

# The Beacon

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March 2026

## FY27 budget hearing set for March 23

By Adrienne Núñez

The Joint Committee on Ways and Means has kicked off hearings on the fiscal 2027 state budget, with sessions scheduled in several locations on various portions of the budget.

An invite-only hearing focused on municipal and school aid will be held in Lawrence on March 23. The MMA will testify at the hearing to advocate for the following priority accounts:

### UGGA

The MMA continues to advocate for a meaningful increase to Unrestricted General Government Aid, a foundational revenue source that supports police, fire, public works, public health, libraries, and other core municipal services.

The governor’s budget proposes a 2.5% increase over fiscal 2026. The MMA argues that this proposal does not keep up with rising costs in labor, health insurance, energy, infrastructure, and much more.



During the Local Government Advisory Commission meeting on Feb. 10, Franklin Town Administrator Jamie Hellen discusses the challenging fiscal conditions facing local governments and the need for sufficient state revenue-sharing to support municipal service delivery.

As the MMA outlined in “[Navigating the Storm: Charting a Course Toward Fiscal Stability](#),” a targeted boost to UGGA in fiscal 2027 would help communities maintain staffing, avert service reductions, and preserve core operations, while providing critical local tax relief to residents.

### Chapter 70

The governor’s budget would fully fund Chapter 70 according to the final year of the Student Opportunity Act funding schedule. The MMA supports this effort, while also advocating for sustaining a \$150 per student minimum new aid level in fiscal 2027 — double what the governor proposed in her budget plan (House 2). More than 85% of districts are expected to receive minimum aid in fiscal 2027.

The MMA will once again advocate for a higher minimum aid figure to ensure that all school districts have the critical resources needed to maintain educational services.

### Special Education Circuit Breaker

The governor’s budget includes \$652.7 million for the Special Education Circuit Breaker program, which provides reimbursements to districts for certain

■ LOCAL AID *continued on 29*

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## MMA to hold Legislative Breakfast Meetings in March

By Daniel Yi

The MMA will hold its spring series of Legislative Breakfast Meetings on March 6, 13 and 20 in locations around the state.

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

The spring series of breakfasts will take place as the Legislature begins its work on a fiscal 2027 state budget plan. Topics of discussion will also include the many bills and issues on the MMA’s



Casey Pease, chief of staff to Sen. Paul Mark, left; Middlefield Select Board Chair Ann Marie Visconti, center; and Sen. Paul Mark talk during an MMA Legislative Breakfast in Lee on Sept. 26. The MMA will host six Legislative Breakfast Meetings around Massachusetts this month.

radar for the session, including the proposed Municipal Empowerment Act, an environmental bond bill, a transportation bond bill with funding for the

■ BREAKFASTS *continued on 29*

## 2026 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 the Massachusetts Mayors' Association, Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, Massachusetts Select Board Association, and Association of Town Finance Committees.

### Executive Committee

**Kassandra Gove**, MMA President,  
Mayor, Amesbury

**Kiana Baskin**, MMA Vice President  
Select Board Member, Sharon

**Jamie Hellen**, MMA Immediate Past President  
and MMMA District 2 Representative  
Town Administrator, Franklin

**Ted Bettencourt**, MMA First Vice President  
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**Denise Casey**, MMMA President  
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**Liz Sullivan**, Town Administrator, Dennis

**Michelle Wu**, Mayor, Boston

# Executive Director's Report

## Snow removal: the nuts and bolts of local government in New England

While we've had snowier winters (remember 2015?), last week brought a storm with intensity and snow accumulation that most of us have never experienced in our lifetimes. In some areas, the snow totals from the Blizzard of '26 eclipsed the totals from the infamous Blizzard of '78.

This storm wreaked havoc in eastern Massachusetts, particularly the southeast and Cape Cod. Many lost power for an extended period, and in some cases, schools were closed for the entire week.

All of this put significant pressure on residents, parents and, of course, local officials. While this pressure likely resulted in frustration being directed at the hard-working people in city and town halls, one municipal department in particular was hard at work long before, and long after, these city and town halls were open: the department of public works.

In the hustle and bustle of daily life, it can be easy for residents to take some things for granted. But in the winter, we should all be grateful that we have dedicated public works employees across the Commonwealth standing ready to work long hours in dangerous conditions to battle a relentless storm like the one we saw last week.

Let's consider the challenging nature of the work of snow removal. For starters, most of the staff we're talking about are



By Adam  
Chapdelaine

typically day-shift employees who are used to working from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., or something similar. But throughout the winter, these same folks climb into large trucks for overnight shifts, while we're all sleeping, to salt and sand our roads if there is even a chance of icing or light snowfall.

For a storm like the Blizzard of '26, crews started pre-treating roads in the early evening — before the first snowflakes — in order to get ahead of the storm. Following that process, they needed to shift to begin plowing operations overnight as the snow came down. This obviously continued throughout the night, and all day Monday until the snowfall finally diminished in the evening. So we're talking about a 24-hour shift at this point. And let's not forget just how challenging it is to plow snow that is falling at the rate of 2 to 3 inches per hour.

Now it might seem like this is the end of it, but it certainly is not. In towns and cities across the Commonwealth, overnight snow removal operations had to be planned for almost the entirety of last week to clear curb cuts and crosswalks, clean up business districts, and provide safe routes to school. These are tough overnight shifts, in cold conditions — all focused on getting life back to normal as quickly as possible for the residents of the Commonwealth.

■ DIRECTOR'S REPORT *continued on 27*



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We encourage readers to send comments, story ideas, news items, and events notices to [editor@mma.org](mailto:editor@mma.org).

# March 3 hearing set for bond bill with Ch. 90 funding

By Violet Gehr

The Legislature's Joint Committee on Transportation will hold a [hearing](#) on March 3 on a [transportation bond bill filed by the governor](#) that includes \$1.2 billion over four years for the Chapter 90 local road and bridge maintenance program.

The hearing will be from 1 to 5 p.m. in room A-2 at the State House and virtually.

The governor's [bond bill](#), filed on Jan. 23, would authorize \$300 million per year for Chapter 90 — matching this year's record total — to address critical transportation and infrastructure projects in municipalities. The bill supports the governor's [transportation funding plan](#).

The bond bill would also authorize:

- \$200 million for transportation improvements that support expanded



Northfield Town Administrator Andrea Llamas voices support for the administration's proposed transportation package during the Local Government Advisory Commission meeting on Feb. 10 in Boston.

housing development

- \$200 million for a new Parkway Resilience Improvement and Safety Modernization investment program to repair, improve safety, and enhance the resilience of transportation infrastructure under the care and

control of the Department of Conservation and Recreation

- \$500 million for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Bridge and Pavement Lifecycle Asset Management Programs, designed to improve bridges and pavement on an accelerated schedule
- \$200 million for the MBTA's Rail Reliability Program

Along with the filing of her transportation bond bill, Gov. Maura Healey announced the launch of a Funding for Accelerated Infrastructure Repair program for local transportation infrastructure projects. Supported by revenue from the Fair Share amendment (an income surtax on earnings above \$1 million), the new program would allocate \$75 million to help municipalities address a significant backlog of local bridges in urgent need of repair. ●

## Environmental bond bill moves to Senate Ways and Means

By Josie Ahlberg

Gov. Maura Healey's \$3 billion environmental bond bill, known as the [Mass Ready Act](#), moved to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means in late January.

The bill includes authorizations for key climate, resilience and environmental priorities, including strengthening infrastructure, investing in farms and local economies, protecting water and the environment, reforming permitting for housing and environmental initiatives, and supporting the western and central regions of the state.

The bill, filed last June, has been reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and the Joint Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets.

The bill includes the following authorizations of interest to cities and towns:

- \$315 million for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program, along with programmatic changes that would expand the list of eligible applicants, allow nonprofit organizations to apply for and hold grant funds, and expand the scope of funds to allow municipalities and others to appoint and retain

sustainability and climate coordinators

- \$308 million to tackle high-risk dams, address inland flood control systems, and improve coastal and marine infrastructure to advance the state's hazard mitigation and climate change adaptation plans
- \$120 million to address PFAS contamination of public water supplies, private wells, and disposal sites
- \$93.5 million to help manage municipal and publicly owned dams, and to further support inland flood control infrastructure and nature-based solutions
- \$28.1 million to assess solid waste facilities and to support composting, recycling and waste reduction programs
- \$30 million for forestry and tree planting programs

The bill would create a new Resilience Revolving Fund, within the Clean Water Trust, to provide low-interest loans to



Gov. Maura Healey's \$3 billion environmental bond bill seeks to invest in key climate, resilience and environmental priorities throughout the state, including extreme weather preparation, infrastructure strengthening, dam management, PFAS remediation, and waste disposal.

cities and towns, as well as water and wastewater utilities, for climate-resilient infrastructure projects. Eligible projects could include stormwater management, floodplain protection, and nature-based solutions.

The MMA recently [submitted a letter](#) on the bill to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means articulating municipal priorities and concerns. ●

# Sections of Municipal Empowerment Act move in House

By Ali DiMatteo

The Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government has favorably reported a [re-drafted version](#) of several sections of the governor's proposed Municipal Empowerment Act that had been in the committee.

The language was sent to the House Committee on Ways and Means on Feb. 19.

The [wide-ranging bill](#), strongly supported by the MMA and local leaders, is intended to increase municipal flexibility, reduce administrative burdens, strengthen municipal finances, address municipal workforce challenges, and improve the efficiency of local operations.

Various portions of the bill were assigned to three committees: the Joint Committee on Public Service, the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government, and the Joint Committee on Revenue.

The Public Service Committee favorably reported out its provisions of the bill, which focused on allowing flexibility for critical workplace shortages and a section that would create an Other Post-Employment Benefits Commission to address unfunded liabilities from

non-pension employee benefits.

The Municipalities and Regional Government Committee held a bulk of the bill's provisions, including those that would:

- Make the current remote and hybrid meeting flexibilities for public meetings permanent
- Reform procurement procedures and regulations, including increasing the threshold for all municipal purchases under Chapter 30B, streamlining cooperative purchasing agreements, and including snow-hauling services with snow-plowing services as exempt from rules of the Uniform Procurement Act (Chapter 30B)
- Extend the borrowing term for municipal building projects to up to 40 years
- Establish enforcement mechanisms for prohibitions on doubled-up utility poles

A [new draft of this portion of the bill](#) reworks the provision on double poles by creating a civil penalty for old attachments paid into a Double Pole Municipal Fund.

The portions of the Municipal Empowerment Act that were sent to the



Among other provisions, the proposed Municipal Empowerment Act would create a civil penalty for old utility pole attachments, to be paid into a Double Pole Municipal Fund.

Joint Committee on Revenue are still awaiting action. These include provisions related to:

- Extending property tax exemptions for seniors
- Increasing the maximum local-option meals tax from 0.75% to 1%
- Increasing the local-option tax on hotels, motels and other short-term rentals from 6% to 7% (and 6.5% to 7.5% in Boston)
- Allowing a local-option surcharge on assessed motor vehicle excise taxes of up to 5% ●

## House OK's energy affordability legislation

By Josie Ahlberg

As energy affordability legislation continues to be a topic of discussion on Beacon Hill, the challenge is balancing the need to contain prices while continuing to promote clean energy and decarbonization across Massachusetts.

Last May, [Gov. Maura Healey filed a bill](#) that sought to lower energy costs for consumers, bring more energy into Massachusetts, increase utility accountability and promote innovation. (More details [available on the bill's website](#).)

Following the bill's hearing last June, House members of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy released their own energy affordability legislation, which was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee in November.

In January, House members discussed the proposals in small groups to provide feedback to the committee, considering issues such as impacts from federal

policy changes on renewable energy, including offshore wind, and what solutions the state might be able to implement.

In a [letter on Feb. 2](#) to the House Ways and Means Committee, the MMA identified key priorities and issues for cities and towns.

On Feb. 26, the House passed an updated version of the bill ([H. 5151](#)), which includes a provision to give municipalities the option to ban third-party competitive energy suppliers, marketers, or brokers from renewing or executing new contracts in their city or town. The compromise provision, which stems from previous discussions on a complete ban on third-party suppliers, would not impact municipal aggregation programs.

The House bill addressed several of the key concerns raised by the MMA.

The bill includes an important provision that would raise the municipal net metering cap — the limit on the amount of

solar generation for which a city or town may obtain net metering credits — from 10 megawatts to 20 megawatts.

The House bill also removed previously proposed language that would have excluded certain projects in the 10 communities participating in the Municipal Fossil Fuel Free Building Demonstration Program from being eligible for Mass Save incentives.

The updated bill also clarified a permitting provision from earlier drafts for high voltage transmission line installations on highways, to avoid confusion with roads under municipal jurisdiction.

One provision that remains in the bill would require the use of an automated, online permitting platform for residential solar projects and associated equipment on one- and two-family dwellings.

H. 5151 is now headed to the Senate for its deliberation. ●

# EPR Commission recommends legislation

By John Ouellette and Josie Ahlberg

The Massachusetts Extended Producer Responsibility Commission, established under a [2024 climate law](#), released its final report on Jan. 15, recommending legislation for EPR programs covering electronics, batteries, paint and mattresses to shift waste management costs for these products from municipalities to producers.

The [commission's report](#) recommends the enactment of legislation to establish an EPR program for the following:

- Electronics, such as computers, laptops, tablets, monitors, televisions, printers and cell phones
- Batteries, incorporating safety measures for damaged or lithium-ion batteries, and aligning with the Rechargeable Battery Association model EPR legislation as much as possible
- Mattresses, mandatory recycling in a way that aligns with existing programs as much as possible
- Paint, including aerosol-based paint, in a way that aligns with programs already in place in many other Northeast states

The commission acknowledged related bills currently under consideration by the Legislature, but did not endorse any specific bills.

The commission declined to make recommendations on general packaging at this time, “due to the vast amount of technical information and expanded stakeholder engagement needed to advance such an initiative.” The commission recommended that the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection be charged with establishing a subcommittee of its Solid Waste Advisory Committee to further investigate EPR for plastics and other packaging, and that the Legislature appropriate the resources to complete a needs assessment within two years.

The MMA has strongly supported EPR as a way of shifting responsibility for certain difficult-to-manage and costly products to retailers and manufacturers, rather than municipalities.

EPR reduces adverse health, safety and environmental impacts from products throughout their lifecycle, from the point of manufacturing to the eventual disposal or recycling. This “product stewardship” process also creates certain economic benefits, as manufacturers



The Massachusetts Extended Producer Responsibility Commission is recommending legislation that would shift waste management costs for certain products, including paint, from municipalities to producers.

and retailers seek to ensure that their products have maximum value and minimal impact throughout their lifecycles.

The commission report points out that municipalities paid more than \$8 million in 2024 for mattress management, and that 1.8 million gallons of unused paint waste is generated annually.

The [Extended Producer Responsibility Commission](#), led by the MassDEP, focused on products that are costly for municipalities to manage or contain hazardous materials, with the goal of fostering sustainable, producer-led recycling systems. ●

## Community One Stop for Growth offers office hours, webinars

Staff and program managers from Community One Stop for Growth are holding [virtual office hours](#) during March and April covering general One Stop information as well as specific grants within the One Stop program.

A series of [prerecorded webinars](#) covering the One Stop technology system and individual grant programs is also available.

[Community One Stop for Growth](#) is a portal that provides access for municipalities and organizations to 14 state economic development grant programs. Applicants are able to work on their fiscal 2027 applications in the portal.

Programs in Community One Stop offer direct funding and support to housing and economic development projects related to placemaking, planning and zoning, site preparation, building construction, and infrastructure.



Community One Stop for Growth will hold virtual office hours this spring covering general information and specific grants within the program.

The portal offers a streamlined process for communities, organizations, and developers to access a range of economic development grants and technical assistance across multiple agencies. One Stop grant programs are administered by the Executive Office of Economic Development, the Executive Office of

Housing and Livable Communities, and the quasi-public MassDevelopment agency.

Municipalities and organizations wishing to apply for funding through Community One Stop may begin by participating in an [optional Expression of Interest](#) process that runs through June 3. During this time, applicants may receive guidance on priority projects from Executive Office of Economic Development staff before submitting a full application.

The EOED will accept full application submissions from May 4 through June 3, with awards announced in October and contracting expected to begin in November.

Grant programs accessible through Community One Stop include:

- [MassWorks Infrastructure Program](#)

■ ONE STOP continued on 28

# Gov. files bill to keep ICE out of certain public spaces

Gov. Maura Healey on Jan. 29 filed legislation to keep federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel out of courthouses, schools, child care programs, hospitals and houses of worship.

The legislation would also make it unlawful for another state to deploy its National Guard in Massachusetts without the governor's permission, and would allow parents to pre-arrange guardianship for their children in case they are detained or deported by federal authorities.

Healey said her bill is the most comprehensive effort in the country to protect against ICE activity in sensitive locations. The provisions were included in a fiscal 2026 supplemental budget bill that proposes \$411.3 million in time-sensitive appropriations for deficiencies.

The governor also signed an [Executive Order](#) prohibiting ICE from making civil arrests in non-public areas of state facilities, and prohibiting the use of state property for immigration enforcement staging.

The Executive Order also prohibits the state from entering into any new agreements — known as 287(g) — to empower local police to identify, detain, and process noncitizens for removal, primarily within jail settings, unless there is a public safety need.

The Executive Order directs the Executive Office of Education and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to support public and private entities in developing policies and guidance on interacting with ICE.

"In Massachusetts and across the country, we continue to see unlawful and unconstitutional actions by ICE that are meant to intimidate and instill fear in our communities, including against United States citizens who are exercising their constitutional rights," Healey said in a prepared statement. "I find it necessary in the interest of public safety to take this action today."

For decades, the Department of Homeland Security maintained a "protected areas" policy requiring ICE to refrain from immigration enforcement actions in sensitive locations, including hospitals, houses of worship, courts, and school programs. According to the administration, the policy allowed all community members to access basic support and services without fear, and protected public



At a Jan. 29 press conference at the State House, Gov. Maura Healey announces her bill to prohibit Immigration and Customs Enforcement from entering courthouses, schools, child care centers, hospitals and places of worship. (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

safety by encouraging all people to seek necessary medical care and testify in court when necessary, whether as a victim, witness, or party.

On Jan. 20, 2025, the Trump administration rescinded the protected areas policy, replacing it with a directive giving ICE agents power to take enforcement actions in medical facilities, houses of worship, courts, schools and child care programs.

Healey said her legislation would restore the longstanding protections against arrests by ICE agents in essential spaces where families, children, and vulnerable people should feel safe.

Mary Bourque, executive director of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, thanked the Healey-Driscoll administration for its efforts "to ensure that parents can send their children to school every day without fear."

"Our students, families, and educators continue to live in terror and trauma because of the cruel and often unlawful acts of federal ICE agents," she said.

## Courthouses

Healey said ICE's presence at courthouses creates confusion and deters witnesses, victims and litigants from coming to court, resulting in the dismissal of some charges and release of defendants. Her bill would ban warrantless civil arrests by ICE agents inside of courthouses.

## Schools and child care

Healey said school enrollment has declined dramatically in districts with

high populations of immigrant students this school year, with record declines of more than 5% in Chelsea and Everett. The revocation of the protected areas policy has allowed ICE agents to target schools and child care programs. As a result, some families have been fearful of sending their children to child care or school, or participating in sports or school events like graduation ceremonies.

Healey's legislation would prohibit elementary, middle and high schools, as well as licensed child care programs and after school programs, from allowing an ICE or immigration agent to enter the premises without a judicial warrant. Schools, child care programs, and after school programs will also be required to adopt and implement their own policies on how to interact with or respond to requests from ICE agents, in line with [guidance](#) issued by the Healey-Driscoll administration and Attorney General Andrea Campbell.

## Health care

Health care providers have been reporting that more immigrant families are skipping medical appointments, delaying care or canceling their health insurance because they fear being detained by ICE. Hospitals also used to fall under the protected areas policy until it was revoked by President Trump.

Healey's legislation would prohibit hospitals, community health centers, nursing homes, and substance use disorder

■ ICE continued on 28

# Senate OK's local-option property tax adjustment bills

By Adrienne Núñez

The Senate has passed legislation that would allow municipalities, at local option, to establish a means-tested residential property tax exemption for certain senior citizen homeowners.

Under the terms of the bill ([S. 2902](#)), passed on Jan. 15, a property owner would need to meet certain age, income and residency requirements in order to qualify. Municipalities would be able to set asset limits and the annual exemption amount, capped at 200% of the maximum senior circuit breaker state income tax credit for the previous year.

The bill is a redrafted version of [S. 2036](#), which was adopted as part of the [MMA's Legislative Package](#) for the current legislative session. A similar proposal is also found in the governor's proposed [Municipal Empowerment Act](#), which is expected to be reported out of legislative

committees soon.

The Senate also passed the following tax-relief related bills:

- [S. 2915](#) would allow municipalities, at local option, to issue uniform property tax rebates to qualified homeowners who received a residential exemption in the prior fiscal year. Qualifications would be asset and income thresholds set by the municipality. The bill also would allow an increase in the maximum local personal property exemption to \$30,000, and allow municipalities to adjust senior property tax exemption by lowering the minimum age to 65, increasing the exemption to \$1,500, and raising income limits, at local option.
- [S. 2917](#) would authorize municipalities to adopt property tax credits for homeowners in any fiscal year when residential property tax levy growth, excluding new growth, is or is likely

to exceed 10%. The bill would allow municipalities to set qualifications for recipients based on senior status, MassHealth enrollment, unemployment, and/or young family criteria. Communities would also be able to set income and wealth parameters.

- [S. 2914](#) would allow municipalities to reduce the interest rate for a year after a homeowner has died, protect against foreclosure for a year and a half, adjust the income level of surviving spouses, and reduce the residency requirement from 10 to seven years.
- [S. 1948](#) would modify existing property tax law related to veterans by increasing the maximum amount of property tax reduction that veterans can receive in exchange for volunteer services, from \$1,500 to \$2,000.

The bills have been sent to the House for consideration. ●

## MSBA accepting Statements of Interest for consideration in 2026

The Massachusetts School Building Authority is accepting Statements of Interest through April 17 for consideration in 2026 under its Core Program, which is intended for new construction, additions, and/or renovation projects.

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

the district's educational program.

[A Core Program SOI Overview](#) is available on the MSBA website.

The Accelerated Repair Program, which is intended for roofs, windows and doors, and heat pump conversions in existing school facilities, will reopen in 2027, consistent with its biennial schedule.

The MSBA has made changes to its SOI template for the 2026 filing period. If the district submitted a Core Program or Accelerated Repair Program SOI in

2025 and intends to use the pre-populate option to update this year's SOI, changes to the SOI template may impact responses to certain questions.

Supporting material is required when selecting Statutory Priorities 1 and 3. Districts may also decide to provide supplemental material. In both cases, the information must be electronically uploaded to the SOI system as a condition of submitting an SOI this year. Hard copies will no longer be accepted. ●

## MassDEP offers snow disposal guidance online

During this particularly snowy winter, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection provides [Snow Disposal Guidance](#) to help communities and businesses dispose of plowed snow without harming the environment.

The online guidance assists with snow disposal site selection, site preparation and maintenance, and emergency snow disposal options that protect wetlands, drinking water, and waterbodies.

The MassDEP also offers an [online mapping tool](#) to help communities identify possible snow disposal options in their area.

If a community or business demonstrates



The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection offers online snow disposal guidance to assist with snow disposal site selection, site preparation and maintenance, and emergency snow disposal options that protect wetlands, drinking water, and waterbodies.

that there is no remaining capacity at upland snow disposal locations, local

conservation commissions are authorized to issue Emergency Certifications under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act for snow disposal in certain wetland resource areas.

Businesses are asked to contact their city or town, and not MassDEP, if no disposal sites appear on the mapping tool.

For snow disposal assistance, municipalities should contact their [MassDEP regional office](#) (click on link to see listings by community):

- Northeast: 978-694-3200
- Southeast: 508-946-2714
- Central: 508-792-7650
- Western: 413-784-1100 ●

# \$13.5M in funding awarded for road safety improvements

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announced on Feb. 11 that the U.S. Department of Transportation's [Safe Streets and Roads for All](#) grant program has awarded \$13.5 million to Massachusetts to improve roadway safety.

The federal grant program was established by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law), with approximately \$5 billion in appropriated funds to be awarded over the next five years.

Grant funding can be used to improve roadway safety by supporting communities in developing comprehensive safety action plans, conducting data analyses, and implementing projects and strategies that seek to significantly reduce or eliminate transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries. Funding can also be used to support stakeholder engagement to ensure that all community members have a voice in developing plans, projects and strategies.

Massachusetts recipients of this round of SS4A funding are:

- Barnstable County: \$476,800 for planning and demonstration activities
- Braintree: \$192,000 for development

of a comprehensive safety action plan

- Brookline: \$540,000 for local planning and demonstration activities
- Dedham: \$300,000 for local planning and demonstration activities
- Freetown: \$96,000 for roadway safety improvements on Chase, Gurney and Braley roads
- Franklin Regional Council of Governments: \$487,200 for demonstrations of safe crossing treatments in town centers in Greenfield and Deerfield
- Leicester: \$280,000 for the town's safety action plan and a high-injury network intersection demonstration
- Leominster: \$328,000 for the city's Vision Zero and Safe Streets For All action plan
- MBTA: \$2.2 million for phase two of the Mobileye Shield + Collision Avoidance demonstration
- Merrimack Valley Planning Commission: \$896,640 for community safety planning and advancing Vision



The Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program provides funding for projects that are designed to reduce roadway deaths and serious injuries.

Zero around Route 28

- Metropolitan Area Planning Council: \$5 million to accelerate road safety innovation in the Boston area
- Newton: \$144,000 for a multimodal improvements demonstration in Waban Village Center
- Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District: \$2.4 million for municipal planning and demonstration subgrant partnership
- Ware: \$160,000 for local planning and demonstration activities ●

## Gov. Healey: Mass. will be 1st state to deploy AI across executive branch

On Feb. 13, Gov. Maura Healey announced the launch of a ChatGPT-powered artificial intelligence assistant for the state's workforce.

The enterprise AI assistant will be implemented across the executive branch using a phased approach, and "will provide a safe and secure environment that protects state data," according to the administration. Massachusetts will be the first state to adopt the technology for the entire executive branch, which includes nearly 40,000 state employees.

"This is about making government faster, more efficient, and more effective for the people we serve," Healey said in a prepared statement. "AI has the potential to transform how government works."

She added that the ChatGPT tool from OpenAI "will ensure a safe and secure environment for employees and improve their ability to deliver better service."

She said state workers "are eager to embrace this new technology."

Jason Snyder, secretary of Technology Services and Security, said ChatGPT will empower state employees "with a secure, governed tool that can enhance service delivery while maintaining the highest standards for data privacy, security, and thoughtful, transparent usage of AI."

Following a competitive procurement process, the state and OpenAI have agreed to a contract to deploy ChatGPT at scale across Massachusetts state government, according to the administration. The phased rollout will start with staff in the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security. Additional secretariats and executive branch agencies will be onboarded over the coming months.

In conjunction with the rollout, the state is offering a series of optional

training programs designed to provide employees using the enterprise AI assistant with a baseline understanding on best practices and strategic use of the tool.

According to the administration, the rollout of ChatGPT will be within a walled-off, secure environment that protects state data and ensures that employee chat inputs do not train public AI models. Use of the tool is governed by terms and conditions set by the TSS Privacy Office, and regularly updated policies that govern the use and development of AI.

While other states have launched limited pilot programs for ChatGPT, Massachusetts will be the first enterprise-wide deployment of the tool.

For more information on the tool, training and other Frequently Asked Questions, visit [mass.gov/ai](https://mass.gov/ai). ●

# Legislature considers management of OB3 impacts

By **Adrienne Núñez**

The Legislature is considering policy changes to mitigate the Massachusetts impacts of the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act, also known as OB3.

A bill filed by the governor, ([H. 4975](#)) would spread out implementation of five OB3 provisions affecting corporate taxes over two years in order to soften negative impacts on state revenue collections. Without action, \$442 million in state revenue would be in jeopardy.

The Healey-Driscoll administration said the bill would ensure that the fiscal 2026 budget “remains intact.”

The administration said the state would experience a modest increase in state

revenues for two years if its bill is adopted, but some analysts believe the state would experience negative impacts in the third year and beyond.

Among many provisions, the governor’s bill would:

- Expand an option that allows eligible Massachusetts taxpayers to use pass-through entities to pay their state and federal taxes
- Allow for a delay of up to one year on the implementation of federal tax policy changes that carry more than a \$20 million impact on state revenue (Current state tax laws automatically update when the federal Internal Revenue Code changes.)

- Require in-state investment to qualify for state Opportunity Zone tax benefits
- Delay the adoption of federal rules regarding the immediate expensing of research and experimental expenditures
- Modify business interest limitations
- Increase dollar limitations for expensing of certain depreciable business assets
- Allow special depreciation for qualified production property

The Joint Committee on Revenue held a hearing on the bill on Feb. 12. ●

## Administration awards \$3M for climate change planning

The Healey-Driscoll administration on Feb. 4 announced more than \$3 million in Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness 2.0 planning grants to aid local planning efforts related to climate change.

Twenty-one municipalities and three regional groups representing 11 additional municipalities are included in the round of grantees.

The grant is for municipalities to revisit their climate resilience priorities with a focus on equity and to translate those priorities into action. MVP grants help communities prepare for disasters.

“Every city and town is already planning ahead to address extreme weather,”



MVP 2.0 grants help communities prepare for disasters by revisiting their climate resilience priorities with a focus on equity and to translate those priorities into action.

Gov. Maura Healey said in a prepared statement, “and we want to give them the support they need to protect their

residents and their infrastructure.”

Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper noted that cities and towns are frontline responders to climate change impacts.

“That’s why the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program matters,” she said. “We partner with communities to build stronger roads, restore wetlands, plant shade trees, and make sure everyone has a voice in shaping a safer future.”

Grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$325,000 were awarded to the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission,

■ **MVP 2.0** *continued on 28*

## Conference committee expected to take up early literacy bill

A six-member conference committee is working to reconcile differences between bills passed by the House and the Senate that would update literacy standards and curriculum requirements for public school students in kindergarten through third grade.

On Jan. 29, the Senate passed a revised version of an [early literacy bill](#) that was passed by the House last fall.

The Senate bill ([S. 2940](#)) would:

- Require districts to use “evidence-based literacy instruction” unless they apply for and receive a waiver to use curriculums not pre-approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education



The Legislature is working on bills that would require the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to create and make available a free curriculum that meets the new literacy instruction standards, and create an Early Literacy Fund.

- Require DESE to create and make

available a free curriculum that meets the new literacy instruction standards

- Create a special Early Literacy Fund, with an initial investment of \$25 million, to support DESE’s development of the new curriculum and professional development resources, and to provide grants to districts
- Set requirements for new student literacy-related screening assessments and reporting requirements

The conference committee’s first meeting was scheduled for Feb. 25.

– **Adrienne Núñez**

# MMA to host webinar on municipal AI policies

Following webinars that covered the foundations and the practical applications of artificial intelligence, the MMA will host the third and final webinar in its AI series on March 11, focusing on the guidelines necessary for responsible implementation.

Nantucket's chief technology officer, Michael Alvarez, and communications manager, Florencia Rullo, will discuss how they developed their town's set of guidelines. The panelists will cover their process, key elements every municipality should consider for an AI policy, and



Michael Alvarez



Florencia Rullo

advice for other communities. This webinar will begin at noon.

[Online registration is available](#) for the 60-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](mailto:klapierre@mma.org)

## MMA to host SAPHE 2.0 webinar

The MMA will host a webinar with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on March 3 covering the State Action for Public Health Excellence (SAPHE 2.0) program.

The Department of Public Health is dedicated to improving the health of everyone in the Commonwealth by transforming the local public health system to meet today's needs. A key to this transformation is the SAPHE 2.0 law that passed in November 2024.

This webinar, designed for municipal leaders, will provide an overview of the ongoing local public health system transformation and how it is improving municipalities and the health and safety of Massachusetts residents.

Speakers will share examples of local system transformation in their communities, supported by the DPH's Public



Paul McLatchy III



Dominick Pangallo



Derek Brindisi

Health Excellence Grant Program.

The speakers will be Salem Mayor Dominick Pangallo, Plymouth Town Manager Derek Brindisi, Ashfield Town Administrator Paul McLatchy III, and Rachael Cain, deputy director of the Office of Local and Regional Health in the Department of Public Health.

[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.

The MMA hosted an introductory webinar on the SAPHE 2.0 program and elevating local public health in December 2025. (The recording is [available on mma.org](#).)

Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre at [klapierre@mma.org](mailto:klapierre@mma.org)

## MMA webinar to cover municipal budget communication strategies

On March 17, the MMA will host a webinar on visually communicating municipal budgets.

What are municipal leaders doing to make their annual budget digestible, accessible, and engaging for constituents? Award-winning broadcast journalist Dave Kartunen, founder of [kartoonEDU](#), finds that many cities and towns are not presenting their budgets in a way that resonates with their community, despite having the communication tools to do so.

In this webinar, Kartunen will walk attendees through a visual storytelling campaign that any municipality can leverage to tell their budget story — to



Dave Kartunen



Jayne Wellman

any audience, through any medium, and on any platform.

[kartoonEDU](#) uses custom animation to explain complex concepts and has worked on topics from budgets to

recruitment to capital construction projects.

In addition to Kartunen, speakers will include Wakefield Superintendent Doug Lyons and Reading Acting Town Manager Jayne Wellman.

[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](mailto:klapierre@mma.org)

## MunEnergy to hold webinar on April 8

The MMA and its partner in the MunEnergy program, [Constellation](#), will host a free webinar on April 8 to reset the energy landscape following New England's 16th coldest winter on record, and to analyze what these shifts mean for municipal power procurement strategies.

The webinar will also cover the impacts of weather on New England wholesale prices for power and natural gas; natural gas fundamentals, including storage, production and natural gas demand drivers; upcoming spring and summer temperatures; and how to be strategic in today's energy market.

Featured speakers will be Brandon Fong, principal of Constellation's Commodities Management Group, and Bill Bartlett, Constellation's Senior Relationship Manager.

Constellation has been MMA's endorsed



Brandon Fong



Bill Bartlett

supplier for MunEnergy, the MMA's municipal energy program, for more than two decades. The Constellation team offers a wide range of services to help communities manage summer energy costs, including strategic energy buying, efficiency projects, and clean energy options. As electricity production is struggling to keep up with demand and New England prices rise, Constellation can help cities and towns explore alternative

energy and cost-savings solutions.

For more than 25 years, [MunEnergy](#) has helped cities and towns manage energy costs through a program designed specifically for public entities. For more information, visit the [MunEnergy webpage](#) or contact MMA Deputy Executive Director Katie McCue at 617-426-7272, ext. 111, or [kmccue@mma.org](mailto:kmccue@mma.org).

[Online registration is available](#) for the 60-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](mailto:klapierre@mma.org)

## MMA webinar will cover how managers can support staff

An MMA webinar on April 15 will cover how managers can best support their staff by understanding their needs.

Municipal leaders and staff are expected to perform with a high level of skill and grace, but consistently high performance can be impossible if staff don't feel valued. It's a common mistake for management to make decisions about what will make their staff happy, but employees, like their managers, want to decide what they need to be successful in their work.

This webinar will explore the "top 10 wishlist of the internal customer,"

moving beyond management assumptions to identify what employees actually require to thrive. By understanding the needs of the "internal customer," municipalities can better support the teams responsible for public service.

The webinar will be led by Stephen Coleman, the fire chief and assistant



Stephen Coleman

town manager in Auburn, who has led talks nationally on customer service and leadership.

[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](mailto:klapierre@mma.org)

## MMCA to hold regional breakfast on April 10 in Watertown

All city and town councillors are invited to a Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association regional breakfast meeting on April 10 in Watertown.

"How Fiscal Policies Shape Our Communities" will feature a speaker panel followed by Q&A.

Speakers will include Watertown Auditor Megan Langan and Marlborough Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Meredith Harris.

MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman will join the panel to discuss the MMA's "[Perfect Storm](#)" fiscal report and its "[Navigating the Storm](#)" recommendations, both released late last year.



Meredith Harris

The free meeting will run from 8 to 10 a.m. at the Forge Life Science Building in Arsenal Yards, Watertown.

Registration is [available online](#).

Contact: Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker at [dbaker@mma.org](mailto:dbaker@mma.org)

## ATFC to hold regional meetings on April 9 and 16

The Association of Town Finance Committees will hold free regional meetings on April 9 and 16.

A meeting on April 9 in Middlesex or Essex County will feature a presentation on credit and bond ratings and their impact on municipal finances. The meeting will run from 6 to 8 p.m.

The April 16 meeting, at the Hadley Council on Aging, will feature Division of Local Services Project Manager Jessica Ferry, who will give a “Budgeting

101” presentation and highlight the DLS’s services. The meeting will run from 5 to 7 p.m.

Both meetings will begin with light refreshments and networking.

All finance committee and capital planning committee members are invited



Jessica Ferry

to these meetings. Online registration is available at [www.mma.org](http://www.mma.org). There is no charge to attend, but registration is required.

Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker at [dbaker@mma.org](mailto:dbaker@mma.org)

## MMMA, MMHR to hold joint meeting on April 16

The Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources will hold their meeting on April 16 at the Hawthorne Hotel in Salem.

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

More information, as well as an agenda and registration link, will be made

available at [www.mma.org](http://www.mma.org) and emailed to members.

Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Martin Davis at [mdavis@mma.org](mailto:mdavis@mma.org)

## Electric Connections Improvements Forum set for March 17 in Boston

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is inviting local leaders to the first Electric Connections Improvements Forum on March 17 at 1 p.m. in Boston.

The Healey-Driscoll administration established the forum to bring together utilities, developers, state agencies and

other stakeholders semi-annually to:

- Share information about the grid connection process and process improvements under development
- Provide transparency about the work of the state and utilities related to grid connections
- Discuss customer experiences with the

grid connections process to identify pain points and collectively develop solutions

The March 17 forum will be held in-person at 100 Cambridge St. in Boston on the 2nd floor in conference rooms B and C. Fill out [this form](#) to register.

The second semi-annual Electric Connections Improvements Forum is tentatively scheduled for the afternoon of Sept. 15.

The forums are part of an effort by the administration to work with the state’s investor-owned utilities and stakeholders to further streamline and standardize the grid connection process. More information about these initiatives is available at a new [Connecting New Buildings to the Electric Grid website](#). ●



### LGAC addresses proposed excise bill changes

During a meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission on Feb. 10 in Boston, Westfield Mayor Michael McCabe expresses concerns about a proposal to change the process by which cities and towns collect outstanding excise taxes, parking ticket payments, and abandoned vehicle fines. “We shouldn’t end this successful practice and replace it with a more uncertain and cumbersome process — one that doesn’t necessarily make payment more likely,” McCabe said. “It’d be risky, it’s unnecessary, and it jeopardizes critical municipal resources.”

# MMA-Suffolk Certificate program accepting applications

By **Kate Evarts**

The application for the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program is available on the [MMA website](#), with an application deadline of April 30.

This is a competitive application process, and applicants will be notified of their status by mid-May.

The MMA and Suffolk University will hold a Zoom information session on March 11 about upcoming offerings of the program. To register, visit [www.mma.org](#). 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.

## 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 significant scholarship, while the recipient's municipality commits to continuing their salary and position while they attend the program part-time.

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

Those interested in the Municipal Fellowship should 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.



Emily Granoff, Chelsea's deputy director of housing and community development, participates in a class on municipal legal issues last fall during the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program in Winchester.

## 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](mailto:kmccue@mma.org), or Kate Evarts at 617-426-7272, ext. 172, or [kevarts@mma.org](mailto:kevarts@mma.org). ●

# Culvert and small bridge project trainings available

The Massachusetts Department of Ecological Restoration has announced two upcoming training opportunities related to culvert and small bridge replacement projects.

A "Stream Smart" training session, at Berkshire Community College on March 25 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., is intended for those interested in planning, designing, and/or constructing road-stream crossings that help facilitate fish and wildlife movement and reconnect habitats. There will be a morning presentation followed by optional afternoon site visits. Space is limited, and [registration is available online](#).

A "Stream Simulation Design" (or "Stream Sim") technical training will be held at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Office in Hadley from May 18 through 22. The four-and-a-half day training will cover the Forest Service's

"stream simulation" method for road-stream crossings — an ecosystem-based approach for designing and constructing resilient crossings that provide aquatic organism passage.

"Stream Sim" will be led by U.S. Forest Service staff, and pre-registration and selection is required. To pre-register, email Amanda Kunzmann at [Amanda.kunzmann@usda.gov](mailto:Amanda.kunzmann@usda.gov) by March 12 to request a pre-registration application. Attendance selections will be made and attendees notified by April 3.

Questions can be directed to [derculverts@mass.gov](mailto:derculverts@mass.gov). ●



Two upcoming training opportunities will focus on planning, designing and building road-stream crossings.

# MMA Webinars

## AI webinar series introduction

The MMA kicked off its artificial intelligence webinar series on Feb. 11 with an introductory session featuring Kevin Gulley and Brendan McSheffrey of the [Kendall Project](#), a Massachusetts-based company that helps organizations develop clarity, shared language, and operating foundations in order to use AI safely and effectively.

The first principle of the Kendall Framework is that “context is king,” Gulley said. The framework defines context as the “data and background information provided to an AI model, enabling it to understand user intent, so that it can generate accurate, useful outputs.”

McSheffrey shared the principle that “problems fuel AI,” since it is designed to solve, not search.

“Problems are almost like fingerprints,” he said. “One person’s problem is never exactly the same, person-to-person. So, when you want AI to solve problems as a team, you want to describe problems as a team, creating a combined articulation that creates problem lucidity.”

McSheffrey recommended using the open-ended statement, “How might we ...” to explain a problem because it emphasizes collaboration and introduces possibility.

The webinar is the first in the MMA’s series on artificial intelligence. The other two sessions will cover municipal use cases

## Practical applications of AI

The MMA continued its artificial intelligence webinar series on Feb. 25 with a session that discussed real-world practical applications, featuring three municipal leaders who have successfully integrated AI into their roles.

Littleton Human Resources Director Michelle Vibert reviewed practical tips for safely using AI in the workplace. Vibert encouraged attendees to maintain authenticity, verify all AI-generated outputs, protect sensitive data, and focus on building repeatable workflows to maximize efficiency.

“AI is a tool to improve your workplace efficiency, strengthen your services, and improve constituent satisfaction,” said Worcester Assistant Public Works Director Jay Mello. “It is going to make all of our jobs easier, especially in the municipal sector, where we’re constantly asked to do more with less.”

Mello gave a live demonstration of Microsoft Copilot using a report on the city’s pavement management program and data on the resurfacing program to produce a memo on the status of the programs.

Longmeadow Town Manager Lyn Simmons emphasized that the quality of AI prompts are the key to quality outputs. Simmons reviewed examples of prompts and clarifying questions she’s used to refine results, including conducting a job description analysis and the creation of a new staff training manual for the town’s recycling center.

Simmons advised attendees to remember that “AI is human-led,” and they are the ones driving it.



Panelists discuss artificial intelligence in municipal workplaces during a recent MMA webinar. Speakers included Kevin Gulley, Kendall Project co-founder and managing partner, left, and Brendan McSheffrey, Kendall Project managing partner.

**Date:** Feb. 11

**Length:** 90 Minutes

[VIEW WEBINAR ↗](#)

and creating an AI policy.

MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine moderated 10 minutes of questions and answers, addressing inquiries regarding the potential environmental impacts of AI use, transferring data across different systems, and advice for using data inaccessible to the AI agent.

– *Kristianna Lapierre*



Panelists discuss real-world municipal AI applications during a recent MMA webinar. Speakers included Longmeadow Town Manager Lyn Simmons, top left, Littleton Human Resources Director Michelle Vibert, top right, and Worcester Assistant Public Works Director Jay Mello, bottom left, while Boxford Town Administrator Matt Coogan moderated the panel.

**Date:** Feb. 25

**Length:** 75 Minutes

[VIEW WEBINAR ↗](#)

Boxford Town Administrator Matt Coogan moderated 15 minutes of questions and answers, addressing inquiries regarding using different AI platforms, how AI can help with meeting minutes, and limitations of these tools.

– *Kristianna Lapierre*

# MMA Webinars

## Grant platform

The MMA hosted a webinar on Feb. 3 with Syncurrent, a government technology company and MMA featured service.

Syncurrent's online platform, available to all 351 Massachusetts municipalities, makes it easy to identify, qualify for, and pursue state and federal funding opportunities.

In the webinar, Syncurrent co-founder and CEO Dhruv C. Patel demonstrates the company's platform, which loads a list of eligible opportunities at the state and federal levels in one place, avoiding the need to search large databases.

Patel reviewed how to look through each opportunity to find its application requirements, posting date, award ceiling, and other key details. A chatbot is embedded into the dashboard for asking clarifying questions about each opportunity.

Users also have the ability to invite colleagues within the same municipality to collaborate on the same application.

Syncurrent co-founder and Chief Product Officer Matthew Jaquez moderated 30 minutes of questions and answers, addressing inquiries regarding the platform's data sources, whether it includes private foundation grant opportunities, and how Syncurrent interacts with state grant portals.

– *Kristianna Lapierre*



During a recent MMA webinar, panelists discuss how Syncurrent's platform can connect municipalities with state and federal funding opportunities. Speakers included Dhruv Patel, Syncurrent co-founder and chief executive officer, top left; Matthew Jaquez, Syncurrent co-founder and chief product officer, top right; and Cass McGregor, Syncurrent product associate.

**Date: Feb. 3**      **Length: 60 Minutes**

[VIEW WEBINAR ↗](#)

### 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.

## Travel and tourism conference is March 24-25 in Danvers

The 2026 Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism, where tourism and hospitality professionals learn about

the latest industry trends, will be held on March 24 and 25 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Danvers.

The conference will feature remarks by Gov. Maura Healey and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll; exhibitor booths; and updates about the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, FIFA World Cup, Sail Boston, and [Massachusetts 250<sup>th</sup>](#) celebration plans.

Breakout sessions will focus on artificial intelligence in marketing, storytelling, hotel contracting, culture building, accessible and inclusive travel, and event budgeting.

The conference will offer several networking opportunities, including a reception at the North Shore Music Theatre.

The cost is \$350, which does not include lodging if needed.

The [schedule](#) and registration are available on the [conference website](#).

Questions about the conference and attendee registration may be directed to Zoë Ross at [massgovernorsconference@conventures.com](mailto:massgovernorsconference@conventures.com). ●



### LGAC highlights value of multi-year Chapter 90

During a meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission on Feb. 10 in Boston, Shrewsbury Town Manager Kevin Mizikar emphasizes how the proposed multi-year authorization for Chapter 90 would help communities plan their road and bridge projects. He said the authorization "would allow Shrewsbury to plan and program longer-term infrastructure projects with greater confidence, providing much-needed stability amid ongoing economic uncertainty."

# Symposium examining town meeting is March 11

“Deliberation and Division: Making Change at the New England Town Meeting,” a free symposium focused on the history, operations, and contemporary challenges and innovations related to town meeting, will be held at the University of Massachusetts Amherst on March 11.

MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine will serve as a panelist at the event, which is hosted by the UMass Amherst Political Science Department and features keynote speaker [Jane Mansbridge](#) of Harvard University.

A number of panels will focus on all

aspects of town meeting. The event will also feature interactive case studies to evaluate different town meeting scenarios, skill-building sessions, and networking opportunities.

Complete information about participants, panels and the schedule is [available online](#). Attendees should [RSVP](#) in advance. Registration is free and open to the public, with an online attendance option for those unable to attend in person. ●



UMass Amherst will host a free symposium on March 11 focused on the history, operations, and contemporary challenges and innovations related to town meeting.

# Planner Training Collaborative to hold conference on March 21

The Citizen Planner Training Collaborative will hold its 22nd Annual Conference for citizen and professional planners on Saturday, March 21, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., in Worcester.

The conference will feature 18 workshops covering foundational and timely information, as well as opportunities to network with other municipal planners and board members from around the state.

Workshops will be led by subject-matter experts, covering topics including



micromobility, clean energy permitting, affordable housing, flood regulations, State Land for Homes, subsidized housing, and conflict resolution.

The keynote speaker is Chris Kluchman, director of the Livable Communities Division.

The cost to attend is \$105, including a continental breakfast and buffet lunch. [Registration is open](#), with a deadline of March 13.

The conference will be held at the College of the Holy Cross. [Visit \[mass-cptc.org\]\(#\)](#) for complete workshop and conference information, or email questions to [coordinator@masscptc.org](#). ●

# Administration awards \$6.6M in Complete Streets grants

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation on Feb. 18 announced awards totaling \$6.6 million to 15 communities as part of the fiscal 2026 Round 2 of grants for the Complete Streets Funding Program.

The grants help to fund local multimodal infrastructure projects that improve travel for pedestrians, public transit users, bicyclists, and people using other forms of transportation. Projects include sidewalk and parking lot improvements, intersection upgrades, bicycle and shared-use paths, and Americans with Disabilities Act compliance upgrades.

Funding of between \$190,000 and \$500,000 was awarded to Andover, Ashland, Athol, Bridgewater, Clinton, Fairhaven, Ipswich, Malden,



Complete Streets grants help fund local multimodal infrastructure projects that improve travel for pedestrians, public transit users, bicyclists, and people using other forms of transportation.

Middleborough, Milford, Norfolk, Plainville, Somerville, Westport, and Wilbraham.

Of the 15 projects selected, 12 will benefit environmental justice communities.

The [Complete Streets Funding Program](#) provides technical assistance and construction funding to eligible municipalities to plan and implement projects that enable safe, convenient, and comfortable travel for users of all ages and abilities, regardless of their mode of transportation.

Municipalities may apply for up to \$500,000 in construction project funding in one application.

Prior to this round, the Complete Streets Funding Program had awarded 568 technical assistance and construction project grants across the Commonwealth, totaling over \$123 million. ●

## State awards funding for nitrogen pollution reduction

The Healey-Driscoll administration on Jan. 20 announced the award of \$830,000 in grants to nine Cape Cod municipalities to support projects that reduce nitrogen pollution and help the towns meet septic system and water protection regulations.

The grants were awarded through the Natural Resource Nitrogen Sensitive

Areas Grant Program, administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, which helps communities develop plans to address nitrogen pollution from wastewater and other sources.

Excess nitrogen fuels the growth of nuisance plants, weeds, and algae that use up much of the oxygen in the water,

which harms water quality and forces out indigenous fish and plant species.

Grants between \$7,182 and \$150,000 were awarded to Barnstable, Bourne, Brewster, Dennis, Falmouth, Mashpee, Truro, Wellfleet and Yarmouth.

More information is available on the MassDEP's [NRNSA Grant Program webpage](#). ●

## State awards \$120,000 for waste disposal site cleanup efforts

The Healey-Driscoll administration on Jan. 27 announced the award of \$120,000 to six municipalities and community groups through the Technical Assistance Grant program, which helps communities with planning waste disposal site cleanups in their neighborhoods by involving subject-matter experts and resident engagement and education.

The program is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. In a prepared statement, MassDEP Commissioner Bonnie Heiple said that, despite interest in cleaning up waste sites, the complex

technical information associated with such work can delay or stop such efforts.

“These funds support local leaders and residents in gaining the knowledge and confidence to actively shape decisions about the cleanup of contamination in their own communities,” Heiple said.

Grants of \$20,000 were awarded to the Nantucket PFAS Action Group, the Lunt Neighborhood Action Group in Greenfield, the Barnstable Department of Public Works, the town of Lee, and the town of Westminister.

More information is available on the [TAG Program webpage](#). ●



Grants awarded by the Healey-Driscoll administration will help communities with planning waste disposal site cleanups.

## State allocates \$8.4M in Shannon grants to address gang violence

The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security on Jan. 29 announced the allocation of \$8.4 million to 15 sites in fiscal 2026 grants through the Shannon

Community Safety Initiative, which is aimed at reducing gang and youth violence.

Funds were allocated to sites in Boston, Brockton, Chicopee, Fall River, Fitchburg, Gardner, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Methuen, the Metropolitan Mayors Coalition, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Springfield, Taunton and Worcester.

Local action research partners associated with the Shannon grant sites received approximately \$616,300 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. ●



### LGAC gets revenue update

Chris Marino, assistant secretary for budget at the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, updates commission members on fiscal 2026 state tax collections during a meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission on Feb. 10 in Boston. He said January collections were “really positive,” and that revenues for the fiscal year to date were 2.3% above the benchmark established in the budget.

# New regulations allow for fishing gear debris cleanups

The Healey-Driscoll administration on Jan. 27 announced new state regulations to promote the cleanup of fishing gear debris in order to protect marine biodiversity and public safety.

The regulations, which took effect on Jan. 30, are intended to streamline the timely and efficient removal of derelict fishing gear, while continuing to protect functional fishing gear and minimizing conflicts on the water.

The regulations, developed by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries with input from stakeholders including fishing industry representatives and municipal leaders, allow the Division of Marine Fisheries to permit local leaders, community organizations, and other partners to conduct coastal



New state regulations aim to streamline the timely and efficient removal of abandoned fishing gear from bodies of water.

cleanups.

In a prepared statement, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper said, "We look forward to continued partnership with the fishing industry and conservationists to tackle this

challenge coastwide through creativity and collaboration."

Fishing gear debris (gear that is not intact) harms marine life and creates safety hazards for fishers, boaters and beachgoers. Lost or abandoned gear can "ghost fish," or continue to catch and kill marine life, and poses entanglement risks for endangered marine animals.

The administration said that state law, dating back to a time when much of the fishing gear used was salvageable, had constrained the cleanup of fishing gear debris. Most of the modern debris consists of plastic-coated metal traps, which are not biodegradable and often not salvageable.

More information about the new regulations is available on [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov).

# Administration awards nearly \$2M for local infrastructure projects

The Healey-Driscoll administration on Feb. 25 announced \$1.9 million in grant awards for local infrastructure projects through the Municipal and Tribal Technical Assistance grant program and the Technical Assistance for Regional Planning Agencies program, both administered by the [Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office](#).

The programs provide technical assistance for projects that have received or are pursuing federal funding.

"As a former mayor, I understand the capacity constraints that municipal officials contend with every day," Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said in a prepared statement, adding that the technical assistance can be "crucial to moving forward important projects in our communities."

Gardner Mayor Mike Nicholson thanked the administration for partnering with

communities.

"Technical assistance grants like this make the complex funding application process more accessible," he said, "helping local communities take the first step toward meaningful progress."

Agawam Mayor Christopher Johnson said the partnership "strengthens our ability to deliver sustainable infrastructure improvements while responsibly leveraging federal resources for the benefit of our community."

The Federal Funds Office said communities across the state made it clear that more technical assistance is needed to advance key infrastructure projects.

Receiving Municipal and Tribal Technical Assistance Awards between \$4,000 and \$200,000 were Agawam, Barnstable, Brockton,

Gardner, Lawrence, Lynn, Nantucket, Newburyport, the North Shore Community Development Corporation, Stoneham, and Westhampton.

Lynn Mayor Jared Nicholson said the funding is "the spark we need to further ignite [waterfront] development. ... This program allows us to advance our residents' goals in the city's South Harbor Implementation Plan (SHIP) and other planning efforts through a strategic approach to urban renewal that will benefit our residents for generations to come."

Technical Assistance for Regional Planning Agencies grants between \$66,667 and \$431,578 were awarded each of the state's 13 regional planning agencies.

More information is [available online](#).

# Applications open for Massachusetts Champions Institute

Smart Growth America and Transportation for Massachusetts on Feb. 24 opened applications for the second cohort of the [Massachusetts Champions Institute](#), a program that fosters partnership and collaboration between community advocates and local officials to identify and implement strategies for safer and more complete streets in their communities.

The program is open to 10 pairings

of community advocates and a local official, who may be elected, appointed, or a member of a municipal planning department.

Participants will meet from April to July for six online sessions and two in-person meetings. The modules include training from subject-matter experts and local practitioners, peer learning sessions, and discussions, all designed to build local expertise in equitable transportation

implementation.

Program applications are available [online](#) and must be submitted by March 31.

Applicants can apply for a grant of up to \$10,000 for their organizations' programs/projects that advance Complete Streets or transportation justice and equity in general.

Interested parties should send questions to [info@t4ma.org](mailto:info@t4ma.org).

# Applications due for sports and entertainment grants

The Healey-Driscoll administration on Feb. 3 announced the opening of a grant program to support significant sports and entertainment events that drive tourism and increase economic activity throughout the Commonwealth.

The submission deadline is March 4 at 3 p.m.

The Sports and Entertainment Events Fund grant program, operating in partnership with the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, was authorized through a fiscal 2025 Supplemental Budget, which allocated \$10 million to support costs associated with the 2026 FIFA World Cup, including public safety, transportation, and celebrations.

Massachusetts will host seven World Cup matches this summer between June 13 and July 9.

Grant applications will be evaluated based upon return on investment, economic impact on the tourism sector, potential to promote Massachusetts nationally and internationally, and geographic equity across the state.

Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations and municipalities. No single entity may receive more than half of the total funds available. Grantees must provide matching funds equal to or greater than the grant amount awarded.

Information including program guidelines and eligibility requirements is



The Sports and Entertainment Events Fund grant program provides funding to support costs associated with the 2026 FIFA World Cup, including public safety, transportation and celebrations.

available through the program's [online application portal](#).

## WEMO to hold annual Leadership Conference on March 27

Women Elected Municipal Officials will hold its annual Leadership Conference on March 27 in Sturbridge.

All women elected municipal officials in Massachusetts are considered members of WEMO and are invited.

The event will feature a keynote speaker, a panel discussion on strategies for success, and a regional networking activity.

The conference will run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Publick House, 277 Main St. in Sturbridge. The registration fee is \$25. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

Online registration is available at [www.mma.org](http://www.mma.org). The full agenda will be made available shortly.

Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Martin Davis at [mdavis@mma.org](mailto:mdavis@mma.org)

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

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

- State budget & local aid
- State & federal grant opportunities
- Member group meetings & webinars
- Connect 351 announcements
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## Workshop offers strategies for keeping your cool

By Joyce McMahon

Municipal employees regularly contend with moments of frustration — and at times outright hostility — from members of the public. This reality was the focus of a [Connect 351 workshop](#) in January, “Keeping Your Cool When the Public Is Losing Theirs,” presented by Cally Ritter of Positive Ripple Training and Consulting and Southborough Assistant Town Administrator Vanessa Hale.

The standing-room-only crowd was a clear sign that cities and towns are grappling with this issue and are committed to finding constructive solutions.

The presenters acknowledged a dynamic unique to municipal work: Residents are often “captive customers.” They cannot take their concerns elsewhere. That reality can intensify frustration and, at times, result in aggressive or abusive behavior.

### Why emotions escalate

Ritter rooted the discussion in emotional intelligence — the combination of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills that shapes how we manage ourselves and relate to others. She began with a key insight:

emotions are contagious. Humans are wired with “mirroring neurons,” which cause us to unconsciously reflect the emotional states of those around us. When a constituent arrives angry or distressed, that energy can escalate an interaction if it is mirrored rather than managed.

Emotional regulation, Ritter emphasized, is not a personality trait but a skill that can be learned and strengthened over time. Self-awareness allows employees to recognize their own rising frustration; self-regulation helps them steady their response. Adjusting tone, pace, posture, or word choice can materially affect how an interaction unfolds, often setting the tone for a more constructive exchange.

### Listen, then fix

A recurring theme was the importance of deep listening. Even experienced professionals make assumptions. Ritter encouraged participants to slow down, resist interrupting, and avoid jumping prematurely into problem-solving mode.

Empathy was described as central to effective public service. Ritter distinguished between emotional empathy (understanding how someone feels) and cognitive



Cally Ritter, foreground, of Positive Ripple Training and Consulting, speaks during the “Keeping Your Cool When the Public Is Losing Theirs” workshop at Connect 351 in Boston in January. Also pictured is panelist Vanessa Hale, Southborough’s assistant town administrator.

empathy (understanding why they feel that way), noting that compassion is putting empathy and sympathy into action.

She said tensions can be significantly reduced by signaling presence and respect with questions such as, “What can I do for you in this moment?” or statements such as, “You might be right,” or, “Here’s how I’ve been able to help others.”

Ritter also shared the CLARA strategy — Calm, Listen, Acknowledge, Respond,

■ MIIA *continued on 27*

## Municipal law updates offered at Connect 351

By Jennifer Ranz

The Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association presented key legal updates for local officials during a “Local Legal Lens” workshop held during the MMA’s [Connect 351 conference](#).

The session focused on emerging legal trends and the practical steps municipalities can take to manage risk. Presenters were Sam Dinning, chief of staff and policy for the city of Boston’s Law Department; Batool Raza, general counsel for the Boston Public Health Commission; and Steven “Tip” Torres, a partner at West Group Law.

A major focus was the governor’s

proposed [Municipal Empowerment Act](#), a wide-ranging package aimed at expanding local flexibility. The bill would give municipalities new revenue options, including increases to local-option meals and lodging taxes and the ability to add a small surcharge to motor vehicle excise taxes. It also seeks to streamline procurement rules, modernize borrowing terms for school projects, and make pandemic-era hybrid and remote meeting flexibilities permanent.

Panelists also reviewed several timely topics with implications for municipalities:

- **Court decisions:** Recent rulings addressed zoning and permitting

standards, public records obligations and attorney-client privilege, and limits on when local boards may deny special permits and licenses. Presenters emphasized that compliance with the MBTA Communities Act is essential to reducing legal and financial exposure. Panelists also noted recent developments in cannabis regulations and the potential impact on local oversight.

- **Federal funding and compliance risks:** Panelists advised municipalities to closely monitor changes in federal grant

■ LAW UPDATES *continued on 29*

## Swansea creates retirement program for volunteer firefighters

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

In an effort to retain volunteer firefighters and attract new recruits, a new Swansea program will offer retirement payments to former volunteers, an initiative local officials said is the first of its kind in Massachusetts.

In October, Swansea launched its Volunteer Firefighter Length of Service Award Program, which allows its volunteer firefighters to accrue credits toward eventual retirement payments. The town, which boasts the state's largest volunteer fire department, hopes that the retirement payments will encourage more volunteers to sign up for service and stay longer with the department once they do join.

Town officials say the new incentive gives Swansea a way to honor the important service of its firefighters. They also see the program as addressing a critical need: The number of volunteers has dropped steadily over the years, from about 125 in 1989 to 76 now, while the number of emergency calls continues to rise. The health of the volunteer service helps stave off a more costly alternative, said Town Administrator Mallory Aronstein.

"If people stopped showing up, we would be literally without a fire service," Aronstein said. "If we had to suddenly replace these volunteers with a professional fire department, it would most certainly mean a [Proposition 2½] override and stressed finances for the rest of the town.

"The fact that this program exists for retention and recruitment efforts and to keep the volunteer system going is a major tool for us to encourage our volunteer system to continue for many years, staving off that financial concern," she said.

Swansea previously had some success with another program giving volunteers up to \$2,500 per year in local property tax credits, said Fire Chief Eric Hajder. But the tax credit ended when volunteers retired, essentially creating a \$2,500 tax increase. Based on the firefighters' feedback, Hajder started researching length-of-service award

programs that volunteer departments in other states use to provide benefits.

"This was something that the members came up with," Hajder said. "They didn't know what it was going to look like, but they knew that we needed to do something kind of long term to take care of the members."

In 2020, Hajder wrote a length-of-service award program proposal for the Board of Selectmen. After several years of Town Meeting appropriations to build up a fund, and a home rule petition passed in 2024 to pave the way for the program, the selectmen voted to create the length-of-service program trust last October.

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**"This was something that the members came up with. They didn't know what it was going to look like, but they knew that we needed to do something kind of long term to take care of the members."**

**- Swansea Fire Chief Eric Hajder**

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To qualify for benefits, firefighters must meet physical fitness requirements and respond to at least 45 calls per year, which represents less than 10% of the nearly 600 calls the town expects to get this year, Hajder said. They must also complete 36 hours of department-approved training annually.

Upon completing 10 years of service, a firefighter becomes eligible for monthly payments for life after retiring and reaching age 65. The monthly payments range from \$50 a month for a decade of service to \$800 a month for 40 years.

The program will also provide assistance to volunteers who become disabled as a



Swansea's volunteer firefighters perform a range of duties for the town, from emergency response to participation in community events. The town recently established a new program to reward volunteers at the end of their service. (Photo courtesy town of Swansea)

result of their service, and for families of firefighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty, Hajder said.

Swansea now has more than \$830,000 in the fund, and conducts actuarial assessments to ensure sufficient yearly contributions. Though the town contributed larger amounts initially to build up the fund, the average annual contribution is now down to about \$75,000, Hajder said. Now that the trust is established, Swansea is vetting outside firms to manage the investments.

Swansea's volunteer firefighters have an average of about 15 to 20 years of service, Hajder said. The goal is to help more volunteers reach at least 20 years, and maybe even closer to the tenure of people like Fran Kelly, who will celebrate his 45th anniversary in May. Hajder said that Kelly (whose son Michael has more than two decades of service), exemplifies the service and sacrifice that so many make to the town.

*For more information about Swansea's program, contact Fire Chief Eric Hajder at [EHajder@swanseama.gov](mailto:EHajder@swanseama.gov).*

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*This column highlights some of the innovative approaches and strategies Massachusetts municipalities are using to deliver services and solve problems. If you know of a Mass Innovation that could be featured in this column, email us at [innovations@mma.org](mailto:innovations@mma.org).*

## ATFC publishes updated Finance Committee Handbook

The Association of Town Finance Committees' Finance Committee Handbook was updated last fall and is now available.

The handbook features chapters on budgeting, capital planning, borrowing, contracting and procurement, general government and accounting operations, IT, establishing fees, employee benefits (including other post-employment benefits, or OPEB), revenue and expenditure forecasting, banking, and Proposition 2½.

Published as a PDF, the handbook includes general updates to all chapters.

Its co-editors are Mansfield Finance Committee Member Melinda Tarsi-Goldfien and Arlington Finance Committee Member Allan Tosti, both of whom are members of the ATFC Governing Board.



The handbook is a member benefit provided to all finance committee members of dues-paying ATFC communities. These members may receive access to the handbook by emailing Katherine Christy at [kchristy@mma.org](mailto:kchristy@mma.org) at the MMA.

Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker at [dbaker@mma.org](mailto:dbaker@mma.org)

## MMHR to hold annual HR 101 Boot Camp on March 12

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources will hold its annual HR 101 Boot Camp on March 12 in Northampton.

The event is geared toward newer municipal human resources professionals and those with a background in the private sector. Veterans in the field are also welcome to attend for a refresher.

Stacie Watson, owner of [Transformative Leadership Strategies](#), will open the boot camp with an interactive session on multigenerational competency in the

workplace.

Additional sessions will cover health benefits, recruitment and onboarding, and personnel files and auditing.

The boot camp will run from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Hotel Northampton, 36 King St. in Northampton. The registration fee is \$100 for MMHR members



Stacie Watson

and \$120 for nonmembers. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

A draft agenda and registration are available at [www.mma.org](http://www.mma.org).

The boot camp is eligible for the [MMHR Pathways Program](#), a new initiative to help members tailor their professional development journey. For more on the Pathways Program, visit [www.mma.org](http://www.mma.org).

Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Martin Davis at [mdavis@mma.org](mailto:mdavis@mma.org)



### LGAC addresses immigration enforcement

During the Local Government Advisory Commission meeting on Feb. 10 in Boston, Fitchburg Mayor Sam Squailia thanks the administration for its executive order and accompanying proposed legislation intended to clarify the legal parameters related to federal immigration enforcement actions. Squailia said the federal approach affects residents' sense of safety as they go about their daily lives, and places the city's police officers in volatile situations without sufficient warning. She said she appreciates the conversations with state partners to address the situation. "With cities and towns and the state all working together," she said, "we can reduce fear and confusion, lower conflict, and keep Massachusetts communities safer for everyone."

## 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. ●

# Around the Commonwealth

## Lee

### Town streamlines process for business applicants

In an effort to become more welcoming to new businesses, the town of Lee is adopting a “Friend-Lee” approach to economic development and is seeking to demystify the application process for residents and developers.

Over the past year, Lee has been redesigning its intake approach to help business applicants and developers navigate the permitting process more smoothly. Dovetailing with efforts to shape the future of the Berkshires community and its overall development ecosystem, the changes are aimed at fostering greater coordination within Town Hall, and helping applicants, who often need multiple approvals before they can open for business.

“Everyone was kind of operating in a silo,” said Town Administrator R. Christopher Brittain. “You’d come up and you’d get your building permit, you’d go see somebody else for your common victualler license, and then someone else for your health license. So that’s where the idea came from — why not ... help them out and get everyone together in one room, and sort of do it all in one shot?”

Town officials could tell that applicants were confused about the process, but the streamlining effort gained momentum after the arrival of Brooke Healy, Lee’s first town planner, in December 2024. A new standardized system could “at least alleviate some of these back-and-forth frustrations” applicants face when working with multiple departments and boards for approvals, she said.

“We don’t expect people to come in knowing exactly how to get stuff done, because it’s not their job,” Healy said. “It’s our job to know that. It’s our job to help them.”

Last June, town officials met with business owners, business organizations including the Lee Chamber of Commerce, and community members to gather feedback on the existing process and potential improvements.



The town of Lee has been streamlining its application approach for new businesses and developments. (Photo courtesy Semperdrone)

Under the new “Friend-Lee” approach, applicants are able to fill out an online form to describe their plans and arrange for an initial meeting with Healy. The process will also feature a roundtable meeting with representatives from relevant departments.

From there, the town will develop a list of next steps for the project, with Healy as the point person helping the applicant navigate the process. (Under the old process, applicants needed to approach different departments on their own and try to decipher the requirements and the sequencing of various steps.)

“The idea is to just be clear in the process and the direction of how somebody should go,” Healy said.

The new process will formally come online with a town website overhaul that’s nearing completion, Healy said.

The town has undertaken other projects to bolster economic growth, including addressing vacant storefronts downtown, reviewing and modernizing zoning bylaws, and considering renovating a former historic fire station into a community center to inject more vibrancy into downtown.

Town officials have been studying Lee’s remaining vacant mills to promote reuse. The redevelopment of one of those mills is expected to add about 200 new housing units near downtown, and bring more people downtown, within the next few years, Healy said.

“Working on improving our main streets, improving what we offer, and making it the gateway to the Berkshires is good for all of those involved, whether you’re a weekend tourist, second

homeowner, or you live here,” Healy said. “We want to make sure that people have what they need and what they want in a town, and we can accurately and adequately support that.”

— Jennifer Kavanaugh

## Northborough

### Town partners with college on workforce development

The town of Northborough has partnered with Anna Maria College, a liberal arts college 18 miles away in Paxton, to create a program that promotes access to educational opportunities and strengthens workforce development.

Through the partnership, Anna Maria will offer academic programs, professional training, and skill development programs targeted to the needs and interests of Northborough town staff and the larger Northborough community. The partnership includes access to both undergraduate and graduate degrees in fields such as social work, criminal justice, fire science, paramedic studies, emergency management, and mental health training.

Town staff will receive a 10% tuition discount, and residents are eligible for a \$500 per-semester discount, and up to \$1,000 each academic year.

Northborough Town Manager Stephanie Bacon said the concept arose from a broader conversation about workforce development and succession planning within town departments.

“We’ve consistently heard from employees that they’re interested in professional development and degree opportunities that are accessible and relevant to municipal work,” Bacon said. “We were looking for ways to create structured educational pathways for our employees, and Anna Maria College was a natural partner given their strong public safety and public administration programs.”

Anna Maria students will also have the opportunity to intern with Northborough town departments through the partnership, which Bacon said has been well received by staff as it “gives the town a pipeline to recruit

■ COMMONWEALTH *continued on 24*

# Around the Commonwealth

## COMMONWEALTH

Continued from page 23

individuals who already understand municipal work and our community.”

Anna Maria has historically partnered with local police, fire, and school departments to conduct training and connect staff with degree or workforce development opportunities. The agreement with Northborough marks the college’s first partnership with a municipality that covers all departments as well as local residents.

David Armstrong, senior advisor to criminal justice operations at Anna Maria and a former Holden police chief, had the idea to combine and potentially expand existing partnerships.

“Instead of just having police, fire, and paramedic training, why don’t we start at the top of the food chain?” he said.

Hiring and employee retention has become a challenge for communities statewide, and Anna Maria had the resources and expertise to make an impact, Armstrong said.

“As a college, both in terms of our programs, and then just our mission, we’ve always been part of the community,”

## Meeting space wanted

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

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

To offer your town or city’s municipal function space, contact Timmery Kuck, the MMA’s assistant director of events, at [tkuck@mma.org](mailto:tkuck@mma.org). ●



A partnership between Anna Maria College and the town of Northborough includes access to graduate and undergraduate degrees, as well as tuition discounts for town staff and residents.

said Jim Bidwell, dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at Anna Maria. “The idea is really to make a partnership with the towns, and so that we have communication back and forth.”

For other communities considering a similar partnership, Bacon and John Practico, interim dean of the School of Professional Studies and associate professor of psychology at Anna Maria, recommend assessing municipal needs and identifying areas where a

higher education partnership could be beneficial.

“Most organizations and communities have a pretty clear sense of what their challenges are,” Practico said. “I think, with [Anna Maria] having such a wide range of programming, that 90% of those concerns could be addressed.”

The partnership is still in its infancy and program offerings are taking shape, but Bacon said staff response has been very positive, with staff expressing interest in leadership training, public safety programs, and health care-related fields.

“Municipal government relies on a highly skilled workforce. Providing access to education helps us retain employees, build internal leadership, and ensure continuity of services,” said Bacon.

– Owen Page

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*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](mailto:editor@mma.org).*



## MMA hosts Israeli delegation

Senior local government leaders from Israel listen to a presentation on local government in Massachusetts by MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine on Feb. 4 in the MMA office in Boston. The visit to Boston was arranged through MAKOM, a joint venue by Israel’s Ministry of the Interior and MAOZ, a nonprofit that works to build a diverse, professional leadership network representing all parts of Israeli society and sectors. The MAKOM venture works with regional councils, municipalities, and local authorities to support leaders in building cross-sector collaboration and strengthening trust at the local level. As part of this work, 43 senior fellows traveled to Boston last month to learn more about local government here. The MMA presentation included two former Massachusetts mayors, Ruthanne Fuller of Newton, and Joseph Curtatone of Somerville.

# People



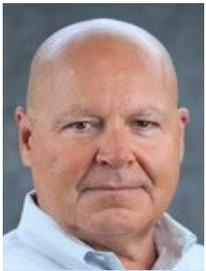
Christopher Senior

**Christopher Senior** became the new town manager in Winchester on Jan. 14.

Senior previously served for a dozen years as the town manager in Cohasset. Before moving to

Massachusetts, he served for a decade as the deputy town supervisor in North Hempstead, New York, and as counsel to the Nassau County Planning Commission. He also served as the legal services director for the National Association of Home Builders in Washington, D.C. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism and economics from Boston University, and a law degree from Hofstra University.

In Winchester, Senior replaced **Beth Rudolph**, who left in September after serving for more than two years in the role. **Stephen Delaney**, and later Town Clerk **MaryEllen Marshall**, served as the interim town managers.



Scott Lambiase

**Scott Lambiase** became the new town administrator in Kingston on Jan. 5.

Previously, Lambiase served for more than five years as the town manager in Abington. Before that, he had served for 15

years in Duxbury, where was the director of inspectional services and building commissioner before being promoted to municipal services director in 2010.

Lambiase is a member of the MMA Policy Committee on Personnel and Labor Relations. He served on Whitman's Board of Selectmen from 2012 to 2019, and was a member of the Whitman Finance Committee. He has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Western Governors University.

In Kingston, Lambiase replaced **Keith Hickey**, who left after more than four years to become the town administrator in

Fairhaven in September. **George Samia** served as the acting town administrator.



James "Jay" McGrail

**James "Jay" McGrail** will become the new town administrator in Harwich on March 16.

McGrail has been the town manager in Middleborough for the past three years. Previously, he

served for three-and-a-half years as the town administrator in Marion. He also served for a year as director of facilities for the Sandwich Public Schools, and for 11 years as the golf director of South Shore Country Club in Hingham. He has a bachelor's degree in plant and soil sciences from UMass Amherst and a Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management from the MMA-Suffolk program.

In Middleborough, McGrail will replace **Joseph Powers**, who left after having served for four-and-a-half years as the town administrator, after almost two years as assistant town administrator and as interim town administrator. **Tony Schiavi**, and later Police Chief **Kevin Considine**, have served as the interim town administrator since Powers's departure.



Rich Bienvenue

**Rich Bienvenue** will become the next town manager in Eastham in June.

Bienvenue has been Eastham's assistant town manager and finance director for the past five-and-a-half years. He will replace **Jacqueline**

**Beebe**, who will retire this summer after more than a decade in Eastham as assistant town administrator, town administrator and ultimately town manager.

Previously, Bienvenue served for more than six years in Yarmouth, in roles including town accountant, acting director

of technical services, and acting assistant town administrator. He also spent 13 years as a call firefighter and emergency medical technician for the town of Wellfleet.

Bienvenue has extensive private sector experience in accounting and auditing, and in 2013 founded GovWorks as an advisor to public and private entities on finance, housing and governance matters. He has an associate degree in liberal arts from Cape Cod Community College, a bachelor's degree in business administration from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, and a Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management from the MMA-Suffolk program.

**Edward Silva** rejoined the Rowe Board of Selectmen after winning a Feb. 7 special election to fill a vacant seat. Silva, who served on the board from 2019 to 2025, filled the spot left vacant by the departure of **Marilyn Wilson** last fall. Silva will fill the remainder of the term, which ends in the spring of 2028.



Stephen Zrike Jr.

On Feb. 10, Gov. Maura Healey announced that **Stephen Zrike Jr.** will become the state's new secretary of education this spring.

Zrike has been the superintendent of the Salem Public Schools since July 2020. Previously, he was the receiver and superintendent of the Holyoke Public Schools, and superintendent of the Wakefield Public Schools. He also held education leadership roles in the Boston and Chicago school systems, and started his career as a fifth-grade teacher in Andover. He has a bachelor's degree in history from Dartmouth College, and a master's degree and doctorate in education from Harvard University.

Zrike is replacing **Patrick Tutwiler**, who stepped down on Feb. 13 after three years to become president and CEO of Walker Therapeutic & Educational Programs, a Needham-based nonprofit that serves

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# People

## PEOPLE

Continued from page 25

children and youth with complex emotional, behavioral, and learning needs, and their families. **Amy Kershaw**, commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, is serving as the interim secretary until Zrike's arrival, which is expected in late March or early April.



Juana Matias

**Juana Matias** will become the new secretary of the Housing and Livable Communities on April 1.

A former state representative for the 16th Essex District, Matias has been serving as regional administrator for

the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, overseeing federal housing offices in the New England states. Before joining HUD, she served as chief operating officer of MassINC

and Commonwealth Magazine (now Commonwealth Beacon), and she has served on several boards, including the University of Massachusetts, Lawrence Alliance for Education, Beth Israel Lahey Hospital, and Amplify Latinx. She has a bachelor's degree in political science and criminal justice from UMass Boston, and a law degree from Suffolk University.

**Edward Augustus**, who served for three years as the Housing and Livable Communities secretary, stepped down on Feb. 27 to become the CEO of UniBank, which is headquartered in central Massachusetts. In 2023, Augustus became the first secretary of a newly created state housing secretariat, when Gov. **Maura Healey** separated the state's housing and economic development functions into two distinct offices.

Deputy Secretary **Jennifer Maddox** will serve as the interim secretary until next month.

**Devyn MacDonald** joined MIIA as its new risk management project coordinator and trainer on Feb. 23.

MacDonald had previously been an intern at MIIA, working on risk and facilities



Devyn MacDonald

management projects, including assembling a facilities management guide for members. He has also been a substitute teacher in the Taunton Public Schools, an intern at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, and a head

lifeguard and swim instructor for the city of Taunton.

MacDonald has a bachelor's degree in emergency management from the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, where he was an ensign and academy staff duty officer, and a squad leader. He also assisted emergency management officers at the academy with various responsibilities, including tutoring first-year students and planning events. He is expected to receive his master's degree in facilities management from Mass Maritime in May.

**June MacDonald Daley**, a former Barnstable town councillor and Mashpee

■ PEOPLE continued on 27

## Bruce Tobey, former MMA president and Gloucester mayor, dies

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Bruce Tobey, a former mayor and councillor in Gloucester and a former MMA president, died on Feb. 17 at age 73.

Tobey served as Gloucester's interim mayor in 1991, and was later elected to the office, serving from 1994 to 2002. Before becoming mayor, he served three years as a city councillor, and later returned to the council, serving from 2006 to 2014. It was during his second council tenure that he served as the MMA president, in 2008.

Tobey was also involved in other parts of the MMA, serving as president of the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association in 2013, as a member of the MIIA Board of Directors, and as a member of the Local Government Advisory Commission.

Tobey had a lifelong connection to the city he would lead. A graduate of the Gloucester schools, where he was

elected high school class president, Tobey received his bachelor's degree in Russian and Soviet studies from Wesleyan University, and a law degree from Suffolk University. During college and law school, he worked in a fish-processing plant on the Gloucester waterfront.

Having enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard, Tobey served as a lieutenant in the Judge Advocate General Corps in New York City. After returning to Gloucester, he worked as the city solicitor under Mayor Leo Alper before his election to the council. He was also an attorney for the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority in the late 1980s and early 1990s.



Bruce Tobey

Tobey was a chair of the Advisory Council of the National League of Cities, and served on the state's Federal Stimulus Task Force and the Massachusetts Water Infrastructure Finance Commission, as well as on numerous advisory committees for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

After leaving the mayor's office, Tobey earned a master's degree in business administration from Suffolk. After his second tenure on the council, he entered private practice, with a focus on environmental law and wastewater management.

Tobey leaves behind his wife, Patricia, and their four daughters and families. One of his daughters, Pam Tobey, is chief of staff to Amesbury Mayor Kassandra Gove, the current president of the MMA. ●

# People

## PEOPLE

Continued from page 26

public servant, died on Feb. 20 at age 74.

In Barnstable, Daley served on the Town Council in 2012 and 2013, and had been a Town Meeting member and a member of Barnstable's Downtown Hyannis Parking Commission and the Marstons Mills Horse Farm Committee. She was an assistant animal control officer in Barnstable, head of Mashpee's Natural Resources Department, and then a special police officer leading Mashpee's Animal Control Division.

Throughout her career, Daley received numerous recognitions for her work. In 2000, the MMA awarded a Kenneth Pickard Municipal Innovation Award to

the town of Mashpee for "Give Us Shelter," a cable television show hosted by Daley featuring cats in need of adoption.



Ann Powers

**Ann Powers**, a former Arlington Select Board member and town clerk, died on Feb. 16 at age 92.

Powers was elected to the Board of Selectmen in 1973 and served until 1981.

Starting as a clerk-stenographer in the town clerk's office in 1952, she became assistant town clerk in 1954, and served as town clerk

from 1959 to 1968. She returned to the town clerk role from 1984 to 1993. Powers helped form the Instant Committee, a group of women focusing on local charitable and humanitarian projects. She also joined Arlington Cable Access, and volunteered at the Arlington Schools.

Powers's niece-in-law, **Diane Mahon**, currently serves as chair of the Arlington Select Board, according to the news site [YourArlington.com](http://YourArlington.com).

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*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](mailto:jkavanaugh@mma.org).*

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## MIIA

Continued from page 20

Assess — as a practical tool for navigating tense interactions. By starting with self-regulation and moving deliberately through listening and acknowledgment before responding, staff can shift conversations from reactive to constructive and determine appropriate next steps.

### Elevation is not failure

Ritter noted that elevating a difficult situation to a manager or colleague is not a failure. In many cases, elevation reassures constituents that their concerns are being taken seriously, and allows frontline staff to reset emotionally.

Municipalities should ensure that senior staff are accessible when needed and that employees feel supported in asking for help. Ritter and Donovan discussed the importance of alerting colleagues when tense situations arise and checking in afterward. The default, Ritter suggested, should be to step in and support one another — not to avoid confrontation.

### Setting boundaries

The session addressed how to end abusive interactions safely and professionally. Clear, calm boundary-setting is essential, Ritter said. Strategies include stating expectations for respectful communication, using structured responses, and disengaging when necessary.

Practical tools include developing codes of conduct, ensuring panic buttons are available where appropriate, and documenting unusual encounters.

While civility can be encouraged, it cannot be required — a principle affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court in cases involving First Amendment audits. Attorney Lauren Goldberg of KP Law offered guidance in a [2023 MMA training session](#), emphasizing that staff should remain calm, continue conducting business as usual, and avoid engaging in on-the-spot constitutional debates. Employees should focus on observable disruptive behavior, apply policies consistently, and ensure they understand they are supported — reinforcing both professionalism and public confidence.

### Trust experience

Ritter reminded attendees that intuition improves with experience. Over time, the brain gathers data and recognizes patterns more efficiently. Listening to that instinct and acting on it is part of professional wisdom.

For individuals who frequently visit municipal offices with lengthy or repetitive complaints, Ritter and Donovan recommended setting respectful time limits early, summarizing concerns, clarifying what the individual hopes will happen next, and addressing priorities first. Structure, Ritter noted, reduces frustration on both sides.

### Shared responsibility

The workshop emphasized that empathy is foundational to public service. Communities function because people show up for one another, even when interactions are difficult. By strengthening emotional regulation, social awareness, and supportive workplace culture, municipal employees can protect themselves while fostering safer, more constructive public spaces. ●

## DIRECTORS REPORT

Continued from page 2

I, for one, am immensely grateful for the people that do this work. I am thankful to the public works directors, plow drivers, heavy equipment operators and everyone else who plays a role in these challenging

and complex operations. It's also important to call out the good work of private plow drivers, used by many municipalities, who are a critical part of making all of this work.

All told, I hope that the residents of the Commonwealth can find a way to express their gratitude to their local DPW. These

are hard-working folks, and living in New England means that we need people brave enough to climb 8 feet up into a snow fighter to take on whatever Mother Nature has to dish out. The DPWs of the Commonwealth have my thanks, and I hope many more will join me in saying the same. ●

## Women Leading Government to hold annual conference on March 5

Women Leading Government will hold its sixth annual conference on March 5 at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester.

The full-day event is designed for women in appointed positions in local government who are interested in advancing their careers and building their management and leadership skills.

Following an interactive opening session centered on Daniel Pink's "2026: Designed" workbook, the conference will feature a watch party for the [SheLeadsGov virtual summit](#).

The cost is \$60, including brunch. The [agenda and registration are available online](#).

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

Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker at [dbaker@mma.org](mailto:dbaker@mma.org)

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### ONE STOP

Continued from page 5

- [Massachusetts Downtown Initiative](#)
- [Vacant Storefront Program](#)
- [Rural Development Fund](#)
- [Housing Choice Grant Program](#)
- [Community Planning Grant Program](#)
- [HousingWorks Infrastructure Program](#)
- [Underutilized Properties Program](#)
- [Site Readiness Program](#)
- [Brownfields Redevelopment Fund](#)

- [Real Estate Services Technical Assistance](#)

- [TDI Equity Investment Program](#)

This year, Community One Stop is adding two existing state economic development programs to the portal: the [Seaport Economic Council Grant Program](#) and the [MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund](#).

The Seaport Economic Council Grant Program provides capital funds to coastal communities for community planning and investment to stimulate economic development, advance maritime technology development and innovation,

and to construct, enhance and protect coastal assets.

The MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund supports activities related to horizontal infrastructure associated with housing.

Since its launch in 2021, Community One Stop has given nearly 1,500 awards totaling more than \$744 million in grants to 306 communities, including \$227 million to Gateway Cities and \$179 million to rural and small towns.

For more information and application details, visit [www.mass.gov/onestop](http://www.mass.gov/onestop). ●

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### ICE

Continued from page 6

programs from granting ICE access to nonpublic areas without a judicial warrant. These facilities will also be required to issue policies on how their staff and volunteers should interact with or respond to requests from ICE.

#### Houses of worship

The cancellation of the protected areas policy has deterred many immigrants from attending religious services, as reported by religious organizations across

the country. Healey's legislation would codify a statutory privilege against civil arrest for individuals within places of worship while attending services, protecting the First Amendment right of free exercise of religion.

#### Other provisions

In addition to the supplemental appropriations, the governor's bill proposes reforms to veterans benefits access to ensure eligible veterans are able to obtain state benefits even if they are denied federal benefits. There are also

indemnification provisions to protect public employees acting within the scope of their duties in connection with federal investigations, and technical and privacy-related amendments affecting higher education access and student records.

The legislation includes a time-sensitive proposal that would allow for the Joint Hazard Incident Response Team to proactively work together and coordinate for large scale events, such as the World Cup or Tall Ships. ●

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### MVP 2.0

Continued from page 9

Braintree, Buckland, Concord, Dedham, Dover, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Falmouth, Gosnold, Grafton, Lawrence, Marion, Mattapoissett, Mendon, Millbury, Milton, Monterey, Newbury, Newton, Norwood, Sandwich, Shrewsbury, Stow, Wareham,

Westborough, and Weymouth.

Municipalities receiving grants will work with experts in climate resilience and will have an equity partner to help keep equity at the forefront of their plans and projects. They will form a team of community liaisons with strong ties to the populations most affected by climate change.

The MVP program is a priority of ResilientMass, the statewide program to reduce risk and strengthen communities in the face of climate change impacts.

The administration is seeking to double funding for the MVP program, to \$315 million, in its proposed Mass Ready Act, while also allowing nonprofits to apply for grants and partner with municipalities on local projects. ●

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## LOCAL AID

Continued from page 1

high-cost, out-of-district special education services and transportation. To complement this funding, and to meet the projected need for fiscal 2027, the governor proposes an additional \$150 million via a separate “Fair Share” surtax surplus supplemental budget, which was filed alongside House 2.

The MMA will continue to prioritize full funding for Special Education Circuit Breaker reimbursements.

### Charter schools

House 2 proposes to fund charter school mitigation payments at \$200.4 million, a slight increase over the current year. The MMA will continue to advocate for addressing the financial strain that charter schools payments impose on public school districts.

### Rural School Aid

The governor’s budget would boost Rural School Aid by \$8 million, or 67%, over fiscal 2026, to \$20 million. The proposal would expand eligibility to agricultural schools, independent vocational schools, charter schools, and collaboratives.

The MMA will continue to advocate to bring this account closer to the \$60 million recommended by the Commission on the Fiscal Health of Rural

School Districts in its 2022 report, “[A Sustainable Future for Rural Schools.](#)”

### School transportation

House 2 would fund regional school transportation reimbursements at \$112.3 million for fiscal 2027, a \$6 million increase over fiscal 2026. The administration said this represents 87% of eligible local transportation costs.

House 2 includes \$6.8 million for reimbursements for transportation of out-of-district vocational school students, which was funded at \$1 million in fiscal 2026. The administration said this investment would fund 100% of expected costs.

Reimbursements for the transportation of homeless students under the federal McKinney-Vento Act would be funded at \$35.2 million, a \$6.5 million increase.

The MMA will advocate for fully funding school transportation accounts.

### PILOT

The governor’s budget would fund payments-in-lieu-of-taxes for state-owned land at \$55.4 million, an increase of 1.6% (\$851,000) over fiscal 2026. This funding level is intended to hold communities harmless from updated valuation changes.

The MMA continues to advocate for increasing PILOT payments and looks forward to the report from the Governor’s

Commission on PILOT for State-Owned Land, which is set to convene in the near future.

### Outside sections — RMV and delinquent payments

House 2 includes several outside sections that would change the process by which cities and towns may collect outstanding excise taxes, parking ticket payments, and abandoned vehicle fines. The proposal would discontinue the current practice that flags delinquent accounts for non-renewal of associated driver’s licenses and vehicle registrations.

The MMA strongly opposes these sections and continues to voice concerns that ending a critical and effective policy that assists in the collection of needed municipal revenue is unwarranted. Many communities find the current process to be an essential tool to ensure timely payment of motor vehicle excise taxes and recoup delinquent revenues.

### Budget process

Following the Joint Ways and Means Committee hearings, the House is expected to debate its own budget bill in April, with the Senate deliberating its bill in May.

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

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## BREAKFASTS

Continued from page 1

Chapter 90 road and bridge program, and energy affordability legislation.

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

attend.

The free Friday morning meetings will open with a light breakfast and coffee at 8:30 a.m. Introductions will begin shortly thereafter, followed by presentations and Q&A. The meetings will end by 10:15 a.m.

The meetings will be held on the following dates and locations:

- **March 6:** Pittsfield and Sharon

- **March 13:** Clinton and Harwich
  - **March 20:** Boxford and Montague
- MMA members are asked to [register online](#).

For more information, visit [www.mma.org](http://www.mma.org) or contact Daniel Yi at 617-426-7272, ext. 125, or [dyi@mma.org](mailto:dyi@mma.org). ●

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## LAW UPDATES

Continued from page 20

conditions, particularly those related to immigration enforcement and program eligibility. Reviewing internal policies now can help communities avoid conflicts that could jeopardize critical funding or create unintended liability.

- **Immigration enforcement in public buildings:** Panelists said clear protocols can help staff respond appropriately while protecting residents, employees and municipal interests. Key steps include understanding the difference between public and private areas, knowing what constitutes a valid judicial warrant, and documenting any interactions immediately after they occur.

The updates reinforce the importance of planning, staff training, and coordination between legal, administrative, and risk management teams, including municipal insurers and risk management partners, as municipalities navigate an increasingly complex legal environment.

For more information and guidance, municipalities are encouraged to consult with their legal counsel or the [MMLA](#). ●

# Classified Advertisements

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### Executive Director

#### Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative

Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative (SMEC) is seeking a highly qualified and dedicated Executive Director to serve as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Collaborative. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the successful candidate is responsible for the overall planning, development, operation, and performance of the organization, and will inspire, lead, guide, and direct all administrative, supervisory, instructional, and support staff in achieving the highest standards of excellence. The Executive Director ensures that each individual enrolled in the Collaborative is provided with an academically complete, socially meaningful, and personally rewarding education commensurate with their needs. Minimum Qualifications: Minimum of five years of central office experience with a focus on special education and/or district administration; Minimum of five years experience teaching or other relevant direct care experience with students with special needs; Earned master's degree in special education, educational leadership or an allied field; advanced degree preferred; Massachusetts DESE licensure as an Administrator of Special Education and/or Superintendent of Schools. Salary: \$150,000 to \$170,000, depending on experience and subject to negotiation. This is a year-round position. Benefits Eligible (Health, Dental, Vision, Life Insurances, 457b/403b). This position qualifies for the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System (MTRS). Local travel between programs is required to support students and staff at different school buildings. Interviews are tentatively scheduled to take place during the weeks of March 23 and March 30. Please review the complete job description and required qualifications at [SchoolSpring.com](http://SchoolSpring.com), Job ID: 5524573, or the SMEC Careers page at [smecollaborative.org/careers/](http://smecollaborative.org/careers/). Application package must include: a cover letter indicating interest in the position; a current resume; a minimum of three recent letters of professional reference; college transcripts indicating degrees earned; documentation of professional licensure. To ensure full consideration and confidentiality, please submit all application materials via email to: Audrey Rodrigues, Human Resources Manager, [arodrigues@smecollaborative.org](mailto:arodrigues@smecollaborative.org), by 12 p.m. on March 9. EOE

### Director of Municipal Services

#### Town of Milford

The town of Milford is seeking a Director of Municipal Services. This position is responsible for: Planning, organizing, budgeting, directing, approving, staffing, supervising and leading departmental resources for the following: the construction, maintenance, and repair of town streets, bridges, dams, buildings, vehicles/equipment, sidewalks, storm drains, and related structures and MS4 Stormwater compliance. Overseeing Transfer Station operations, solid waste pickup, town-wide vehicle repair and maintenance, decorative streetlights, traffic lights, school grounds maintenance, and storm emergencies. Overall operations and communications of the Municipal Maintenance Department. An associate degree or two years of business or technical school with a

minimum of seven years of previous experience is required. A bachelor's degree in public administration or engineering is preferred. This position is considered an on-call 24/7 Public Safety Official. View the full job description at [www.milfordma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=45](http://www.milfordma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=45). This salaried position's pay range is \$115,387 to \$155,773 per year. Interested candidates should send a resume and cover letter to [HumanResources@townofmilford.com](mailto:HumanResources@townofmilford.com).

### Town Manager

#### Town of Cohasset

Cohasset, Massachusetts (pop. 8,400), is seeking a proactive, proven community leader, who is committed to organizational excellence to serve as the next Town Manager. The new Town Manager will be following a respected municipal professional Town Manager who is leaving to pursue an opportunity in another community after 12 years of dedicated service to Cohasset. The town is a quintessential New England seacoast community located on the upper South Shore bordered by Hingham, Hull and Scituate and is approximately 20 miles from Boston. The town is serviced by the MBTA and has commuter rail service to Boston. Cohasset is a full-service municipality, with an Open Town Meeting form of government and is led by a five-member Select Board and Town Manager who operates under the guidance and authority of the Town Manager Act of 1997. This is a politically and financially stable community. The town is known for its conservative budgeting practices, both revenues and expenditures. The operating budget for FY26, for the town and schools, is \$61.2 million, with 225 town FTEs including seasonal hires. In addition, the town has substantial reserves and an investor's grade bond rating of AAA from Standard & Poor's rating agency. The successful candidate will have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in political science, business, or public administration (master's preferred); Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official designation preferred, at least five years' progressive municipal management, business or not-for-profit experience and demonstrated strong

leadership, or relevant combination of experience and education. Starting salary range \$180,000 to \$225,000 commensurate with qualifications; the town also provides a competitive benefits package. Cohasset is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate based upon race, religion, color, national origin, gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, sexual orientation), age, status as a protected veteran, status as an individual with a disability, or other applicable legally protected characteristics. For further information potential candidates are directed to the Municipal Resources Inc. website at [www.mrigov.com/career](http://www.mrigov.com/career) to contact Alan Gould, President, Municipal Resources Inc. at 603-279-0352, x 320. To apply, submit a resume and cover letter, in confidence, as a single PDF attachment to [recruitment@mrigov.com](mailto:recruitment@mrigov.com) by 8 a.m. on Monday, March 16.

### Senior Planner

#### Municipal Housing Partnership

Municipal Housing Partnership is hiring a Senior Planner who will support collaborative efforts to advance affordable housing development, preservation, and stewardship in Massachusetts. Key responsibilities include building strong relationships with municipal stakeholders and community groups, delivering targeted training and workshops, and representing the organization's housing policy agenda through active participation in committees and industry forums. In this role, you will bring strong planning expertise and a collaborative spirit to guide municipalities, regional agencies, and community groups as they navigate housing policy, development opportunities, and local planning tools. Full posting available on our [Careers page](#). Cover letter and resume may be submitted via the online portal accessed on our [Career page](#).

### Town Treasurer

#### Town of Brookfield

The town of Brookfield is seeking qualified

■ CLASSIFIEDS *continued on 31*

## 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](http://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.

### April Beacon

Deadline: March 26  
Publication: April 1

### May Beacon

Deadline: April 27  
Publication: May 1

### Placing an ad

You may use our convenient online form at [www.mma.org/municipal-marketplace/add-listing/](http://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](http://www.mma.org) for details.

# Classified Advertisements

## CLASSIFIEDS

Continued from page 30

applicants for the full-time (30 hours/wk) position of Town Treasurer. 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 have working knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite, be bondable, and must become certified within three years. For full job description, visit [brookfieldma.us](http://brookfieldma.us). Those interested should submit cover letter and resume to: [selectmen@brookfieldma.us](mailto:selectmen@brookfieldma.us). Applications accepted until positions are filled. The town of Brookfield is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

### Town Engineer Town of Walpole

The town of Walpole seeks a qualified professional to serve as Town Engineer. This full-time, non-union position works under the direction of the Director of Public Works and supervises Engineering department staff in providing services to town departments and residents. Responsibilities include planning, assigning, and overseeing engineering projects primarily related to municipal public works construction. The role requires strong knowledge of civil engineering principles, construction methods, and inspection practices. Experience with surveying instruments, computer-aided drafting, geographic information systems, hydrological analysis, and stormwater management is essential. Candidates must hold a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and have at least five years of experience in municipal public works engineering or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to manage staff and oversee varied engineering functions. Certification as a Registered Professional Engineer and a valid state driver's license are required. Salary range: \$103,730 to \$136,869, depending on qualifications and experience. For a complete job description, visit [www.walpole-ma.gov](http://www.walpole-ma.gov). Position open until filled. To apply, submit a cover letter, resume, and town of Walpole employment application to: Town of Walpole, HR, 135 School St., Walpole, MA 02081 or email [apply@walpole-ma.gov](mailto:apply@walpole-ma.gov).

## 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 part-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. 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. 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 the 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](mailto:hr@mma.org).

*The MMA and MIIA are committed to diversity in the workplace and are proud to be equal opportunity employers. Diverse candidates are encouraged to apply. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, genetics information, pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition, disability, age, or military or veteran status.*

## 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](http://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](mailto:energy@mma.org).

### Executive Recruiting, Management and Governance Consulting Services

Community Paradigm Associates provides comprehensive professional services to public sector, private sector, and not-for-profit clients, including organizational and management studies, executive recruiting, operational analyses, personnel studies, compensation and classification plans, charter development, strategic planning, leadership training, and facilitation services. Community Paradigm Associates has a team of seasoned associates with expertise in all aspects of municipal government. For more information, contact Principal Bernard Lynch at 978-621-6733 or [BLynch@CommunityParadigm.com](mailto:BLynch@CommunityParadigm.com); [www.communityparadigm.com](http://www.communityparadigm.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](http://mgt.us), post to our job board at [govhrjobs.com](http://govhrjobs.com), or contact our team of experts at 847-380-3240.

### 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](mailto:rickwhite58@verizon.net); 781-572-6332; [www.grouxwhiteconsulting.com](http://www.grouxwhiteconsulting.com).

### 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

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# Classified Advertisements

## CLASSIFIEDS

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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](http://www.petrinilaw.com) or contact Christopher Petrini at [cpetrini@petrinilaw.com](mailto:cpetrini@petrinilaw.com) or 508-665-4310.

### 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](http://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.

### 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](mailto:info@mrigov.com).

### Municipal Support Services

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

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

VADAR Systems provides financial management software to more than 100 Massachusetts municipalities. Our accounting, cloud, utility and collections applications are designed exclusively for Massachusetts municipalities by Massachusetts end users. The VADAR Cloud maximizes efficiency with 24/7 secure, remote access to all your applications from any device. Our user support offers unparalleled expertise. Proudly serving Massachusetts for 20-plus years. For a free on-site demonstration, please contact us at 877-823-2700 or [sales@vadarsystems.com](mailto:sales@vadarsystems.com). Learn more at [www.VADARsystems.com](http://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](http://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](mailto:lgoldberg@k-plaw.com).

### Town Counsel Services

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

### Human Resources Consulting

Human Resources Services Inc. provides a full range of human resource management consulting services to Massachusetts local governments and other public agencies. Specialization includes compensation/classification, performance appraisal, job analysis and evaluation, job descriptions, salary/benefits and total compensation surveys and analytics, personnel policies/handbooks, staffing and organizational

management studies, HR audits and assessments, HR training services, recruitment and selection services, web-based HR services, and special projects. Please contact Sandy Stapczynski, President, Human Resources Services Inc., 9 Bartlet St., Suite 186, Andover, MA 01810; 978-474-0200; [hrcsconsulting@comcast.net](mailto:hrcsconsulting@comcast.net); or visit [www.hrcsconsultinginc.com](http://www.hrcsconsultinginc.com). WBE certified.

### Municipal Accounting and Consulting Services

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

### Town Counsel/Legal Services

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

### Public Management Consultants

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

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

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

The website is a valuable resource for news updates in between issues of The Beacon.

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

# Calendar



# The Beacon

Massachusetts Municipal Association

3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108

## 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

**11 MMA-Suffolk certificate program**, virtual information session, 10-11 a.m. Visit [www.mma.org](http://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.-3:30 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

**24 Massachusetts Municipal Communicators**, virtual meeting, noon-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre

**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, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Publick House, Sturbridge. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Martin Davis

## APRIL

**8 MMA webinar**, MunEnergy program, 12-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre

**9 Association of Town Finance Committees**, regional meeting, 6-8 p.m., Middlesex or Essex County. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

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

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

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

**14 Local Government Advisory Commission**, hybrid meeting, 1-2 p.m. Contact: MMA Executive Assistant Elanienne Coste

**15 MMA webinar**, wishlist of the internal customer, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre

**16 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources**, joint meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Hawthorne Hotel, Salem. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker and MMA Member Program Coordinator Martin Davis

**16 Association of Town Finance Committees**, regional meeting, 5-7 p.m., Hadley Council on Aging. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

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

## MAY

**2 Massachusetts Select Board Association**, Western and Rural Massachusetts Conference, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., The Delaney House, Holyoke. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Martin Davis

**7 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources**, labor relations seminar, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Devens Common Center, Devens. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Martin Davis

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

**12 MMA Board of Directors**, 10-11:45 a.m., hybrid, MMA office, Boston. Contact: MMA Executive Assistant Elanienne Coste

**12 Local Government Advisory Commission**, hybrid meeting, 1-2 p.m. Contact: MMA Executive Assistant Elanienne Coste

**13-15 Massachusetts Mayors' Association**, spring conference. Contact: MMA Membership and Project Assistant Katherine Christy

*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](mailto:editor@mma.org).*

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**Kristianna Lapierre** can be reached at [klapierre@mma.org](mailto:klapierre@mma.org)

**For more information, visit [www.mma.org](http://www.mma.org).**