusetts Municipal** 14 Councillors' Association,

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

- MMA Board of Directors, 14 10-11:15 a.m., Forbes Municipal Building, Westborough. Contact: MMA Executive Director's office
- Local Government Advisory 14 Commission, 1-2 p.m., Forbes Municipal Building, Westborough. Contact: MMA Executive Director's office

#### 15-17

**Massachusetts Mayors'** Association, spring confer-

ence. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

**Women Elected Municipal** 23 Officials, Women's Equality Day webinar, 12-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

MMA webinar, Mass Cultural 28 Council, 12-1 p.m. Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore



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

#### **Massachusetts Municipal** 29-31 Management Association,

spring conference. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

JUNE

**Massachusetts Select Board Association**, newly elected training, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Devens Common Center, Devens. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

**Massachusetts Municipal** 11 Councillors' Association, board meeting, 8:45-9:45 a.m., via Zoom. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

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

Local Government Advisory 11 **Commission**, 1-2 p.m., remote. Contact: MMA Executive Director's office

MMA webinar, munici-12 pal branding, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

**Massachusetts Municipal** 13 Human Resources, annual meeting, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Hawthorne Hotel, Salem. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

MMA webinar, Mass Cultural 18 Council: creative communities, 12-1 p.m. Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

Women Leading Government, 26 meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Cyprian Keyes Golf Course, Boylston. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

#### JULY

**Massachusetts Municipal** 18 Management Association, meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Danversport, Danvers. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

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

#### **SEPTEMBER**

**Massachusetts Select Board** 6 Association, webinar. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

**Massachusetts Municipal** 10 **Councillors' Association**, board meeting, 8:45-9:45 a.m., The Boylston Rooms, Easthampton. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

**MMA Board of Directors**, 10-10 11:15 a.m., The Boylston Rooms, Easthampton. Contact: MMA Executive Director's office

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

#### **MMA contacts**

Denise Baker can be reached at dbaker@mma.org

Timmery Kuck can be reached at tkuck@mma.org

Candace Pierce can be reached at cpierce@mma.org.

Anneke Craig can be reached at acraig@mma.org

Lily Rancatore can be reached at lrancatore@mma.org

#### For more information, visit www.mma.org