



Healey, Driscoll to speak at Connect 351

Gov. Maura Healey and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll will share their vision for the coming year with local leaders from across the state during [Connect 351](#), the MMA's annual conference in Boston.

The appearance, at the general session on Friday, Jan. 23, will come the day after the governor's annual State of the Commonwealth address and just a few days before she is due to file her fiscal 2027 state budget plan with the Legislature.

The governor and lieutenant governor are expected to address their priorities for 2026, as well as areas where the work of local government and the administration intersect.

Over the past year, the Healey-Driscoll administration has been working to address housing, health care and overall affordability concerns, climate issues, and federal funding gaps, to name a few challenges.

During an Opening Session address at



Gov. Maura Healey, left, and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll speak during Connect 351 in 2025. They will both speak again at Connect 351 later this month.

the MMA conference this past January, Healey and Driscoll discussed their state budget and local aid plans, public schools and roads, and other priorities. They pledged to work closely with cities and towns, emphasizing the importance of continued advocacy for their proposed [Municipal Empowerment Act](#).

Driscoll discussed the Municipal Empowerment package and the state-local partnership, along with her experience in public service, during a recent appearance on the MMA's podcast, [The 351](#).

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

MMA events since her time as attorney general.

Raised in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, Healey came to Massachusetts to attend Harvard College, where she majored in government and was co-captain of the women's basketball team. She spent two

■ **HEALEY, DRISCOLL** *continued on 24*

Connect 351 opens in 2 weeks

More than 1,000 local leaders from across the Commonwealth have already registered for [Connect 351](#), the MMA's annual conference, which will be held from Jan. 22 through 24 at the Menino Convention and Exhibition Center in Boston's Seaport District.

Registration is on a record pace, and the online option will be available through Jan. 20. ([Registration takes only a few minutes.](#))

The event retains the same high-quality programming as in past years, with more networking opportunities than ever. New features include Thursday's Boardroom Breakout and a Women Leading Government session called "Burning Questions," as well as



MMA members greet each other during Connect 351 in 2025.

[Affinity Networking Spaces](#) to promote connections.

Recent programming updates include the addition of [Gov. Maura Healey and Lt. Gov Kim Driscoll](#) at the general session on Friday morning.

Conference highlights include:

■ **CONNECT 351** *continued on 23*

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2025 MMA Board of Directors

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

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Liz Sullivan, Town Administrator, Dennis

Robert Sullivan, Mayor, Brockton

Michelle Wu, Mayor, Boston

Executive Director's Report

'Navigating the Storm' will require enhanced investment

We all know that things are tough right now for local governments in Massachusetts. That's why we at the MMA spent considerable time and energy to do a thorough assessment of the structural gaps, and have spent the last few months elevating the fiscal issues that are most critical to the success of local government in 2026 and beyond.



**By Adam
Chapdelaine**

In October, we released our "[Perfect Storm](#)" report, outlining the systemic challenges facing all city and town budgets in the Commonwealth. In November, I [wrote to you here](#) with a preview of our recommendations for alleviating the strains outlined in the "Perfect Storm" report. Then, in December, after months of engagement with many of you, we released our "[Navigating the Storm](#)" report, which outlined our recommendations for state budget and policy actions aimed at mitigating many of the challenges we outlined earlier in the fall.

We presented a menu of options, including modest additional revenue flexibility, assurances that a range of local accounts will be fully funded, and removal of some barriers to efficiency. But the centerpiece of our recommendations — and our top priority — is a significant infusion for Unrestricted General Government Aid, in order to restore state support for

municipal services toward a level that existed before the Great Recession of 2008.

As we enter 2026, we are focused on working with state leaders, and with all of you, to advocate for action on our ambitious agenda. Most notably, we have started our work with state leaders in advocating for our proposal for additional UGGA investments: \$351 million for 351 cities and towns.

As our report states: "Such an investment would provide immediate and meaningful relief for local budgets statewide, and local taxpayers. It would strengthen public safety, public health, public works, and community services in every corner of the Commonwealth. It would help municipalities stabilize budgets strained by rising costs and uncertain revenues. And it would restore a measure of balance to a state-local fiscal partnership that has drifted out of alignment for more than a decade."

"Reinvesting in UGGA is the most direct and immediate way to strengthen the foundation of municipal government. The proposed \$351 million investment would not only help restore historical balance, it would reaffirm the Commonwealth's enduring commitment to its cities and towns."

What's laid out in the passage above will serve as our guiding principles. Advocating for this reinvestment will protect local taxpayers while simultaneously shoring up critical services that

■ **DIRECTOR'S REPORT** *continued on 24*



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

State leaders, fiscal experts predict slow growth

By Adrienne Núñez

State budget experts convened on Dec. 16 for the annual consensus revenue hearing, with testimony highlighting continued economic uncertainty and predictions of slow state revenue growth in the coming months.

Experts highlighted the implications of federal policies on the state's economy and state tax collections, as well as known impacts of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, "or OB3" — such as changes to federal contributions for MassHealth and a raised state and local tax cap for federal income tax deductions (known as SALT), which could reduce state revenue due to its influence on taxpayer use of the state's Pass-Through Entity workaround.

Federal policy impacts on the workforce, particularly due to federal immigration enforcement activity, were also raised as a potentially negative factor for the state economy and tax collections.

Department of Revenue Commissioner Geoffrey Snyder said he expects slow tax revenue growth — somewhere between 1.7% and 3.1% — in fiscal 2027. For the current fiscal year, he expects tax revenue to range from \$43.46 billion (or \$155 million below benchmark) and \$44.18 billion (\$563 million above benchmark) when accounting for the impacts of OB3.

Snyder said he anticipates a reduction of \$664 million in fiscal 2026 state

revenue due to OB3, with a smaller reduction, \$282 million, in fiscal 2027. Snyder also noted a possible decline in Fair Share Amendment income surtax revenue in fiscal 2027, while predicting above-benchmark collections for fiscal 2026 (between \$528 million and \$793 million).

Several factors will impact forthcoming fiscal outcomes, Snyder said, including federal funding cuts that affect the state economy's education, health care, pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors, impacts of tariff policy changes, inflation, and actions taken by the Federal Reserve.

Other experts at the hearing echoed the commissioner's prediction for slow growth and uncertainty about several factors that may impact state tax collections.

Administration and Finance Secretary Matthew Gorzkowicz assured lawmakers that fiscal 2026 revenues are on track to meet expenditures due to cautious budgeting for fiscal 2026. He emphasized, however, that uncertainties remain, including pressures on health care expenditures.

Hosted by the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, the consensus revenue



Senate Ways and Means Chair Michael Rodrigues, center, speaks during the annual consensus revenue hearing on Dec. 16 at the State House. Among those joining him were Senate Ways and Means Vice Chair Joanne Comerford, left, and House Ways and Means Chair Aaron Michlewitz.

hearing convenes the governor's budget office as well as the Department of Revenue and other invited fiscal experts and economists to provide analysis on current and forthcoming fiscal year revenue to legislative and administration leaders. The event marks the start of the annual budget development season, laying the foundation for the Legislature and administration's spending decisions for the fiscal 2027 budget and the remainder of fiscal 2026.

Legislative leaders and the administration are expected to reach agreement on a tax revenue forecast for fiscal 2027 in the coming weeks. The forecast will be used in the governor's state budget recommendation, due to be filed by Jan. 28. The forecast will also inform the House and Senate budget plans that are customarily released in April and May, respectively. ●

CCC approves social consumption regulations

By Ali DiMatteo

The Cannabis Control Commission on Dec. 11 unanimously approved regulations allowing on-site consumption of cannabis products in Massachusetts, with the new rules taking effect on Jan. 2.

Municipalities will need to "opt-in" to the social consumption regulations, via local bylaw changes, referendum or local ordinance, in order for a local business to offer on-site consumption.

The regulations create three different on-site, adult-use consumption license types:

- Supplemental, for existing marijuana establishments, including cultivation sites
- Hospitality, for new or existing non-cannabis businesses
- Event organizer, for temporary consumption events

All social consumption establishments will be required to enter into new host community agreements with the host city or town, even if the licensee is already operating an existing business with an HCA. Event organizer licensees will need only one host community agreement in their principal place of business.

The regulations prohibit the intersection of alcohol and tobacco within licensed spaces, and municipalities can add some additional restrictions, such as prohibiting the smoking of cannabis products within their borders.

The CCC released a preliminary draft of the regulations last January, and initiated the formal public comment period in August. The MMA collaborated with the Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association to submit comments [in late January](#) as well as [early September](#).

The final social consumption regulations can be found [on the CCC website](#). ●

MMA offers recommendations on fiscal challenges

By John Ouellette

The MMA has issued a package of policy recommendations designed to stabilize municipal finances and public services amid a ["Perfect Storm"](#) of fiscal challenges that the MMA reported on in October.

At the top of the list is a \$351 million increase in state support for the Unrestricted General Government Aid program for cities and towns, to mitigate the structural impacts of deep UGGA cuts that were made during the Great Recession of 2008-10.

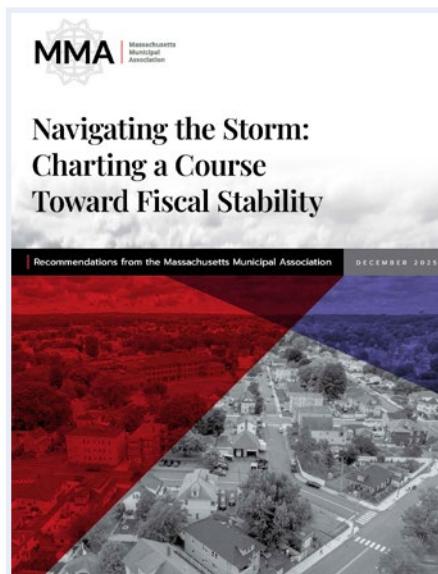
"Reinvesting in UGGA is the most direct and immediate way to strengthen the foundation of municipal government," the MMA's recommendations report states. "Such an investment would provide immediate and meaningful relief for local budgets statewide, and local taxpayers."

The MMA plan, released on Dec. 11, also recommends giving cities and towns more flexibility to raise local property taxes within the continued framework of Proposition 2½, and flexibility to increase local-option add-ons to meals, lodging and motor vehicle excise taxes, as proposed in Gov. Maura Healey's Municipal Empowerment Act.

"What the MMA is recommending is a renewed, strengthened partnership between the Commonwealth and its city and town governments," said MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine. "That includes the state providing more — and more stable — local aid, as well as cities and towns gaining more options for securing their share of municipal budgets and ensuring fiscal sustainability."

The recommendations are built on the data analysis in the MMA's October report, ["A Perfect Storm,"](#) and were refined through a series of conversations and meetings with city and town officials across the state. Local leaders are urging support for the recommendations.

"Working together, we can reverse the trends that have put municipalities in an untenable position and ensure the high-quality, essential local government services that make our communities great places to live and work," said Gardner Mayor Mike Nicholson,



president of the Massachusetts Mayors' Association. "All residents rely on these services every day — like excellent schools, public safety, and well-maintained streets, sidewalks and parks."

"The MMA's 'Perfect Storm' report was a landmark analysis that documented just how close to the brink many municipal budgets are," said Beverly City Councillor Brendan Sweeney, president of the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association and the assistant town administrator/finance director in Boxford. "The most important step is for the Commonwealth to renew its historic partnership with cities and towns by restoring local aid — the foundation for strong local services."

The recommendations from the MMA plan include an infusion of local aid and support for increased flexibilities at the local level:

- Providing "351 for 351 cities and towns" — a \$351 million infusion of discretionary aid through UGGA, to mitigate the lasting impacts of Great Recession cuts on municipal budgets.
- Ensuring that other local aid programs remain fully funded, including Chapter 70 education aid, the special education "circuit breaker" and other school-related accounts, and payments to municipalities for non-taxable state-owned property within their borders.
- Allowing Proposition 2½ flexibility, including allowing communities,

with approval from their voters, to implement gradual, multi-year overrides and/or to increase the 2.5% annual levy limit increase, temporarily or permanently, with another fixed cap, such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

- Providing cities and towns more flexibility on reclassifying properties for tax-assessment purposes, empowering local leaders to thoughtfully balance the impact on taxpayers, and providing new options for tax exemptions to seniors, veterans and other populations.
- Increasing the local-option meals tax from 0.75% to 1%, the local hotel/motel tax from 6% to 7% (from 6.5 to 7.5% in Boston), allowing a 5% local-option surcharge on motor vehicle excise tax bills, and establishing a new, local real-estate transfer fee to fund affordable housing trusts.
- Adopting several elements of the governor's proposed [Municipal Empowerment Act](#), including further incentives for regional cooperation on municipal services, the removal of red tape to improve local government efficiency, and reform of ongoing municipal liabilities and legacy costs.

"Cities, suburbs, and rural communities face very different challenges for balancing budgets and living within Proposition 2½," said Northfield Town Administrator Andrea Llamas, a past president of Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts. "Overrides are a non-starter for most communities, and state law prohibits communities from using many local revenue-generation strategies. The MMA plan offers a needed degree of flexibility. Adopting it, and restoring UGGA municipal aid, would be a huge win for the 7 million people who call Massachusetts home."

In the weeks and months ahead, the MMA will continue to engage with its members, along with state policymakers and other stakeholders, in pursuit of action on its recommendations. ●

MMA launches 'The 351' podcast

The MMA has launched a podcast: "The 351" – a show that explores the world of local government in Massachusetts, offering insights and a window into the personalities who make the work happen.

The show will cover the major issues of the day, as well as leadership lessons from innovators and experts who are leading the Commonwealth forward and working to make it stronger.

"We really want to dig into issues, but also bring forward the personalities of people who bring passion, energy and thoughtfulness to their work in public service," said MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine, who co-hosts the show with Communications Director John Ouellette. "We'd like to make local government in Massachusetts more relatable and understandable."

Ouellette added, "What makes this Commonwealth what it is — a great place to live and work — is real people doing important work, with an incredible and sustained level of commitment. It's fascinating to talk with these leaders and find out what drives them."

The MMA published the first two episodes on Dec. 16 — one with Chapdelaine and Ouellette discussing the MMA's extensive analysis of the fiscal challenges facing cities and towns, and one with Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll.

The third episode, an interview with National League of Cities Executive Director Clarence Anthony, was published on Dec. 23. Subsequent episodes will be published every other week, on Tuesday mornings.

["The 351"](#) — named for the number of cities and towns in Massachusetts, all of which are represented by the MMA — is available on Apple, Spotify and other podcast services, and can be [streamed on the MMA website](#).

The premiere episode focuses on two MMA reports: "A Perfect Storm: Cities and Towns Face Historic Fiscal Pressures," released in October, and "Navigating the Storm: Charting a Course Toward Fiscal Stability," released in December. Chapdelaine and Ouellette do a deep dive on the fiscal challenges facing cities and towns as well as MMA policy recommendations that could



The second episode of "The 351" features Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, center, in conversation with co-hosts MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine, left, and Communications Director John Ouellette.

"The 351" podcast is named for the number of cities and towns in Massachusetts, all of which are represented by the MMA.

stabilize municipal finances. The discussion covers the confluence of forces that have led to the current situation, the threat to the fundamental services that all Massachusetts residents rely on every single day, and an MMA package of remedies, led by the call for a substantial infusion of local aid to restore state support to levels experienced before the drastic cuts made during the Great Recession of 2008-2010.

"If you don't have local public health, if you don't have local public safety, public works, clean, running water, safe roads, safe streets, you don't have anything else, right?" Chapdelaine said on the podcast. "These are the building blocks of society, and we have to make sure we are maintaining this foundation so that all of the other important, exciting stuff that we want to do as a Commonwealth can happen."

In the second episode, Driscoll highlights what the administration is doing to help communities tackle an onslaught of

challenges, as well as the importance of local governments and public service, and the lessons she learned as mayor of Salem that she uses to inform her leadership today.

"We stay really close with our municipal officials, really trying to have our finger on the pulse of like, what are the most challenging issues happening at the local level?" she said on the podcast. "Because if we don't have strong cities and towns — that are vibrant and really thriving — then we're not going to have a strong and vibrant Commonwealth."

Upcoming episodes will focus on topics such as local officials who serve in leadership of the MMA, health care costs, the leaders of the Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts group, and the MMA's Connect 351 conference.

"We really want to cover a lot of ground, to have something for everyone who has a connection to local government in Massachusetts," Chapdelaine said. "We hope our members enjoy it, and we look forward to getting their feedback."

The podcast is produced by Dooe Diligence Media, with sound engineering by Nick Crnko and production assistance from the MMA's Meredith Gabrilska and Ella Coste.

The initial run of episodes is sponsored by MIA. ●

MMA annual Trade Show to feature latest solutions

By Stacey Compton-Maga

More than 275 exhibitors will be showcasing the latest in municipal solutions during the MMA's annual Trade Show at Connect 351.

Held at the Menino Convention and Exhibition Center in Boston's Seaport District, the Trade Show offers an unparalleled opportunity to connect in person with representatives from a wide range of companies, government agencies and nonprofits to discuss products, services and programs targeted to municipal needs.

This year's Trade Show will introduce AI Avenue, additional Learning Labs, an expanded Government Row, and a new networking area on the Trade Show floor. The floorplan of the vibrant exhibit hall

has been redesigned to enhance interaction among attendees.

The Trade Show will also feature MIIA's state-of-the-art driving simulator, which provides a safe environment for drivers to experience and react to various conditions typical of emergency response situations.

Learning Labs

A series of nine educational Learning Labs will be offered on Friday, Jan. 23. The 30-minute sessions will provide opportunities to hear from experts on a variety of topics. (Details available on the [Connect 351 website](#).)

Hours

The Trade Show will be open on Thursday, Jan. 22, from 2 to 5:30 p.m., and on Friday, Jan. 23, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. An opening reception will be held on



The MMA Trade Show, which will be open on Jan. 22 and 23, provides the opportunity to speak with exhibitors and learn more about municipal products and services.

Thursday from 4 to 5:30 p.m. The Trade Show will not be open on Saturday, Jan. 24.

The [Trade Show web page](#) has the latest information. Questions can be directed to tradeshow@mma.org.

Exhibitors

The following is the list of Trade Show exhibitors for Connect 351:

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| 617MediaGroup | Cannabis Control Commission | Freedom Energy Logistics | kartoondEDU | Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, Damage Prevention Program |
| AARP Massachusetts | Capital Strategic Solutions | Fulcrum Energy Solutions | Keep Massachusetts Beautiful | Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, Rail Safety Division |
| Abacus Health Solutions | Cascade Engineering | Fuss & O'Neill | KellifromBoston Communications | Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services |
| Accenture Infrastructure and Capital Projects | CaseGuard | Gale Associates | KFDA | Massachusetts Department of Transportation |
| Acriture | Casella Waste Systems | GameTime Park and Playground Equipment | Kimley-Horn | Massachusetts Division of Standards |
| Action Emergency Management | CBIZ | Gateway Fiber | Kleinfelder | Massachusetts Federation of Building Officials |
| Advantage One/MoveEV | CGR Center for Governmental Research | GEI Consultants | KOMPAN Play Equipment | Massachusetts Highway Association |
| AI Engineers | CHA | Genlyte by Signify | KP Law | Massachusetts Housing Partnership |
| Airbnb | CHA Occupational Health | GeoStabilization International | LeadSMART Training Solutions | Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA) |
| AllOne Health EAP | Christmas Decor | GFT | Lexikeit Language Services | Massachusetts Maritime Academy |
| Altus Dental Insurance Company | CIMS Cemetery Software | GHD | LiRo-Hill | Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association |
| Alwayz | Citylogix | Global Partners | LITIX | Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) |
| American Fidelity | CivicPlus | GM2 Associates | LKB Engineering | Massachusetts Office of the State Auditor |
| American Lamp Recycling | CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen) | GOGov | Local Linx | Massachusetts Public Health Alliance |
| AMP | ClearGov | GoNetspeed | Loureiro Engineering Associates | Massachusetts School Building Authority |
| Apex Companies | CMRK | Good Energy | Lynkwell | Massachusetts State Lottery |
| Auctions International | Collins Engineers | GovDeals | Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers | Massachusetts State Treasury – Unclaimed Property Division |
| Axis Communications and Gridless | Comm-Tract Corp. | GovWell | Massachusetts Attorney General's Office | Massachusetts Veterans Service Officers Association |
| Azora Software | Commonwealth Print and Mail Services | Granicus | Massachusetts Behavioral Health Help Line/MBHP | MassCor Industries |
| Barrett Planning Group | Comprehensive Environmental Constellation | Greater Boston Police Council | Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners | Mass Cultural Council |
| Bartholomew and Co. | Cyvl | Green International Affiliates, A | Massachusetts Broadband Institute | MassDevelopment |
| BCLW Consulting | DDS Acoustical Specialties | Lochner Company | Massachusetts Clean Energy Center | Mass Fleet Advisor |
| Beacon Bid | Deckard Technologies | Group Insurance Commission | Massachusetts Clean Water Trust | Mass General Brigham Health Plan |
| Beacon Climate Innovations | Delta Dental of Massachusetts | Guardian Energy Management Solutions | Massachusetts Councils on Aging | Mass Save Sponsors |
| BELFOR Property Restoration | Dig Safe New England | Haley Ward | Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation | Mead Talerman & Costa |
| BerryDunn | Dimonoff | Harrington Heep | Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources | |
| BETA Group | DMH Electric | Harvard Pilgrim Health Care | Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection | |
| BidDocs ONLINE | Downes Construction Company | HDR | Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards | |
| Black Earth Compost | East Coast Renewable Energy | Health New England | Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Local and Regional Health: Metrik | |
| Bludot Technologies | Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management | Hilb Group/Cook & Company Insurance Services | Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Local and Regional Health | |
| Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts | E Ink | Hilb Group/LifePlus | Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Local and Regional Health: John Turner Consulting | |
| Blue Mantis | EJP | Horsley Witten Group | Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities | |
| Blue Voice.io | Energy Efficient Investments | Housing Navigator Massachusetts | | |
| Bonsai Logic | Energy New England | Howard Stein Hudson | | |
| Boston Mutual Life Insurance Company | Energy Source | Hoyle, Tanner & Associates | | |
| Boston University Metropolitan College | Enterprise Fleet Management | HUB International New England | | |
| Bridgewater State University – MPA program | Equitable | HUB Tech | | |
| Brightly Software a Siemens Company | Eric A. Kinsher CPA | Hyster-Yale Materials Handling | | |
| Brody, Hardoon, Perkins & Kesten | Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities | ICC Innovation | | |
| Brown Legal | Federated Hermes | ICON Architecture | | |
| BSC Group | FlashVote | indigOTech EVs | | |
| CAI Technologies | Forerunner | Indus | | |
| | Foth Infrastructure and Environment | Infrasense | | |
| | | John Guilfoil Public Relations | | |
| | | John Turner Consulting | | |
| | | Just Appraised | | |

■ **TRADE SHOW** *continued on 24*

Members to consider fiscal resolution at Connect 351

Local leaders from across Massachusetts will consider a resolution on the state-local fiscal partnership during the MMA's Annual Business Meeting on Saturday, Jan. 24, in Boston.

The MMA's Annual Business Meeting is a key component of the [Connect 351](#) conference being held in Boston on Jan. 22-24. Resolutions adopted by the membership at the meeting help guide the advocacy work of the MMA in the year ahead.

[The fiscal resolution](#) seeks to ensure a strong partnership between cities and towns and the state in fiscal 2027. It identifies municipal needs in areas such as unrestricted aid; education and charter school finance; capital needs such as road maintenance, municipal and school facilities, water and wastewater systems, and climate resilience; and local-option flexibility for local revenues.



MMA members vote during the MMA Annual Business Meeting at Connect 351 in 2025.

The proposed resolution was published in the December Beacon and [posted on the MMA website](#), and member feedback was sought via an online form through Dec. 29.

Voting at the business meeting

Voting at the Annual Business Meeting is open to all municipal members of the MMA through voting delegates as defined

by the MMA's bylaws.

Individuals eligible to vote at the meeting are:

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

In early January, the MMA will reach out to chief municipal officials in each community about voting procedures.

Those who will be voting on behalf of their community should visit the credentials table outside of the business meeting between 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Only one voting card will be issued per member community. ●

Mobile app helps attendees navigate Connect 351

Attendees of [Connect 351](#) later this month can use the event's free mobile app to make the most of their MMA conference experience.

The app, available for all smartphones and tablet devices, is the primary resource for planning and navigating Connect 351. Users will find schedule details, workshop listings, speaker profiles, exhibitor information, an interactive Trade Show floor plan, helpful maps, and

information regarding accessibility, affinity networking and concessions.

Attendees can use the app to personalize their meeting schedule, network with other attendees, download workshop materials and presentations, and receive up-to-the-minute updates and alerts.

A guide to accessing the app will be emailed to registrants during the week of Jan. 12. [Advance registration for Connect](#)

[351](#) is advised, so attendees have time to explore the app and take advantage of its many features.

Assistance will be available at Connect 351 to answer any questions and to help on-site registrants.

— *Meredith Gabrilkska*



Trade Show to feature 9 Learning Lab workshops

One highlight of the MMA's annual [Trade Show](#) is the series of educational Learning Labs that will be held on Friday, Jan. 23.

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

The following are the nine Learning Labs for 2026:

11:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

- Efficiency Consulting for Municipalities — Presented by Kimley-Horn
- Cost-Effective, Turnkey, Electric Vehicle Charging Solutions for Municipalities — Presented by Constellation Energy
- Data Certainty for Negotiations and Budgets — Presented by LITIX

12:25-12:55 p.m.

- Vehicles – Putting Modern Hardware and



People participate in a Learning Lab session during last year's MMA Trade Show in Boston. Connect 351 attendees can choose from nine Learning Labs on Jan. 23.

Software Solutions on the Road Map! — Presented by Bonsai Logic

- OSHA Regulations Municipalities Must Follow — Presented by LeadSmart

Training Solutions

- Municipal Borrowing Basics — Presented by KP Law

1:05-1:35 p.m.

- The Use of Safe AI in Government — Presented by BlueVoice.io
- Navigating the Path to Fleet Electrification for Municipalities — Presented by National Grid
- I Hadn't Thought About That: Simple Strategies for Mitigating Risk — Presented by the Office of the Inspector General

Visit [Connect351.org](#) for complete information about the [Learning Labs](#).

For more questions about the Trade Show, contact Stacey Compton-Maga at 617-426-7272, ext. 154, or tradeshow@mma.org. ●

MMA launches Featured Services program

The MMA has launched a Featured Services program to deepen relationships with companies and organizations offering specialized services to cities and towns in Massachusetts.

Companies in the [Featured Services](#) program have been vetted by the MMA and have a proven track record of working with other municipal associations, national associations and/or municipalities. The MMA has entered into these mutually beneficial partnerships to offer a deeper level of service for our members.

Three longstanding MMA programs — [MIIA](#), [MMA-Suffolk](#), and [MunEnergy](#) — are now known as MMA [Signature Services](#).

Here's a summary of the first three Featured Services:

- [KartoonEDU](#) harnesses the power of

custom animation to tell municipal stories, such as how an override works or the components of a school budget. The animated pieces help residents understand complex municipal issues in an easily understandable format.

- [Savi](#) is committed to helping public-sector employees experience the benefits of public student loan forgiveness and navigate the repayment and forgiveness process.
- [Syncurrent](#) offers a tool designed to help governments find and apply for grant opportunities. Syncurrent uses AI to source and recommend opportunities for local



governments to find available state and federal funding dollars.

"A valuable service of the MMA is to offer ways for companies and organizations dedicated to improving local government, the people they employ, and the residents they serve to engage with our member municipalities," said MMA Deputy Executive Director Katie McCue.

At the [Connect 351](#) Trade Show on Jan. 22 and 23, members can find KartoonEDU at booth 1107 and Savi at booth 1121.

The MMA's [Partner Program](#) remains a hub for listings of a variety of services for municipalities.

For questions about the MMA's Featured Services, contact Katie McCue at 617-426-7272, ext. 111, or kmccue@mma.org.

Local siting and permitting regulations move to Energy Committee

The Department of Energy Resources has submitted a plain-language summary of draft regulations concerning local government permitting of clean energy infrastructure, including small solar and battery energy storage system projects — as well as an updated version of draft regulations that were released in September — to the Legislature's Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy for review.

The communication, filed on Dec. 8, can be found [on the Legislature's website](#), while the [DOER's Clean Energy Siting and Permitting Regulations web page](#) provides additional context and resources.

The MMA submitted [comments](#) to the DOER's [Clean Energy Siting and Permitting Division](#) during the public comment period for the draft regulations in October.

Promulgation of these regulations (225 CMR 29.00) is expected this spring.

The MMA will hold a workshop on these local siting and permitting changes during [Connect 351](#) on Friday, Jan. 23, at 2 p.m.

— **Josie Ahlberg**



In December, the Department of Energy Resources submitted draft regulations for local government permitting of clean energy infrastructure to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy.

State releases battery energy storage system FAQs

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs on Dec. 19 released a frequently asked questions resource on battery energy storage systems, or BESS.

The online resource, [Battery Energy Storage Systems: Frequently Asked Questions on Fire Safety and Public Health](#), was created to help state and local officials as well as community members and residents. (A [PDF version](#)

[is also available](#).)

Potential fire safety and health impacts of BESS were often raised during the public comment processes for draft regulations on state and local clean energy siting and permitting. ([Click here for more information on the regulatory process](#), and see the [latest MMA update on the process](#).)

Over the past several months,

Energy and Environmental Affairs, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Energy Resources, and the Department of Fire Services have prioritized providing public education materials on battery energy storage systems, as the work to implement the [2024 climate law](#) continues.

— **Josie Ahlberg**

MMA seeks members for its five policy committees

Local officials are invited to fill a limited number of positions available on the MMA's five policy committees for 2026.

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

- [Application form](#)

- Deadline: Jan. 26

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

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

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

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

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

Those with the interest and time to



Members of the MMA Policy Committee on Personnel and Labor Relations meet at the MMA offices in Boston last June. The MMA is seeking applicants to fill a limited number of spots on its five policy committees.

serve on a policy committee are asked to fill out the [online application form](#) by Jan. 26. The form provides space to list areas of interest and expertise so that a good match can be made between volunteers and the work of the committees.

About the policy committees

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

- **Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment:** This committee formulates policy in the following areas: water quality, water supply, air quality, solid waste and recycling, hazardous waste, wetlands, coastal areas, wastewater treatment, renewable energy and energy conservation.

- **Policy Committee on Municipal and Regional Administration:**

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

- **Policy Committee on Personnel and Labor Relations:**

This committee considers issues in the following areas: collective bargaining, civil service, employee benefits and pension reform.

- **Policy Committee on Public Works, Transportation and Public Utilities:**

This committee considers issues that relate to regional and metropolitan transportation, transportation planning, the relationship between local governments and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and the question of local control in joint state-local public works programs.

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

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

MMA to host webinar series on artificial intelligence

In February, the MMA will launch a free artificial intelligence webinar series that will explore AI and how it can be used by municipalities.

The webinar series will provide the information municipal leaders need to evaluate if and how AI can be used ethically and responsibly within their community.

The sessions will include:

- Demystifying AI — Feb. 11, noon-1:30 p.m.

An introduction to artificial intelligence,

this session will use the [Kendall Project's](#) framework of "how to think about AI." Attendees will learn to identify and prioritize AI opportunities for challenges they're facing.

- AI in Action — Feb. 25, noon-1:15 p.m.

This webinar will feature live demonstrations of how some communities are using AI.

- Developing an AI policy — March 11, noon-1:15 p.m.

The series will conclude with a webinar

on how a municipality can develop guidelines for employees to use AI responsibly.

More details, including registration, will be available soon.

This free webinar series is open to all MMA members. MMA members include elected officials and municipal employees from MMA member communities across the state. Media members are not permitted to attend.

Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre at klapierre@mma.org

MSA to host annual business meeting on Jan. 24

During its annual business meeting on Jan. 24, the Massachusetts Select Board Association will focus on networking and navigating fiscal challenges.

The meeting will be held from 12 to 1:15 p.m. during [Connect 351](#) at the Menino Convention and Exhibition Center in Boston.

MSA President and Stoughton Select Board Member Debra Roberts will give opening remarks, followed by a vote on the MSA Board of Directors slate for 2026.

Members will then engage in facilitated small group discussions on the fiscal challenges facing their towns. This session will serve as a follow-up to MMA's Fiscal Summit in October and be guided by insights from the MMA's recent reports: [A Perfect Storm: Cities and Towns Face Historic Fiscal Pressures](#) and [Navigating the Storm: Charting a Course Toward Fiscal Stability](#). The session will offer a valuable opportunity for members to network and share best practices with their peers.

All Select Board members in Massachusetts are considered members of the MSA and are encouraged to attend the meeting, provided they are registered for [Connect 351](#). Attendance at the meeting is limited to MSA members. Boxed lunches will be provided.

Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Martin Davis at mdavis@mma.org

MassDOT launches Municipal Speed Feedback Signage Program

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation on Dec. 10 announced the launch of a Municipal Speed Feedback Signage Program to help cities and towns manage speeds and improve roadway safety, with a focus on speed transition zones.

Any Massachusetts community may apply for free, solar-powered, data-capable speed feedback signs (post-mounted or portable trailer-mounted) that are compliant with the federal "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices."

The focus of the program is to place signage in areas in speed transition zones, where the posted speed limit changes and/or where current data shows the presence of speeding.

Participating municipalities are



Any Massachusetts community may apply for free, solar-powered, data-capable speed feedback signs through the Municipal Speed Feedback Signage Program.

responsible for the installation and maintenance of the signs, and must share the collected speed data to support statewide speed management

research and decision-making.

Approximately \$1 million is available in federal fiscal 2026.

Communities can use an [online form](#) to submit sign requests.

MassDOT will host two Zoom webinars about this opportunity:

- Jan. 21, 2-3 p.m. ([register](#))
- Jan. 22, 2-3 p.m. ([register](#))

The program is administered by MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning in coordination with the Highway Division's Traffic Safety Section.

Questions may be directed to Leah Pickett, from MassDOT's Municipal Planning and Support team, at leah.i.pickett@dot.state.ma.us. ●

ECO One Stop webinars scheduled in January

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs will hold three webinars in January on its new Environment and Climate One Stop portal.

Two webinars will provide an overview of the grant application portal process, participating grant programs and combined application, and answer participant questions:

- Jan. 27, 10-11 a.m. ([registration](#))
- Jan. 28, noon-1 p.m. ([registration](#))

An additional webinar will be held on Jan. 29, 10-11 a.m. ([registration](#)), to explain how to submit fiscal 2027 ECO One Stop applications, including how to create an EEA Grants Management System account, using the platform, accessing and submitting the application.

The webinars will be held just before ECO One Stop releases a Request for Responses on COMMBUYS and opens for formal applications.

Recordings of the webinars will be posted to the [ECO One Stop website](#).

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs launched an ECO One Stop portal to simplify the grant application process for climate and environmental resilience projects in Massachusetts.

By consolidating multiple grant applications into one streamlined process, the portal allows applicants to apply to multiple grants through a single application.

The application for the popular Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grants is part of ECO

One Stop, along with the following programs:

- Coastal Resilience
- Coastal Habitat and Water Quality
- Cooling Corridors
- Planning Assistance
- Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal
- Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance and Training

The MVP Planning 2.0 grant is not part of ECO One Stop and will continue to be a separate application process.

An earlier webinar on the ECO One Stop process is available on the program's [webpage](#), along with an FAQ document.

State awards \$50 million for road paving

The Healey-Driscoll administration on Dec. 17 announced the award of \$50 million in grants to 34 municipalities to pave 217 miles of roads in order to enhance safety and improve travel.

The funds come from the Municipal Pavement Program and are available for municipally owned, state-numbered routes, with an emphasis on National Highway System roadways.

In a prepared statement, Gov. Maura Healey said the funding would support local economies and ease the burden on municipal budgets.

The Municipal Pavement Program, launched in 2021, has helped to deliver more than \$125 million in funding and supported upgrades to more than 615 miles of municipal roadways, according to State Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver.

Projects are selected by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation each fiscal year based on pavement condition data, the proportion of state numbered routes in poor condition in a municipality, and geographic equity. MassDOT works closely with selected communities to develop a scope of work for each

roadway segment. All work is conducted by MassDOT contractors in coordination with the municipality.

The following cities and towns will receive funding in fiscal 2027: Agawam (routes 75 and 57), Bedford (Route 4), Carlisle (Route 225), Cummington (Route 112), Harwich (routes 124 and 39), Kingston (Route 106), Leominster (Route 117), Norfolk (Route 115), North Adams (Route 8A), Plympton (Route 58), Salem (Route 114), Uxbridge (Route

98), Westfield (routes 10 and 202), Westhampton (Route 66), West Stockbridge (Route 41), Williamstown (Route 43), Worcester (Route 122), and Worthington (Route 112).

The following cities and towns will receive funding in fiscal 2028: Adams (Route 8), Billerica (Route 129), Brewster (Route 137), Bridgewater



The Healey-Driscoll administration on Dec. 17 announced \$50 million in grants through the Municipal Pavement Program to pave 217 miles of roads in order to enhance safety and improve travel.

(Route 104), Brookfield (Route 148), Cheshire (Route 116), Georgetown (Route 133), Hadley (Route 47), Newton (Route 30), Northampton (Route 66), Paxton (Route 31), Rowley (Route 133), Savoy (Route 116), Springfield (Route 141), Sudbury (Route 27), and Truro (Route 6A). ●



Veteran councillors offer insights

Waltham City Councillor John McLaughlin, left, discusses the responsibilities and roles of a city councillor during a Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association newly elected training on Dec. 5 in Worcester. Also pictured are Marlborough City Councillor Michael Ossing, center, and Waltham City Councillor Colleen Bradley-MacArthur.

Let us know about your local news

Every day across the Commonwealth, municipal leaders are finding ways to deliver services more efficiently, save taxpayers money, engage more citizens in the work of local government, and improve the effectiveness of services that have a direct impact on people's lives.

The MMA wants to spread the word about these local efforts. If your community has launched a new program or initiative, or has found a unique solution to a common problem, please let us know with our [Local News Tips form](#) on the MMA website. ●

MMA Webinars

‘Alternative response’ teams

The MMA hosted a webinar on Dec. 9 featuring three “alternative response teams” throughout the state.

Faustina Cuevas, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion officer and senior advisor to the mayor in Lynn, said an alternative response team can complement the work of police departments to more effectively support impacted community members.

“Many community issues are driven by mental health needs, substance use, housing instability, and community conflict and mediation — situations where wellness focused, trauma-informed, culturally relevant responses are required,” she said.

Webinar speakers included:

- Camille Theriaque, director of the Community Responders for Equity, Safety and Service (CRESS) team in Amherst
- Marie Mathieu, community safety director in Cambridge, on the city’s Community Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE) team
- Abdel Kawaf, program administrator from the Lynn Calm Team

Each panelist discussed their program’s mission, staffing structure, position within their community’s public safety department, funding, and the types of calls they respond to.

“The first people who need to buy in are the leaders in your municipality,” Mathieu said.



Panelists discuss alternative response teams and tailoring responses to fit their communities during a recent MMA webinar. Speakers included, clockwise from top left, Camille Theriaque, director of Community Responders for Equity, Safety and Service for the town of Amherst; Abdel Kawaf, Calm Team Program administrator for the city of Lynn; Faustina Cuevas, diversity, equity and inclusion officer and senior advisor to the mayor for the city of Lynn; and Marie Mathieu, director of Community Safety Department for the city of Cambridge. Cuevas moderated the discussion.

Date: Dec. 9

Length: 75 minutes

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

She urged attendees to think about the specific needs of their community when considering beginning a similar program.

Cuevas moderated 30 minutes of questions and answers, addressing inquiries regarding hours of operation, response from public safety officials, and what stakeholders are necessary for these programs to succeed.

- Kristianna Lapierre



Panelists discuss State Action for Public Health Excellence (SAPHE 2.0) and building an equitable local public health system during a recent MMA webinar. Speakers included Samuel Wong, top, director of the Department of Public Health’s Office of Local and Regional Health, and Aimee Petrosky, director of performance standards and data systems in the Office of Local and Regional Health.

Date: Dec. 17

Length: 50 minutes

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

Aimee Petrosky, director of performance standards and data systems in the Office of Local and Regional Health, gave an overview of Metrik. She said the platform will “boost equity across the state by giving each municipality access to the same high-quality reporting tools, providing increased access to timely, consistent data to facilitate better public health outcomes.” She said it also “allows municipal leaders to be more responsive to residents and local businesses.”

- Kristianna Lapierre

Webinar topic suggestion form available

The MMA invites members to submit topic ideas for webinars or offer their expertise to present on a topic. Visit the [webinars form](#) on our website.

MMA booth is place to network, discuss policy issues

Local officials will be able to talk about the important issues facing cities and towns with MMA staff and representatives from MMA member groups at the MMA's Trade Show booth during [Connect 351](#) on Jan. 22 and 23.

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

The MMA booth will also have information about MMA programs and events and member group information.

Details will be available about the MMA-Suffolk University Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management Program for 2026-2027, and the MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar.

Representatives and board members from Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources will be present to answer questions, share information on upcoming programs and events, and network.

José Alvarado, senior regional specialist with the National League of Cities, will be available to speak with members about the league's programmatic and legislative work, member benefits, and the many ways Massachusetts communities can impact public policy at the national level.

Finally, Jillian Harvey, the MMA's chief equity officer, will spend time at the booth to discuss upcoming DEI



The MMA's Trade Show booth at Connect 351 offers opportunities to meet with MMA staff and fellow attendees.

initiatives and answer questions about her work.

Check [Connect351.org](#) or the conference's mobile app for the full MMA Trade Show booth schedule.

— Daniel Yi

MMA webinar to cover Syncurrent grant technology

On Feb. 3, the MMA will host a webinar with Syncurrent, a government technology organization committed to connecting municipalities with state and federal grant opportunities.

Finding relevant grant opportunities to accomplish local needs and navigating the complex processes are becoming increasingly difficult — at a time when grants are more needed than ever.

The MMA is partnering with Syncurrent to make grant funding more accessible to all municipalities.

Syncurrent offers a free platform available to all 351 municipalities to easily identify, qualify for, and pursue funding opportunities.

In this webinar, Syncurrent will

demonstrate their platform, which allows local leaders to find opportunities for which they're eligible, view application requirements, and build the entire application all in one place.

The speakers for this webinar will include Dhruv C. Patel, Syncurrent cofounder and CEO; Matthew Jaquez, Syncurrent cofounder and chief product officer; and Product Associate Cass McGregor.

[Online registration is available](#) for the 60-minute webinar, which will begin at noon. Only MMA members may



Cass McGregor



Dhruv C. Patel



Matthew Jaquez

register. MMA members include elected officials and municipal employees from MMA member communities across the state. Media members are not permitted to attend.

Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre at klapierre@mma.org

Clean Water Trust awards \$99 million for municipal projects

The Massachusetts Clean Water Trust's Board of Trustees on Dec. 4 announced \$98.8 million in grants for 59 projects in 51 cities, towns and water utilities, funded through the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

A full list of grant recipients and approved projects is [available online](#).

The funds help communities pay for

project costs associated with improvements to drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. The grants are provided as loan forgiveness and are a component of larger low- or no-interest loans.

Grants were awarded by project category and provide assistance for priority water projects. Communities that qualified as "Disadvantaged Communities"

via an affordability metric received additional funds.

More information about SRF programs is available on the [SRF programs webpage](#). Information on the state's [Loan Forgiveness Program](#) is also available online. ●

MMA and Suffolk to host information sessions

By Kate Evarts

The MMA and Suffolk University will hold a Zoom information session on March 11 about upcoming offerings of the Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program.

To register for the session, visit www.mma.org or [click here](#). The one-hour session will begin at 10 a.m.

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

The program is held over the course of 25 Fridays from September through May. The 2026-2027 certificate programs will be hosted in Littleton, Medfield and Palmer. The program is held in person (40%) and on Zoom (60%). Each location can accommodate up to 25 students.

The certificate program application will be available on the [MMA website](#) on Feb. 1, and the deadline to apply is April 30. Applicants will be notified of their status by mid-May.

Municipal Human Resources Seminar

The MMA and Suffolk University will offer three Municipal Human Resources Seminar programs in 2026.

The 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.

More than 125 participants have completed the seminar since its inception in 2024.

The Municipal Human Resources Seminar will be held via Zoom over the course of five Fridays, with start dates as follows:

- Winter 2026: Jan. 9 (fully enrolled)
- Spring 2026: April 10
- Fall 2026: TBD

The application for the spring seminar is [available online](#). Applications are due by Jan. 30. This is a competitive application process; applicants will be notified of their status by mid-February.

Questions about the registration process can be directed to Kate Evarts at kevarts@mma.org or 617-426-7272, ext. 172.

Municipal Fellowship

Municipal professionals interested in pursuing a [master of public administration](#) degree at Suffolk University are encouraged to apply for the Municipal Fellowship program.

Launched in partnership with the MMA in 2021, the program offers a scholarship of up to \$28,000, while the recipient's municipality commits to continuing their salary and position while they attend the program part-time.



Andover Health Inspector Carolina Bencosme participates during a class on municipal legal issues on Oct. 24 as part of the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program in Winchester.

Fellowship applicants must be accepted for admission to Suffolk's master of public administration program and must receive the support of the chief municipal official in their municipality. Additional consideration will be given to graduates of the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program.

Those interested in the Municipal Fellowship should check off, on [Suffolk's application](#), that they are a municipal employee interested in the fellowship, and apply to Suffolk by May 1. The fellowship selection committee will interview qualified applicants and award up to two fellowships in June.

More information

The MMA has partnered with Suffolk University since 2011 to offer programs designed exclusively for municipal employees to help them further their professional careers.

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

State allocates \$8.5M in Shannon grants to address gang violence

The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security on Dec. 16 announced the allocation of approximately \$8.5 million to 15 sites in fiscal 2026 grants through the Shannon Community Safety Initiative aimed at reducing gang and youth violence.

Funds were allocated to Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, the Metropolitan Mayors

Coalition, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Springfield, Taunton and Worcester.

Additionally, local action research partners associated with the Shannon grant sites received approximately \$616,000 to enhance these efforts.

The [Shannon Community Safety Initiative](#), established in 2006 and named for the late Sen. Charles Shannon, is a multi-pronged approach to help address a community's gang and

youth violence problem. The initiative targets five specific areas: social intervention, suppression, opportunity provision, organizational change, and community mobilization.

Shannon grants are open to multi-disciplinary groups working to address high levels of gang violence in their geographic area. Multiple municipalities may apply together as a regional collaborative group. ●

All-America City Award applications due Feb. 26

The National Civic League is accepting applications for its 2026 All-America City Award through Feb. 26.

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

The 2026 theme is "America at 250: Strengthening Civic Health and Building Trust." The league is seeking



communities that engage residents, businesses, and public institutions in civic dialogue, collaboration, and community-building efforts that not only strengthen civic life and rebuild trust

but also address pressing challenges and lay the foundation for a better future.

In March, the [National Civic League](#) will announce the finalists, who will have an opportunity to convene in Denver from June 26 to 28 to showcase their community's achievements at the All-America City Award event.

The application fee is \$250 for communities.

For more information and the application, visit the [All-America City Award website](#). ●

Gateway City projects receive \$15 million in tax credits

Projects in Brockton, Fall River, Hyannis, Lowell and New Bedford have been approved for participation in the Massachusetts Economic Assistance Coordinating Council's [Economic Development Incentive Program](#), the Executive Office of Economic Development announced on Dec. 22.

The recipients will receive \$15.2 million in state tax credits for projects that are expected to create 369 new housing units.

The Economic Development Incentive Program is aimed at developing market-rate housing in Gateway Cities to support economic development, improve the diversity of the housing stock, and create more vibrant neighborhoods.

The announcement was made during an event in New Bedford, whose mayor, Jon Mitchell, thanked the Healey-Driscoll administration for their support and said that the project receiving tax credits "will activate a vacant property, help drive down housing costs in

Greater New Bedford, and expand the city's tax base."

Fall River Mayor Paul Coogan said the investment will help to build additional housing and mitigate rent increases, and will "allow the city to continue its housing diversification efforts which will, in turn, lead to a better balance of housing choices for Fall River residents."

Visit the [Economic Assistance Coordinating Commission website](#) for more information. ●



New councillors get training

Newburyport City Councillor Afroz Khan, center, discusses the "job" part of being a city councillor during a Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association newly elected training on Dec. 5 in Worcester. Also pictured are Beverly City Councillor and Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association President Brendan Sweeney, left, and Watertown City Councillor Lisa Feltner.



Councillors get introduction to DLS

Sean Cronin, senior deputy commissioner at the Division of Local Services, discusses the work his office does to make municipal finance easier to understand during the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association newly elected training on Dec. 5 in Worcester. Cronin highlighted tools and resources available through DLS to help new councillors navigate municipal finance.

Municipal ADA Improvement Grants awarded

The Massachusetts Office on Disability awarded \$6.9 million to 86 Massachusetts municipalities in December through the [Municipal ADA Improvement Grant program](#) for fiscal 2026.

The grants include 33 Planning Grants, for ADA self-evaluation and transition plans, and 53 Project Grants, for specific capital projects. Funds will be used to update municipal emergency preparedness plans, accessible playground

equipment, mobility improvements at municipal senior centers, and accessible signage, and equipment and activities at outdoor recreation areas.

The fiscal 2026 cycle received the most applications in the program's nine-year history, according to the Office on Disability. The budget was increased from \$5 million to \$6 million for fiscal 2026 to accommodate the growing number of applications.

Office on Disability Executive Director Allen Motenko said the growing interest in the grant program "reflects the commitment of our cities and towns to accessibility, and we are proud to support local communities with their efforts through these funds."

The fiscal 2027 application period will open in the spring.

- [Download list of fiscal 2026 grant awardees](#)

PACE program available to finance energy efficiency projects

Cities and towns across the Commonwealth can facilitate access to financing for energy efficiency improvements in new developments and existing buildings through [PACE Massachusetts](#) once the program is adopted by the municipality.

Property Assessment Clean Energy (PACE) Massachusetts, administered by [MassDevelopment](#), helps commercial,

industrial and multifamily property owners, as well as manufacturers, unlock the power of clean energy, helping to drive energy savings, boost sustainability, and fuel economic growth by investing in energy-efficiency and renewable energy upgrades.

Nearly 80 cities and towns have adopted PACE Massachusetts.

MassDevelopment, the state's

development finance agency and land bank, delivers financing solutions, real estate expertise, and other assistance to strengthen and grow the Massachusetts economy.

The MMA will hold a webinar about PACE Massachusetts financing in the spring.

- **Katie McCue**

MMA to hold webinar on digital accessibility requirements

The MMA will host a webinar on Jan. 14 with the Commonwealth's Accessibility Center for Consulting, Education and Support Services (ACCESS) team covering what municipalities need to know regarding digital accessibility.

In April 2024, the [U.S. Department of Justice updated its regulations](#) for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, specifically for state and local governments. The requirements set Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 Level AA as the technical standard

to ensure that all digital content is accessible to all community members.

Municipalities with more than 50,000 residents must comply with version 2.1 Level AA by April 24, 2026, and smaller municipalities must comply by April 26, 2027.



Adam Gojanovich

This webinar will detail what local leaders need to know to prepare for the upcoming deadline, including expectations for different types of digital content, strategies for approaching the rule changes, and resources to facilitate the accessibility journey.

Adam Gojanovich, accessibility training coordinator with the [ACCESS](#) team, will share resources that municipalities can use to prepare for their compliance date, and will answer questions from webinar participants.

[Online registration is available](#) for the 75-minute webinar, which will begin at noon. Only MMA members may register. MMA members include elected officials and municipal employees from MMA member communities across the state. Media members are not permitted to attend.

Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre at klapierre@mma.org

Leaders look to the new year

Ashland Town Manager Michael Herbert discusses strategies for building strong habits and setting New Year's resolutions during a joint holiday meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources on Dec. 11 in West Boylston. Herbert led a session that focused on turning aspirations into concrete, achievable goals.



Property risk is a year-round challenge

By Jennifer Ranz

In years past, winter was viewed as the primary season for property losses, especially here in New England, where freeze-ups, burst pipes and heating system failures remain among the most severe claims for municipal entities. Indeed, last year's MIIA claims activity reaffirmed that winter hazards remain a significant concern.

At the same time, recent MIIA claims data also confirms that losses tied to sudden heavy rainfall and localized convective storms are an increasing issue, bringing volatility throughout the calendar year. Municipalities are seeing property damage during months that were once considered relatively quiet, particularly late spring and summer, said Stephen Batchelder, vice president of Claims Operations and Risk Management at MIIA.

"It's important to recognize that risk now extends across all 12 months," Batchelder said. "A year-round approach is the most effective way to protect municipal buildings and operations."

What claims data show

Freeze-ups remain a significant driver of large losses, and mid-January, particularly

around the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend, is an ongoing problem period. Plumbing fixture failures, HVAC issues, and roof vulnerabilities remain common, particularly in schools and older municipal buildings. The severity of cold-weather losses underscores the continued importance of winter readiness.

But emerging weather patterns, noted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, mean a greater prevalence of flooding and flood damage. Over the past several years, more claims have been attributed to power surges during more intense, convective storms and sudden downpours, Batchelder said. Surges can damage pumps, irrigation systems, electrical panels, and computer equipment. Torrential rain events stress drainage systems and expose roof weaknesses that may not be apparent during routine weather conditions.

Often, these types of storms hit at times



Communities can adopt a year-round facility maintenance plan to head off costly problems such as freeze-ups, burst pipes and heating system failures.

that communities historically considered the "off-season." A notable example is the severe rainfall that hit Leominster in September 2023.

Year-round vulnerabilities

Municipal facilities and maintenance teams often use late spring and summer to regroup, plan capital projects, and prepare for the next heating season. But with heavier rainfall, more frequent

■ MIIA *continued on 26*

MIIA offers 'Management Skills for Public Sector Supervisors'

By Jennifer Ranz

Effective public sector supervisors play a central role in delivering high-quality municipal services. They must communicate clearly, motivate teams, resolve conflicts, and manage performance while upholding public-sector standards and expectations.

To support supervisors in strengthening these essential skills, MIIA will offer a six-session "Management Skills for Public Sector Supervisors" training series for MIIA members this spring in partnership with the Public Sector Consortium.

Designed for frontline supervisors with two to 30 years of experience, the series will cover one supervisory practice per session and emphasize skills that support effective daily operations.

The training sessions are scheduled for March 12, 19 and 26, and April 9, 16 and 23 at the Southborough Public Safety Complex in Southborough. Participation is limited to two individuals per municipality.

Topics include recognition and delegation, hiring interviews, teaching new job skills, setting standards, monitoring progress, conducting

development discussions, partnering with one's supervisor, and managing performance issues, including progressive discipline and termination.

The series will be led by Georgianna Bishop, president of the Public Sector Consortium and a former director of workforce development and planning at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Julia Ross, senior faculty member and curriculum designer for the consortium. Both have extensive experience in leadership development and organizational learning.

MIIA members are eligible for Rewards credits for attending these sessions. ●

CONNECT 351

JANUARY 22-24, 2026

Menino Convention & Exhibition Center
and Omni Boston Hotel at the Seaport

NETWORKING

Our dynamic, high-energy conference provides countless opportunities to discuss the challenges you face and to learn what other local leaders are doing to move their communities forward.

- Receptions on Thursday, Friday and Saturday
- A lively **Trade Show** for meeting with exhibitors and colleagues
- Events for **Women Leading Government**, **WEMO** and other groups
- A Friday evening dinner
- **Affinity networking spaces** (new for 2026!)
- Hallway conversations and numerous seating areas where you can engage with colleagues whenever you like



TRADE SHOW

Our **Trade Show** is a great opportunity to find out what's new in the municipal marketplace! More than 275 exhibitors will be showcasing the latest in products and services tailored to Massachusetts cities and towns. And experts on a variety of topics will share their knowledge in a series of nine Learning Lab workshops.

WORKSHOPS

Our **workshops** cover the latest developments affecting local government.

Topics:

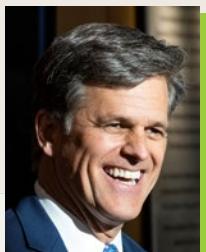
- Accelerating Housing Supply: Local Leadership for a Statewide Goal
- The AI Toolkit for HR: Leveraging AI With Confidence
- Collaborative Planning: Bringing Community Initiatives to Life
- Dollars, Data, and Dedicated Support: Insights from the DLS Team
- The Federal Landscape: Key Legislative Updates for Municipal Leaders
- Fiscal and Economic Outlook
- Forward Focused: Moving From Reactive to Strategic Leadership
- From Challenge to Change: A Perspective on Municipal Health Care Costs
- From Hired to Higher: Public Works Recruitment, Retention and Succession Planning
- From Prep to Practice: Crisis Communications
- Keeping Up With Clean Energy: Siting and Permitting Updates
- Keeping Your Cool When the Public Is Losing Theirs
- Labor Law Landscape
- Language Access: Starting Small in Order to Build
- Local Legal Lens: Insights on Municipal Law
- Municipal Cybersecurity: Safeguarding Communities Online
- When the Waters Rise: Leading Your Community Through Disaster

Workshop details are available on Connect351.org



Join more than 1,000 local leaders at this inspiring, can't-miss event devoted to learning, problem solving and idea sharing!

KEYNOTES



FRIDAY KEYNOTE

Special Olympics Chair,
Nonprofit Leader and Dignity
Index Co-Creator
Timothy Shriver



SATURDAY KEYNOTE

National League of Cities CEO
and Executive Director **Clarence
Anthony**



WEMO LEADERSHIP LUNCHEON

UNITE Chief External Affairs
Officer and Dignity Index Co-
Creator **Tami Pyfer**

GUEST SPEAKERS



Governor
Maura Healey



Lieutenant Governor
Kim Driscoll

I think the greatest value of Connect 351 is that it broadens your perspective. Every year you leave with an enhanced passion to go out there and keep moving forward with that positive energy after being recharged from the conference.



Liz Sullivan, Town Administrator, Dennis



HEADSHOT STATION

Attendees can get free
professional headshots taken at
the Trade Show.



Visit
Connect351.org
for complete
information.

Make the most of your Connect
351 experience with our official
app. Find out how to get it in this
issue of The Beacon.

REGISTER TODAY!

State awards \$104M in loans for clean water projects

The Massachusetts Clean Water Trust's Board of Trustees on Dec. 4 approved \$104.2 million in low-interest loans and grants to cities, towns and water utilities through the Massachusetts State Revolving Funds.

The funds help communities build or replace water infrastructure that enhances existing water resources, ensures drinking water safety, protects public health, and increases community resilience.

More than \$96.9 million went to clean water projects in Fairhaven, Fitchburg,

Haverhill and Swansea, including \$70 million for wastewater treatment facility upgrades in Fairhaven.

A \$4.8 million grant went to a drinking water project overseen by the Pine Valley Plantation Cooperative Corporation.

More than \$2 million in Asset Management Planning Grants went to Auburn, Cheshire, Fairhaven, Franklin, Great Barrington, Groveland, Haverhill, Medway, Milford, Milton, Needham, Oxford-Rochdale Sewer District, Pemroke, Wayland, Williamstown and

Winchester.

Peabody and Yarmouth received a total of \$81,500 in related cybersecurity improvement grants. Chicopee and Marion received grants totalling \$338,000 for sewer overflow mitigation and stormwater reuse. A \$3,000 School Water Improvement Grant was awarded to Family Access of Newton.

For more information, visit the [SRF programs webpage](#). Information on the state's [Loan Forgiveness Program](#) is also available online. ●

MassTrails grant program accepting applications through Feb. 2

The Department of Conservation and Recreation has opened the application period for its 2026 MassTrails grant program.

The [application deadline](#) is Feb. 2.

[MassTrails](#) provides grants to communities, public entities, Native nations and nonprofits to plan, design, create and maintain the state's network of trails, trail systems, and trail experiences.

The award maximum is generally \$100,000 for recreational trail projects and up to \$500,000 for shared-use path projects demonstrating critical network connections of regional or statewide significance.

Eligible grant activities include project development, design, engineering, permitting, construction and maintenance of recreational trails, shared-use

pathways, and the amenities that support trails.

These are reimbursement grants, requiring documentation of expenditures. Grants recipients must pay at least 20% of the total project cost.

Visit the [MassTrails Grants](#) webpage for more information. ●

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
- Connect 351 announcements
- And much more!



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

SIGN UP TODAY



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

Around the Commonwealth

Worcester

City trust fund supports affordable housing needs

The Worcester Affordable Housing Trust Fund awarded \$1.25 million in October to eight housing projects that will create 59 affordable rental and homeownership units. The units represent a mix of housing types, from single-family to multi-unit.

The city's affordable housing trust fund was created about three years ago with about \$18 million from the American Rescue Plan Act, all of which has been allocated.

In November of 2022, city voters passed the Community Preservation Act, and the \$1.25 million approved this fall is the first round using CPA funds.

The city also completed its first-ever housing production plan this year.

"We wanted to ... do a deep dive on our demographics," said Worcester Chief Development Officer Peter Dunn, "to make sure that we're understanding what those housing needs are, and then being able to strategically prioritize the allocation of resources for the types of housing that are most in need."

"The key takeaway is that we certainly have a need for more units across the income spectrum, so we definitely need more affordable housing. We need more market-rate housing."

We also need more homeownership."

The city decided to undertake a housing production plan for two reasons: It was also working on implementing a comprehensive long-range plan for the city, Worcester Now, which is focused on the built environment, zoning and land use. And the city was closing out American Rescue Plan Act funding and, with less resources, saw a need to be as strategic as possible in meeting housing needs.

Dunn said the city has been working closely with the Worcester Housing Authority, which received funding in this fall's allocation, on thinking about what is next for public housing, since much of that stock was built in the 1950s and will need to be reconstructed.

"As they're doing that, they're using that land that they already control to add

additional density and expand capacity, and they're doing it as affordable housing at different levels of Area Median Income," Dunn said. "So not just expanding public housing, but making sure that we're having neighborhoods developed that have a mix of incomes."

The recent trust fund award includes a Worcester Community Housing Resources project for four rented tiny homes, which Dunn said will be built on a surplus municipal property that used to be a parking lot. The agency will be partnering with Open Sky Community Services to provide wrap-around services. The homes will be rented to households with less than 30% Area Median Income in order to reach folks who are currently or at risk of homelessness.

"They're targeting seniors because one of the things that we had heard from seniors in terms of the shelters that exist, as well as some permanent supportive housing that is of greater density, was that having this kind of style that is more reminiscent of a single-family home provides more of that kind of independent style living, and in some cases, depending on their perspective, a better sense of dignity," Dunn said.

Projects previously funded by the trust fund are at various stages of development, Dunn said, and the initial investment of \$18.4 million is supporting 552 total units at a variety of income levels.

Based on demographic trends, community feedback, and the fact that much of the housing stock in the city is older, Dunn said applications for the housing trust fund have a minimum threshold for Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility of 10%.

The housing production plan, which the city was able to complete in part thanks to a grant through the state's Housing Choice program, helped the city identify their specific needs and strategies.

"You see a lot of commonality certainly across the Commonwealth in what those strategies could be or what those recommendations are, and certainly the needs," Dunn said. "But doing it at a municipal, community-based level is important because there are unique conditions or circumstances that exist."

- Meredith Gabrlska



In an image from Hidden Brookline's video tour of Brookline Town Hall, Malcolm Cawthorn, left, and Barbara Brown stand by a plaque in Brookline Town Hall honoring town residents who fought at the Battle of Lexington.

Brookline

Video highlights 'hidden history' of slavery in town

Visitors to Brookline Town Hall are greeted by a large metal plaque in the entrance that bears the names of Brookline residents who fought in the Battles of Lexington and Concord in April 1775. At the bottom are the names of three enslaved men who fought for the cause, but they're recognized only by their first names and the names of the men who enslaved them.

The plaque is featured in a [new video, called "Hidden Brookline,"](#) that brings to light the history of enslaved people in Brookline. The video was developed and produced by Brookline's Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations, in coordination with Hidden Brookline, a committee focused on understanding the history of slavery in Brookline.

The video features two guides: Barbara Brown, a retired professor and educational program director, and Malcolm Cawthorn, a Brookline High School history teacher and the town's METCO director.

"Slavery in Massachusetts has been, across the state, hidden for over 225 years," Brown said. "We have gotten so caught up in this simple narrative ... that we hadn't heard that there was slavery here."

Brown began researching Brookline's history to learn more about the area's relationship with slavery. She developed walking tours that highlight locations throughout the town that are connected to the history of enslaved people of African descent who

■ **COMMONWEALTH** *continued on 22*

Around the Commonwealth

COMMONWEALTH

Continued from page 21

lived and worked in Brookline, as well as the town's connections to slavery and the abolitionist movement.

"We have a more complicated history," Brown said. "We also have wonderful things. It's one piece of our history."

While looking for ways to bring the walking tour to a larger audience, including Brookline Public School students, Brown had the idea to create a video, one that covered a place most residents know well: Town Hall. She reached out to Cawthorn, who had been involved in Hidden Brookline's work, to see if he would be interested.

"We decided to make a video that classrooms could use," Cawthorn said, "for those with limited mobility, or ... for schools."

Brown and Cawthorn partnered with Brookline Interactive Group, a local non-profit and local media producer, as well as Lloyd Gellineau, Brookline's chief diversity officer. Gellineau was able to secure funding for video production from the Brookline Community Foundation.

Brown leveraged existing relationships with local stakeholders, built through her research process, to compile information and resources for the video. These stakeholders included the Brookline Historical Society, Brookline Public Library, and the First Parish Church of Brookline, all of which have historical documents and artifacts related to the history of slavery in Brookline.

Brown and Cawthorn have plans to expand the video series into multiple parts to cover additional locations that are discussed on Hidden Brookline's walking tours, as well as more recent history within Brookline.

This hidden history is "important to uncover to get a full picture of the town, the state, and the communities we live in," Cawthorn said.

"There's joy in revealing things that people didn't know, and making it powerful for them to know and making it real," Brown said.

- Owen Page

Milton, Randolph

Towns launch new programs to honor, support veterans

With a new director in place, Milton and Randolph's shared veterans department is finding creative ways to support veterans and elevate their service in the two communities.

Under the leadership of Veteran Services Director Alex Ortiz, who began in July, Randolph has started a peer support group for veterans and first responders, and Milton Access TV recently released the first episode of "Veteran Stories with Alex Ortiz," to honor the military service of people connected to the town. The two initiatives are efforts by the towns to ensure that their veterans are both seen and heard.

Ortiz, an Army combat veteran who served tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, has worked for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and served on an advisory committee for that department, chairing a subcommittee on the Caribbean territories. In 2024, the White House recognized him as one of five Latino veterans leading change across the United States and its territories.

"Working with veterans is not only near and dear in my heart, because I served and I understand the struggles," Ortiz said, "but a lot of the things that we learned can be applied locally, in terms of not only municipal government and efficiency, [but] having the ability to bring all these learned lessons from federal structures, compliance, and regulatory issues."



Alex Ortiz, the veteran services director in Milton and Randolph, appears in the first episode of "Veteran Stories with Alex Ortiz," a new program on Milton Access TV highlighting the service and lives of local veterans.

The Randolph meetings, which started in September, give veterans and first responders a safe space to talk about mental health issues, finances and veterans benefits. The meetings, averaging a dozen attendees, have some structure, but pairs or smaller groups can break off for private conversations. There are only two rules, he said.

"We don't talk about politics, and we don't talk about religion," Ortiz said. "Those are two big divisive subjects. Anything else is game."

Ortiz said it's important to pair veterans and first responders, given the overlap in the groups and the similarities in the stress and traumatic situations they've faced. The group offers opportunities for mentoring, he said, and support to help strengthen the bonds for first responders.

"So building, rebuilding that camaraderie within the town, to me, is critical, because once you build those relationships, then we can share benefits, we can share information," Ortiz said. "We can also, in times of crisis or in need — whether it be suicidal ideation or financial economic hardship — we can cover those because you have a confidant within the community that's your town, that you can trust. ... So that's the whole purpose of having the peer support group."

Over the border in Milton, residents will be learning more about the town's veterans through Ortiz's new cable show. The local TV station released the first episode in November, and Ortiz said he hopes to record the next two episodes soon. The recordings of the interviews will also be stored in the Library of Congress, he said.

The first episode features Col. Mark Denton, executive officer to the undersecretary of the Army, who discusses his early childhood in Jamaica, his move to Milton at age 10, his combat experiences and rise through the ranks, and the importance of resilience in his career. In November, Denton spoke at Veterans Day ceremonies in Milton and in Randolph, where he also has family.

"Milton and the community gave so much to me," Denton said in the episode. "Doing the guest speaking for Veterans Day is a full-circle moment for me — just to give back and share my story, and I hope it's a

COMMONWEALTH continued on 26

CONNECT 351

Continued from page 1

- [Engaging and inspiring speakers](#)
- [Timely, educational workshops](#)
- [A lively Trade Show](#)
- [Member business meetings](#) and important policy discussions
- [Numerous networking opportunities](#)

Visit [Connect351.org](#) for complete conference information. The event's free mobile app will help attendees make the most of their experience.

The event "is a safe space to talk with other people in other communities and find out how we can kind of work together to move forward," said Adams Select Board Member Christine Hoyt, a regular MMA conference attendee. "I always come back from Connect 351 with this renewed sense of purpose, a little more focus, and a sense that I'm not in this alone."

Speakers

Connect 351's inspiring speaker lineup includes:

- [Friday keynote Timothy Shriver](#), CEO of UNITE and co-creator of the Dignity Index, will explore the ways in which people can engage in constructive dialogue and see each other's humanity.
- [Gov. Maura Healey](#) and [Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll](#) will discuss the state-local partnership and their priorities for the year ahead.
- [Saturday keynote Clarence Anthony](#), executive director of the National League of Cities, will discuss building effective partnerships, bridging divides, navigating artificial intelligence, and addressing the housing emergency.
- [Tami Pyfer](#), co-creator of the Dignity Index and a former city councillor, will address the Women Elected Municipal Officials Leadership Luncheon.

Workshops

Connect 351 will feature [17 timely and informative workshops](#) during three time slots on Friday and Saturday afternoons, covering timely topics like crisis communications, employee recruitment and retention, artificial intelligence, health costs, strategic

leadership, and more. A number of these workshops are MIIA Rewards-eligible. Visit [Connect351.org](#) for complete information.

Trade Show

A lively [Trade Show](#) will feature more than 280 exhibitors showcasing the latest in products, services and solutions for Massachusetts municipalities. The Trade Show will be open on Thursday afternoon from 2 to 5:30, which is a great opportunity to meet with exhibitors when the exhibit hall will be less crowded than at peak times. A welcome reception will be held on the Trade Show floor from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

The Trade Show will also be open on Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., with nine, half-hour [Learning Lab](#) sessions on the show floor between 11:45 a.m. and 1:35 p.m.

The Trade Show will not be open on Saturday.

Networking

Connect 351 features numerous opportunities to meet your colleagues, share ideas, and expand your network.

Networking events include general receptions on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, a DEI-centered networking reception, affiliate and regional group meetings, affinity group receptions, and an [MMA-Suffolk programs](#) reception. In addition, there are always hallway conversations and numerous seating areas where members can engage with colleagues whenever they'd like.

Additional programming

- Local leaders will take the stage during the WLG's "Burning Questions" event — modeled after the web series "Hot Ones" — in which panelists will offer their perspectives on critical issues while facing the heat by eating progressively spicier hot wings.
- In "Boardroom Breakout," on Thursday, 3-4 p.m., participants will form teams for an escape-room-style activity, solving a series of puzzles, challenges and critical-thinking tasks before the clock runs out.
- Attendees can get free, professional photos taken at the Headshot Station, which will be open on Thursday from 2 to 5:30 p.m. and on Friday from 8 to 9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Registration

[Online registration](#) for Connect 351, which is available through Jan. 20, requires a member's unique username and password. Registrations cannot be made by mail or over the phone. Those who didn't register in advance online may register on site, though there will be an additional fee of \$40.

The early registration rate is \$289 for MMA members and Partner Program members. (Partners must be in good standing as of Dec. 30, 2025, to be eligible for registration and attendance. New MMA Partner Program applications will not be accepted until after Connect 351, and renewal applications will not be accepted during Connect 351.)

Nonmember government entities are welcome to attend Connect 351, at a cost of \$359.

Tickets are also available for the Women Elected Municipal Officials Leadership Luncheon (\$59), and the Friday evening dinner (\$69).

The MMA accepts credit cards for all Connect 351 transactions and is able to invoice your municipality after the meeting as well.

Those who need assistance with registration can email connect351@mma.org.

Accommodations and parking

Rooms in the MMA's discounted room blocks at area hotels are now sold out, but attendees may still book rooms at regular rates at the following area hotels:

- [Omni Boston Hotel](#)
(1-800-THE-OMNI)
- [The Westin Seaport](#) (617-532-4600)
- [Element Boston Seaport District](#)
(617-530-1700)
- [Aloft Boston Seaport District](#)
(617-530-1600)
- [Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel](#)
(606 Congress St.)
- [Seaport Hotel Boston](#) (1 Seaport Lane)

The sites for Connect 351 — the [Menino Convention and Exhibition Center](#) (415 Summer St.) and the [Omni Boston Hotel at the Seaport](#) — are located in Boston's fastest-growing and newest neighborhood. Both are just minutes away from Boston's major highways, and

■ **CONNECT 351** *continued on 24*

HEALEY, DRISCOLL

Continued from page 1

years playing professional basketball in Europe before returning to earn her law degree at Northeastern University School of Law.

Healey began her law career as a U.S. District Court clerk followed by seven years in private practice. She served as a special assistant district attorney in Middlesex County, as chief of the attorney general's Civil Rights Division, as chief of the AG's Public Protection and Advocacy Bureau, and as chief of the AG's Business and Labor Bureau. In 2014, she was elected attorney general, and was reelected in 2018.

In January 2023, Healey and Driscoll

became the state's first all-women leadership team, and Massachusetts became one of the two first states in the country, along with Arkansas, to have women occupying the two top executive roles. Driscoll was also the first woman to serve as mayor in Salem when she was elected there in 2005.

Driscoll was previously chief legal counsel and then deputy city manager in Chelsea, community development director in Beverly, a councillor in Salem, and an intern in Salem's Planning Department. She majored in political science and played basketball at Salem State University before earning a law degree at the Massachusetts School of Law.

During 17 years as mayor of Salem, Driscoll was credited with helping to

improve Salem's finances, overseeing infrastructure upgrades, investing in public school improvements, championing climate initiatives, prioritizing downtown and waterfront revitalization, and promoting equality.

She had been actively involved in the MMA and served as president of the Massachusetts Mayors' Association in 2012. She also served as chair of the North Shore Coalition of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and served on the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Local Government Advisory Committee, the Massachusetts Seaport Economic Council, and the Massachusetts Economic Development Planning Council.

But we can't do this alone. We need all of you, the leaders of towns and cities across this state, to assist us in making this case to both the governor and the Legislature. In the weeks ahead, we will be providing more information about how to best assist us in this effort, and we are excited that we'll see many of you at Connect 351 in just a couple weeks to inject even more energy into this critical endeavor. ●

DIRECTORS REPORT

Continued from page 2

provide the foundation for the quality of life enjoyed by these same taxpayers. Most importantly, and this bears repeating, we are advocating for reinvestment — movement toward the state and local fiscal partnership that existed before the Great Recession — when allocating funds for

UGGA going forward.

We are fully aware that the Commonwealth faces economic and budgetary headwinds as it plans for fiscal 2027, but in many ways, that makes it even more imperative that we start to make progress on this approach now, in order to fortify cities and towns for whatever may lie ahead in these uncertain times.

TRADE SHOW

Continued from page 6

Metropolitan Area Planning Council
MGT Impact Solutions
MHEC
Milliman
Mirick
Mitsubishi Electric Trane
Municibid.com
Municipal Police Institute
MuniTrac
Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Lehane
Musco Lighting
National Grid
NEAPWA (APWA New England Chapter)
Nessit
New England Water Works Association/Massachusetts Water

Works Association
Nitsch Engineering
Office of Inspector General
Office of the Veteran Advocate
Omega Benefit Strategies
OneLocal Bank
OpenGov
Operational Services Division
Oracle NetSuite for Government
P-Three
Pare Corporation
ParkMobile by Arrive
PARS
Pennoni
Petrini & Associates
Pierce Davis & Perritano
Polara Energy
Polimorphic
PowerOptions
Precision Concrete Cutting
RadarSign
Readyly

REDNOSE Holiday Lights & Decor
Republic Services
RestoreNow
RetroFit Technologies
RevEnergy
Revit
RND Consultants
Rockland Trust Investment
Management Group
Roselli, Clark & Associates, CPAs
Rycor
Santander Bank
Savi
Schaefer Plastics North America
Schneider Geospatial
SDL
Second Life Mac
Secretary of the Commonwealth
SELCO
Sensys Gatso USA
ServiceMaster By Gaudet
Solect Energy

Sora System
Springbrook Software
Sterling Printing
Stresscrete Group
STV
Suffolk University MPA Program
The Davey Tree Expert Company
The Pond and Lake Connection
The SLAM Collaborative
Tighe & Bond
Toole Design Group
TOSS C3
Town of Andover
Toyota Motor North America
Trane
TRC Companies
Tree Line View Thermal Roof Inspection
Trident Environmental Group
Troutman Pepper Locke
Tyler Technologies
U.S. BENCOR/MidAmerica

UKG
UMass Transportation Center
UniBank Fiscal Advisory Services
USDA Rural Development
VADAR Systems
VC3
Veolia
VHB
Vialytics
WasteZero
West Group Law
Westfield Gas + Electric/Whip City Fiber
Weston & Sampson Engineers
Williams Stone
Woodard & Curran
Workday
Wright-Pierce
Zobrio
ZOLL Medical Corporation
Zoom ●

CONNECT 351

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steps away from the MBTA's Silver Line World Trade Center stop.

In addition to hotel parking, there are several parking garages located within minutes of the Menino Center and the Omni ([view full list of options](#)).

Day attendees will be able to park at the Menino Center in the South Lot. Attendees will not be able to leave vehicles in this lot overnight.

Complimentary coat check will be available on the exhibit level of the Menino Center, near registration, courtesy of the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association, the MMA's nonprofit

insurance service.

For Connect 351 questions, visit Connect351.org or email connect351@mma.org. For Trade Show and Partnership Program information, contact Stacey Compton-Maga at tradeshow@mma.org or 617-426-7272, ext. 154. ●

People



Chris Vitale

Chris Vitale became the new town administrator in Westport on Dec. 29.

Vitale previously served as the assistant town administrator in Dartmouth for nearly three years, including as interim town administrator for a portion of that time. He has also served as an assistant town administrator in Leicester, and as the director of economic development and communications and as a municipal consultant in Bristol, Rhode Island. He has also worked as a leasing professional and manager for Greystar.

Vitale has a bachelor's degree in marketing from Roger Williams University, and a master's degree in strategic communications from the University of Iowa. He graduated from the MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar in 2024.

In Westport, Vitale replaced **James Hartnett**, who retired in September after four years in the role but remained in an interim role to assist with the transition.



Heather Butler

Heather Butler became the new town administrator in Rutland on Jan. 5.

Butler had been serving as town administrator in West Boylston since April. Previously, she served for six years as the town administrator in Buckland, for two years as the office manager in Concord, and for 15 years as the office manager in Athol. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Northeastern University.

In Rutland, Butler replaces **Austin Cyganiewicz**, who served for two years before becoming the town manager in Sutton in July. **Seth Knipe** served as the acting town administrator.



Nicholas Caccamo

Nicholas Caccamo will become the new town administrator in Adams on Jan. 20.

For the past four and a half years, Caccamo has been serving as the town administrator in Williamsburg, and he served on the Pittsfield City Council from 2014 through 2021. He also spent three years in the Pittsfield Public Schools as a teacher and data and assessment coordinator, and nearly three years as a teacher and guidance counselor at BART Charter Public School in Adams. He has a bachelor's degree in education from Champlain College, and a master's degree in public administration from UMass Amherst.

In Adams, Caccamo replaces **Jay Green**, who left in early 2025 after nearly six years to become the town manager in Lenox. **Kenneth Walto** and **Hollie Jayko** served as the interim town administrators.



Connor Read

Connor Read will become the new town administrator in Westwood on Feb. 1.

Read has been serving in Easton for the past 14 years, the past nine of which as town administrator. Previously, he had served there as acting town administrator, assistant town administrator, acting town clerk and citizen business advocate. He also served as chair of the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional 911 District and spent a year working as a recovery advocate for Fellowship Health Resources.

He has a bachelor's degree in political science from UMass Dartmouth and a master's degree in public administration from Bridgewater State University.

In Westwood, Read will replace **Christopher Coleman**, who left after nearly six years to become the city manager in Milford, Delaware. **Molly**

Fitzpatrick has been serving as the interim town administrator.

Eric Anderson became the new town manager in Dalton on Nov. 17, according to The Berkshire Eagle. He previously served for six years as the town administrator in Andover, Connecticut, according to the newspaper.

In Dalton, Anderson replaced **Tom Hutcheson**, who retired last year after four years in the role. **Terry Williams** served as the interim town manager.

Mayors took office on Jan. 5 in Cambridge and Lowell after being elected by their respective city councils.

Sumbul Siddiqui was elected by her fellow councillors in Cambridge, after having become the city's first Muslim mayor in 2020 and serving two terms until 2024. She has served on the council since 2018.

E. Denise Simmons, who was elected mayor two years ago, remains on the council, serving her 13th term.

Erik Gitschier was elected mayor in Lowell. He has served on the council since 2022, first as a District 8 councillor, and then as an at-large councillor. As mayor, he replaces **Daniel Rourke**, who remains on the council.

On Dec. 23, **George Russell** attended his final meeting as a member of the Worcester City Council — with a perfect 14-year attendance record. Russell, who represented Worcester's District 3 since 2012, decided not to run for reelection. In a statement, he said that "the confidence that has been placed in me during my years of service has been a truly humbling experience."

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.

MIIA

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thunderstorms, and temperature swings, buildings are vulnerable year-round.

For example:

- Roof drains blocked by debris in winter may not cause problems until the first major downpour in April or May, when torrential rains can overwhelm drainage systems.
- Cracked pipes may fail when pressure fluctuates in spring. (Regular plumbing inspections can catch these issues early.)
- Electrical systems can sustain damage during sudden lightning activity or surge events when spring and summer storms hit.
- HVAC and unit ventilator failures, particularly in schools, often surface during seasonal transitions and remain a frequent claims issue.
- Plumbing-related failures, such as valve, supply line, and connection issues, can occur at any time of year. Water remains

the most persistent risk to municipal property, whether caused by freezing, fatigue or weather-related stress.

Older facilities bring additional challenges — such as cold spots, insulation gaps and aging valves — that increase risk during temperature swings or sudden weather events. These pressures are especially evident in schools, where higher occupancy, complex mechanical systems, and budget constraints converge. Recent MIIA claims involving HVAC and plumbing issues, as well as roof-related challenges, reveal how minor weaknesses can lead to costly losses.

Year-round maintenance plan

Traditional seasonal schedules can leave gaps, but a year-round approach helps communities stay ahead of issues. Regular, documented inspections, including semi-annual plumbing reviews, seasonal HVAC checks, and post-storm system assessments, help identify trends and predict failures before they lead to larger losses.

Here are some recommendations:

- Shift to quarterly maintenance cycles (distributing tasks across all four quarters) to reduce seasonal overload and ensure systems are checked regularly.
- Prioritize maintenance by building age and claims history, and increase inspections for facilities with recurring issues.
- Add roof, drain and mechanical inspections following major storms, rapid freeze events, and power surges.
- Coordinate across departments — public works, IT and facilities — to flag issues and plan maintenance tasks.
- Document lessons learned and track emergency response results to improve planning and support budget decisions.

For additional resources and guidance, including preventive maintenance best practices, visit emiia.org.

COMMONWEALTH

Continued from page 22

story of hope for somebody that's going to watch this."

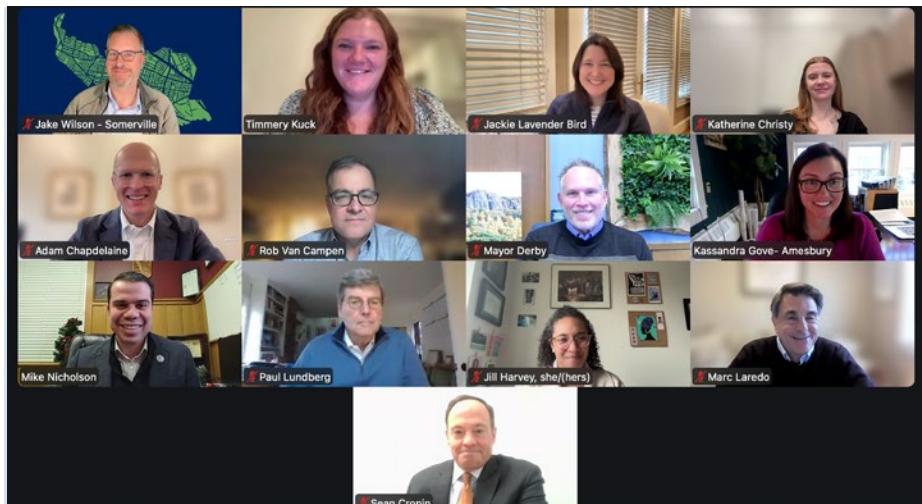
Milton has already seen the effort pay off, Ortiz said, with a near doubling of gift card donations for veterans between the Thanksgiving and the December holidays, which he attributed to the popularity of the Denton interview.

Ortiz said he hopes the program inspires a new generation to enter military service, because they can see themselves in the veterans who are being interviewed.

"It hasn't cost us anything to do this, it's just been a benefit for everybody," Ortiz said. "Milton TV gets content. The veteran gets a story at the Library of Congress. And the town is seen as doing more for veterans, a new outlet, a new media. So it's definitely a PR multiplier when it comes to what the town's doing for the veterans."

— Jennifer Kavanaugh

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



New mayors receive training

Several mayors-elect meet virtually with veteran mayors, state officials, subject-matter experts and MMA staff on Dec. 2 for newly elected mayor training. The training, which the MMA offers every two years, included insights from MMA Vice President and Amesbury Mayor Kassandra Gove and Gardner Mayor Michael Nicholson, president of the Massachusetts Mayors' Association. The session included primers on the local and state fiscal relationship, budgeting, labor negotiations, and media and social media strategies.

Send personnel changes to the MMA

Retirements, elections, resignations and hirings bring about frequent changes in a community's personnel. Keep the MMA up-to-date with your community's

personnel changes by sending an email to database@mma.org. Please include the person's name, title, and start date.

Classified Advertisements

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Police Chief

Town of Belmont

Belmont (pop. 27,295) seeks a Police Chief with unquestioned integrity, a thorough knowledge of police administration and proven management and leadership skills. Works as a "strong police chief," Chapter 41, Section 97A, under the direction of a three-member Select Board. The Police department's FY27 budget is \$8.25 million, which includes 48 sworn officers, nine dispatchers, seven crossing guards and 1.5 parking control officers. Applicants will have a bachelor's degree in criminal justice or related field, a master's degree is preferred; minimum of 10 years' supervisory experience or an equivalent combination of education and experience at the rank of lieutenant or higher. Salary \$200,000 to \$230,000 DOQ. Belmont is an equal-opportunity employer. [Click here](#) for a detailed job description and hiring rubrics. Submit a cover letter and resume, in confidence, via email in a single PDF, by 4 p.m., Jan. 16, 2026, to John_parow@comcast.net with the subject: Belmont Police Chief.

Senior Planner and Conservation Agent

Town of Saugus

The town of Saugus seeks a highly skilled and motivated Senior Planner and Conservation Agent to support and manage the community's land use planning and environmental permitting functions. This position provides professional support to the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Conservation Commission, and plays a key role in guiding responsible development, long-range planning, and natural resource protection. Primary responsibilities include: Reviewing development applications (site plans, subdivisions, zoning permits). Supporting long-range planning efforts such as master planning, zoning updates and housing initiatives. Serving as the Conservation Agent, administering the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, local wetlands bylaws, and conducting site inspections. Preparing staff reports, technical analyses, and recommendations for boards and committees. Managing grants, coordinating with municipal departments, and engaging with residents and developers. Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in planning, environmental science, or related field required, master's preferred. Minimum of three years of experience in municipal planning and environmental permitting. Strong understanding of land use regulations and the MA Wetlands Protection Act. GIS proficiency, excellent communication skills, and ability to manage multiple projects are essential. AICP or MACC certifications preferred. Valid MA driver's license required. This is a full-time, exempt position with a competitive salary and full municipal benefits. To apply: Submit a resume and cover letter to smalik@saugus-ma.gov. Position open until filled.

Director of Planning and Economic Development

Town of Saugus

The town of Saugus seeks a highly motivated and talented Director of Planning and Economic Development to guide our planning and development initiatives. You will be responsible for planning, developing, directing, organizing, coordinating and administering the town's municipal planning, land-use development, approving site plans, affordable housing,

redevelopment, and all community development functions and activities. We are looking for a leader who is knowledgeable in related federal, state, and local laws who can develop comprehensive strategies and provide insight and recommendations to the Town Administrator and Planning Board on land use and community development projects. In Saugus, we emphasize collaboration, transparency, integrity and excellent service to align planning efforts with community needs. The town promotes a healthy balance between professional responsibilities and personal well-being. We offer excellent paid time off, health coverage and retirement. Municipal employees may qualify for federal student loan forgiveness. Education and Experience: Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in public administration, municipal/urban planning, economic development, engineering, or related field; master's degree preferred. At least five-plus years of municipal planning experience or any equivalent combination of education, training, certification, and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform essential functions of the job. Licenses and Certifications: Valid Massachusetts Class D Driver's License required. American Institute of Certified Planners certification preferred. Salary Range: This is a non-union position with a full salary range of \$100,000 to \$130,000. Starting salary will be commensurate with education, certifications, and experience. To Apply: Please e-mail a cover letter, and a resume to Human Resources Manager, Shalini Malik at smalik@saugus-ma.gov. The town of Saugus is an equal opportunity employer. Federal law forbids discrimination based on race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, gender orientation or disability.

Fire Chief

Town of Pepperell

The town of Pepperell is seeking a highly skilled and dedicated Fire Chief to lead our combination career/call Fire Department operating with six full-time FF/ Medics and 30 call/volunteer members with per diem

medics and EMTs to fill a two-person rotation, 24/7. The Fire Chief shall work in accordance with MGL, Ch. 48, Sec. 42, and is appointed by the Select Board and reports to the Town Administrator. The Fire Chief plans, directs, and coordinates activities of the Department including, but not limited to: Advance Life Support emergency medical service, fire prevention, suppression, and hazardous material response and mitigation. The Chief will have knowledge of professional firefighting and be an experienced incident commander; have excellent organizational skills and be proficient and professional in all aspects of communication. Additionally, the Fire Chief will be responsible for developing and administering the annual department budget to be approved at Town Meeting. Preferred requirements of the position include a bachelor's degree in fire science, fire protection engineering, public administration, business administration, or a closely related discipline; more than 10 years of progressive experience as a member of a fire department providing fire and EMS services with a minimum of five years of experience at a supervisory or command rank; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience. Fire Chief accreditation by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Fire Commission is highly desirable. The qualified candidate will have a history of demonstrated leadership and foster and maintain a positive labor-management climate. The preferred candidate will have experience in municipal-based fire and EMS services within a combination type department. A valid driver's license, 24-Haz-Mat, EMT-Basic certification, Firefighter I/II or equivalent, and Fire Prevention Officer certifications are required or to be obtained within one year. The candidate must have completed ICS 100 and 200 at the time of application with the ability to complete ICS 300 and 400 within one year of appointment. Residency within 15 miles of the Pepperell border is preferred within one year of appointment. Candidates may visit our website for details and a copy of the job description:

■ **CLASSIFIEDS** *continued on 28*

Classified advertising rates and information

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

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

Classified advertising rates

Classified ad rates include publication in The Beacon and on www.mma.org, though a discount is available for those who request placement of an ad only on the website.

Member rates

- web only, 200 words or less: \$115;
201-400 words: \$225
- web & Beacon, 200 words or less: \$165;
201-400 words: \$325

Nonmember rates

- web only, 200 words or less: \$175;
201-400 words: \$285
- web & Beacon, 200 words or less: \$225;
201-400 words: \$385

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.

February Beacon

Deadline: January 27
Publication: February 2

March Beacon

Deadline: February 24
Publication: March 2

Placing an ad

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

For more information, call Owen Page at the MMA at 617-426-7272, ext. 135.

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

See www.mma.org for details.

Classified Advertisements

CLASSIFIEDS

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town.pepperell.ma.us/268/Opportunities-Bids-Openings. Salary is \$101,000.00 to \$130,000.00, depending on qualifications. Comprehensive benefit package to include four weeks of vacation, 12.5 holidays, and health insurance. Position will remain open until filled. Resume review to begin Jan. 28, 2026. Submit resume and letter of interest to: Jennifer Lane, Town Hall, One Main St., Pepperell, MA 01463, or email jlane@town.pepperell.ma.us. We are an EEO Employer.

Veterans Agent

Town of Stoneham

The town of Stoneham seeks qualified applicants to join our team as the Veterans Service Officer. This full-time, 35 hours per week, This benefited position is classified within the Stoneham Classified Employees Association. The Veterans Service Officer performs a variety of duties including assisting veterans and their dependents in obtaining benefits, conducting public outreach and education, and administering the day to day operation of the Veterans Service office. This position requires applicants to be a veteran pursuant to MCL, Chapter 4, and s.7. Preferred applicants should hold a bachelor's degree in public administration, business, social work or related field and at least two years of similar full-time work experience, or the equivalent combination of education and work experience. Additionally, this position requires excellent attention to detail and strong computer skills. The full salary range is \$34.91 hrly-\$41.47 hourly, hiring range anticipated \$34.91-\$38.52. Stoneham is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage diversity in our workforce and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees. To apply you should include a cover letter, resume and Town of Stoneham employment application. Preferred delivery method is email: dgaffey@stoneham-ma.gov, Town of Stoneham, 35 Central St., Stoneham, MA 02180, Attn: Donna Gaffey, HR Director. Application can be found along with complete job description: www.stoneham-ma.gov/674/Town-of-Stoneham-Job-Opportunities. This position will remain open until filled, however, first review of applications will begin on January 6, 2026. The prospective employee must successfully complete a CORI (Criminal Offender Records Inquiry) and a physical examination, including a drug screening. The town reserves the right to run additional background checks as allowed under the Massachusetts General Laws.

Shared Town Planner

Towns of Blackstone and Dudley

The towns of Blackstone and Dudley are seeking applicants for the full-time position of Shared Town Planner. This position offers a salary of up to \$90,000, commensurate with qualifications and experience, plus an excellent benefits package. The Shared Town Planner oversees planning, zoning, land use, and economic development activities in both communities. The Planner supports the Planning Boards, coordinates with Zoning Boards of Appeals and Economic Development Committees, and collaborates with municipal departments on land use projects, grant administration, and long-term planning initiatives. Key responsibilities include reviewing permit applications and development proposals; advising boards on zoning and land-use matters; preparing and managing grants; supporting economic

development efforts; organizing public hearings and workshops; representing both towns in regional/state initiatives; and updating zoning bylaws, subdivision regulations, and planning documents. Attendance at evening board and committee meetings in both towns is required. Bachelor's degree in planning, community development, or related field required; three or more years of municipal planning experience preferred. Master's degree and/or AICP certification desirable. Strong communication, public engagement, and project management skills are essential. Full job description available at: townofblackstone.org/jobs. To apply, send resume and cover letter to plannerrecruitment@townofblackstone.org.

Public Health Agent

Town of Wellfleet

The town of Wellfleet is seeking to fill the position of Public Health Agent to assist and advise the Board of Health. The position is responsible for administering state and local health and environment codes, laws, and policies for developing and exercising the town's Public Emergency Plans according to the requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Full-time position 40 hours per week. Compensation range is \$98,801 to \$133,673 commensurate with experience. This is a union position (WEA Unit B).

Chief Financial and Operating Officer

Massachusetts Housing Partnership

The Chief Financial and Operating Officer will succeed a long-tenured, well-respected leader and will inherit an exceptional team of committed and experienced staff. The CFOO will join MHP's five-member Steering Committee (senior management team) and will ensure that MHP has the infrastructure and systems in place to achieve its mission effectively, be financially and operational sustainable, and mitigate risk. [See MHP Careers page for full details](#). To learn more about this opportunity, please contact Neeta Mehta, Partner, Bridge Partners at neeta.mehta@bridgepartnersllc.com.

Interim Town Administrator

Town of Brookfield

The town of Brookfield is seeking an experienced Interim Town Administrator to work 20 to 40 hours per week, depending upon experience and availability. Note: The town is seeking to hire one Town Administrator. Postings include a range of hours and position structures to maximize outreach and attract qualified candidates. The Town Administrator performs complex professional, administrative and management work in providing daily control over ongoing town activities, as well as assisting and advising the Select Board to discharge the duties of their office. Providing executive leadership in areas of policy formulation, fiscal affairs, labor relations, and organizational development, the Town Administrator acts as the agent for the Select Board. Salary range is \$50,000 to \$95,000 depending on hours and experience. Candidate should have municipal experience. For a complete job description, log onto brookfieldma.us, and click on Employment Opportunities. Those interested should send a letter of interest and resume to selectmen@brookfieldma.us. Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Full-Time Town Administrator

Town of Brookfield

The town of Brookfield is seeking an experienced Town Administrator to work 20 to 40 hours per week, depending upon experience and availability. Note:

The town is seeking to hire one Town Administrator. Postings include a range of hours and position structures to maximize outreach and attract qualified candidates. The Town Administrator performs complex professional, administrative and management work in providing daily control over ongoing town activities, as well as assisting and advising the Select Board to discharge the duties of their office. Providing executive leadership in areas of policy formulation, fiscal affairs, labor relations, and organizational development, the Town Administrator acts as the agent for the Select Board. Salary range is \$50,000 to \$95,000 depending on hours and experience. Candidate should have municipal experience. For a complete job description, log onto brookfieldma.us, and click on Employment Opportunities. Those interested should send a letter of interest and resume to selectmen@brookfieldma.us. Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

Full-Time Town Treasurer

Town of Brookfield

The town of Brookfield is seeking qualified applicants for the full-time (30 hours) position of Town Treasurer. Note: The town is seeking to hire one Town Treasurer. Postings include an Interim Treasurer to maximize outreach and attract more candidates. Responsibilities include the town's investment, cash management, debt service management, tax title management, issuance of bonds and administration of payroll including fringe benefits and related personnel requirements. This role includes HR duties and involves benefits administration, maintaining personnel records, employee relations and more. The ideal candidate will have strong interpersonal skills, an understanding of best HR practices and experience in the field. Pay: Annualized salary equivalent \$60,000 to \$80,000 commensurate with experience. Municipal financial experience is essential; working knowledge of municipal procedures and state/federal laws relevant to the position; ability to develop internal procedures relevant to the position. At least three years of municipal experience is required; individual must be bondable, and must become certified within three years. Full job description at www.brookfieldma.us/home/pages/employment-and-volunteer-opportunities. Submit cover letter and resume to: selectmen@brookfieldma.us.

Interim Town Treasurer

Town of Brookfield

The town of Brookfield is seeking qualified applicants for the full-time (30 hours) position of Interim Town Treasurer. Note: The town is seeking to hire one Town Treasurer. Postings also include a permanent Treasurer to maximize outreach and attract more candidates. Responsibilities include the town's investment, cash management, debt service management, tax title management, issuance of bonds and administration of payroll including fringe benefits and related personnel requirements. This role includes HR duties and involves benefits administration, maintaining personnel records, employee relations and more. The ideal candidate will have strong interpersonal skills, an understanding of best HR practices and experience in the field. Pay: Annualized salary equivalent \$60,000 to \$80,000, commensurate with experience. Municipal financial experience is essential; working knowledge of municipal procedures and state/federal laws relevant to the position; ability to develop internal procedures relevant to the position. At least three years of municipal experience is required; individual

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Classified Advertisements

CLASSIFIEDS

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must be bondable, and must become certified within three years. Full job description at www.brookfieldma.us/home/pages/employment-and-volunteer-opportunities. Submit cover letter and resume to: selectmen@brookfieldma.us.

CAREERS AT MMA/MIIA

Driver Training Instructor - EVOC and Simulator

MMA/MIIA

The Massachusetts Municipal Association and the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association are seeking a full-time Driver Training Instructor (Simulator and EVOC) to oversee the driver simulator training program across the Commonwealth. The individual will also be a Certified Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC) Instructor to train police officers in emergency driving scenarios. About the MMA: The nonpartisan Massachusetts Municipal Association provides an array of services to its member cities and towns statewide, including advocacy, education and training, research and analysis, and publications and information programs. As the voice of local government in Massachusetts, the MMA works to advance the interests of all cities and towns. About MIIA: The Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association provides property, liability, workers compensation, and group health insurance to cities and towns in Massachusetts. MIIA is a nonprofit organization and a subsidiary of Massachusetts Municipal Association. About the position: The MIIA simulator is a state-of-the-art driving simulator available to MIIA member communities and offers a safe environment for driver operators to experience a variety of scenarios and conditions typical to emergency response situations. Simulator duties: The Driving Instructor will have knowledge of or ability to be trained in the use of the Doran simulator computer system, including police, fire, DPW and general municipal driving scenarios. They will be responsible for curriculum development, including vehicle and scenario updates. They will work with Doran to ensure a 24-hour customer support onsite visit with followup. They schedule and confirm training while maintaining the truck, trailer and simulator. They will track and communicate participant performance to their Police Chief/Fire Chief or Training Officer. EVOC Instructor duties: The Driving Instructor will train participants on vehicle pre-trip inspections, defensive driving, backing emergency response pursuit and vehicle limitations. They will also discuss the importance of attitude, skill, capability and driving conditions. They will be responsible for course development, including setup and breakdown of courses. They will handle the onsite training logistics and facilitate driving instruction while supervising a team of EVOC instructors. Qualifications: The candidate must have knowledge and fluency of Police/Fire response policies, a valid driver license and the ability to drive the truck while towing the simulator trailer. They must have an understanding of the interaction between dispatchers and officers. EVOC Certification or the ability to obtain certification is required. Knowledge of EVOC course design, statement of program objectives and understanding of vehicle dynamics are necessary.

Knowledge of commercial vehicles, federal highway regulations and CDL licensing is important. They must possess a DOT medical card. Five years of public safety employment, training and supervisory experience is preferred. Simulator experience is a plus. The salary range for this position is \$75,000 to \$100,000. How to Apply: Please send a PDF of your cover letter and resume to: hr@mma.org.

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.

Human Resources Consulting

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

SERVICES

Municipal Energy Services

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

Town Counsel Services

Harrington Heep LLP provides Town and Special Counsel services to help build and implement local programs that serve community needs. We have the expertise you require, based on decades of real-world experience. We take the time to understand your situation. We inquire, listen and respond. We provide options that will work for you. We are committed to the values of democracy, to preservation and enhancement of natural resources and the built environment, and to excellence and care in support of municipal objectives. We offer competitive rates, personal service, diligent attention to our clients' needs, and good humor. Please contact us at contact@harringtonheep.com or 617-489-1600.

Town Counsel/Legal Services

Brooks & DeRensis, P.C., is available to provide services to government entities at the state, county, city, town or regional district level. Legal services available include procurement law, contracts, eminent domain, labor relations and civil rights. Contact Paul DeRensis for all public law issues at 857-259-5200.

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,

Special Counsel, Public Construction and Infrastructure Services

Petrini & Associates P.C. (P&A) is a recognized statewide leader in representing public owners in public construction and infrastructure disputes and litigation. P&A has decades of experience, having represented public owners in numerous bid protests, delay claims, differing site conditions, disputes between design professionals and project owners, and a broad variety of other construction disputes. Since its founding in 2004, P&A has represented more than 40 cities, towns, school districts and water and sewer districts in public construction litigation. For further information, please visit www.petrinilaw.com or contact Christopher Petrini at cpetrini@petrinilaw.com or 508-665-4310.

■ CLASSIFIEDS *continued on 30*

Classified Advertisements

CLASSIFIEDS

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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.

Tax Title Legal Services

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

Navigating Employment Law

Navigate the intricate world of public employment law with this indispensable guide, crafted to address some of the most challenging and pressing issues faced by public employers today. While it's impossible to cover

every facet of employment law in a single volume, this resource focuses on providing practical guidance on key topics, including: Harassment in the Workplace; Combating Disability Discrimination; FLSA; FMLA; Labor Relations; Management Rights; Freedom of Speech; IOD; Personnel Records. For more information or to purchase, visit mpitraining.com/product/navigating-employment-law-a-practical-guide-for-municipal-leaders.

Labor Counsel Services/Municipal Human Resources Specialists

Clifford and Kenny LLP provides quality representation to cities, towns and school districts in the area of labor and employment. Attorneys John Clifford and Jaime Kenny have many years of experience in representing clients for collective bargaining and personnel-related matters including discipline and discharge of unionized employees. We have extensive experience in the area of police and fire injured-on-duty cases, and have worked extensively with municipalities and insurers to resolve costly long-term claims. We offer training in sexual harassment, social media and the "just cause analysis" to municipal managers. We also serve as appointed hearing officers on a case-by-case basis. Many of our clients take advantage of a flat monthly rate for unlimited phone calls and emails, which encourages key managers to work with counsel prior to making critical personnel decisions. Check our website at CliffordKennyLaw.com to see a complete list of our satisfied clients or call John Clifford or Jaime Kenny at 781-924-5796 for more information.

Municipal Support Services

Capital Strategic Solutions (CSS) is a Massachusetts-based, certified woman-owned, disadvantaged business enterprise composed of municipal experts. We have hands-on experience that allows us to formulate and implement strategies tailored to the communities we serve. We specialize in public administration and municipal finance, human resources and policy development, emergency management services and public safety, public works and infrastructure

operations, public relations and community engagement, project management and oversight, grant writing and administration, and onsite support services. For more information, visit www.capital-strategic-solutions.com, call 508-690-0046, or email info@capital-strategic-solutions.com.

Human Capital Solutions

MGT provides executive recruiting, comprehensive interim staffing, and human capital consulting for local governments, school districts, businesses, and nonprofits. Drawing on decades of experience working across the country, our team collaborates with your organization to understand your unique needs, culture, and goals to deliver tangible results. We tackle immediate challenges, anticipate future workplace needs, bridge talent gaps, and enhance policies to foster lasting positive transformation within your organization. Visit us at mgt.us, post to our job board at govhrjobs.com, or contact our team of experts at 847-380-3240.

Public Management Consultants

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

Municipal Accounting and Consulting Services

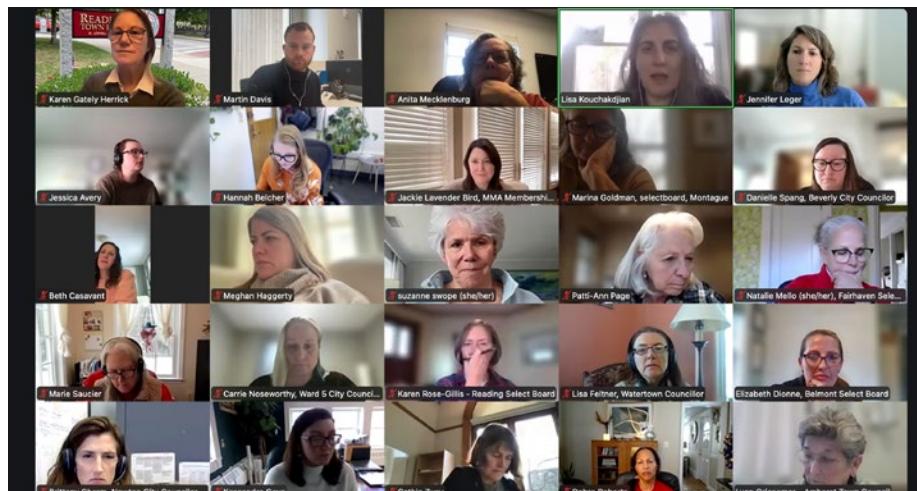
Our outstanding team specializes in municipal financial consulting and outsourced accounting. Since 2008, we have worked with many Massachusetts cities and towns with interim accounting, special projects, fraud risk assessments, financial forecasts, and budgeting. We also provide permanent outsourced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

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.

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 who 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. ●



WEMO takes fiscal view

Members of Women Elected Municipal Officials discuss the fiscal challenges facing their communities during a virtual mentorship meeting on Dec. 10. Attendees shared different approaches for addressing fiscal challenges and how to effectively communicate them to residents.

Calendar

JANUARY

14 **MMA webinar**, digital accessibility, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre

22-24 **Connect 351**, MMA's annual conference, Menino Convention and Exhibition Center and Omni Boston Hotel, Boston. Visit connect351.org or contact MMA Assistant Director of Events Timmery Kuck.

FEBRUARY

3 **MMA webinar**, Syncurrent grant platform, 12-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre

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

10 **MMA Board of Directors**, board meeting, 10-11:45 a.m. Contact: MMA Executive Assistant Elanienne Coste

11 **MMA webinar**, demystifying AI, 12-1:30 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre

25 **MMA webinar**, practical AI applications, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre

26 **Massachusetts Municipal Management Association**, mini boot camp, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Middleborough Town Hall, Middleborough. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

MARCH

3 **MMA webinar**, local public health, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre

5 **Women Leading Government**, conference, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Holy Cross, Worcester. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker



The Beacon

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

11 **MMA-Suffolk certificate program**, virtual information session, 10-11 a.m. Visit www.mma.org to register.

11 **MMA webinar**, developing an AI policy, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre

12 **Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources**, boot camp, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Hotel Northampton, Northampton. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Martin Davis

17 **MMA webinar**, communicating your budget, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre

19 **Massachusetts Municipal Management Association**, meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Cyprian Keyes Golf Club, Boylston. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

25 **Massachusetts Mayors' Association**, meeting, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Membership and Project Assistant Katherine Christy

27 **Women Elected Municipal Officials**, leadership conference, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Publick House, Sturbridge. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Martin Davis

APRIL

10 **Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association**, regional meeting, 8-10 a.m. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

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

14 **MMA Board of Directors**, board meeting, 10-11:45 a.m. Contact: MMA Executive Assistant Elanienne Coste

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

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Martin Davis can be reached at mdavis@mma.org

Timmery Kuck can be reached at tkuck@mma.org

Kristianna Lapierre can be reached at klapierre@mma.org

CONNECT 351

Join your colleagues for the MMA's Annual Conference!

Full details & registration:
mma.org/connect-351

For more information, visit www.mma.org.