

Jeff Speck is Connect 351 keynote

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

“Walkability Wizard” Jeff Speck, a renowned planner and author who focuses on making downtowns of all sizes more economically robust and enjoyable, will share his insights as the keynote speaker during Connect 351 on Jan. 22 in Boston.

Speck’s TED Talks have been viewed more than 6 million times, and his books include “Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time,” which argues that walkability is the single key factor for making American communities thrive.

A partner with the Brookline-based design and consulting firm Speck Dempsey, Speck works with municipalities to design places where people stop to spend time instead of just driving by. The Belmont native emphasizes the importance of walkability over drivability to create healthier, more sustainable

and more economically resilient communities.

For more than three decades, Speck has worked with communities in nearly every state, but he told the MMA recently that he particularly loves working in his home state, with its diverse mix of cities, suburbs and small towns. And while people often associate the concept of walkability with dense urban centers, Speck said that his principles apply to all municipalities, even if the techniques vary by community type.

“Whether your community is rural, urban, or somewhere in between, local leaders have an opportunity to make their municipality more economically vibrant and livable by enhancing walkability,” Speck said. “At Connect 351, I’ll



Jeff Speck

be talking about the steps that cities and towns can take to be more walkable, and how walkability is a key to achieving so many of the other goals we have for the places we call home.”

For Speck, walkability transcends just walking — it represents a framework that weaves together numerous elements of a healthy, thriving community, including the availability of diverse housing options, robust economic development, the proximity of services to housing, traffic safety, environmental sustainability, equity, a strong social fabric, and improved health outcomes.

Speck began his career at a Miami-based architecture firm now called DPZ CoDesign, where he spent a decade and co-authored the book “Suburban Nation,” about the effects of development sprawl, with the firm’s founders, Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk.

■ **KEYNOTE** *continued on 29*

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Development bills have zoning, open meeting, liquor law provisions

By Ali DiMatteo

Economic development bills passed by the House and Senate in July, which include more than \$500 million in funding and a wide range of policy provisions, have been sent to a conference committee to reconcile the two versions.

The [House approved its bill](#) on July 8, and the Senate took its action on July 23. The [MMA has sent a letter of testimony to the conference committee](#) detailing key municipal concerns and priorities.

Zoning

The House and Senate bills differ in their approaches, but each branch included proposed by-right zoning changes that would significantly impact cities and towns.

The Senate bill would allow duplexes by right in residential zones, while the House



Economic development bills passed by the House and Senate in July, which include policy provisions concerning zoning, alcohol, and public meetings, as well as funding to support the vitality of downtowns, like this one in Newburyport, have been sent to a conference committee for reconciliation.

bill would mandate multifamily housing by right on land owned by religious institutions.

■ **DEVELOPMENT BILL** *continued on 30*

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

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Select Board Member, Sharon

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

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Liz Sullivan, Town Administrator, Dennis

Michelle Wu, Mayor, Boston

Executive Director's Report

As autumn arrives, essential municipal services face strain

September brings a familiar rhythm to Massachusetts. The air turns crisp, municipal fields fill with youth sports leagues, leaves begin to turn, and our communities reopen their school doors to welcome students back for a new academic year.

These unmistakable signs of autumn are more than just seasonal shifts — they are a living demonstration of the vital role that municipal government plays in our everyday lives. From paving the roads that school buses travel on and providing school resource officers, to maintaining public parks, funding classroom instruction, and preserving public safety during fall community events, municipal services form the bedrock of the autumn season.

Behind these cherished traditions and essential operations, however, lies an increasingly difficult reality: Municipal budgets are stretched to their absolute limits. Cities and towns across the Commonwealth are confronting a severe fiscal squeeze driven by persistent inflation, rising healthcare and energy costs, escalating capital project expenses, and escalating demands for local services.

While local leaders work hard to minimize negative impacts caused by tight budgets, the impacts of unavoidable layoffs and service cuts in fiscal 2027 are now being felt by residents in many



By Adam
Chapdelaine

communities. Some school staff positions went unfilled, for example, and library hours have been curtailed.

Because local budgets rely heavily on property taxes — which are subject to strict legal caps — municipalities have limited tools to generate new revenue to keep pace with these skyrocketing expenses. As a result, maintaining the

level of service our residents expect and deserve is becoming more challenging with each passing fiscal year.

In the face of these severe budgetary pressures, the MMA is already laying the groundwork for the road ahead. While fiscal 2028 does not officially begin until next July, the state budget process starts now, as state (and local) leaders begin shaping their fiscal priorities. Throughout the upcoming fall and winter, the MMA will be actively advocating at the State House to ensure local needs are front and center in the fiscal 2028 state budget framework.

Our early advocacy focus will center on the work of the Foundation Budget Review Commission, which will be determining the approach to Chapter 70 school aid now that the Student Opportunity Act has expired, continuing to expand Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) in response

■ **DIRECTOR'S REPORT** *continued on 21*



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

DLS issues FY26 winter relief funding guidance

By Adrienne Núñez

In July, the Division of Local Services' Bureau of Accounts issued a bulletin providing guidance regarding procedures to amortize fiscal 2026 snow and ice deficits and related special accounting treatment of Commonwealth reimbursements related to fiscal 2026 snow and ice expenses.

[BUL 2026-04](#) offers revised guidance pursuant to a [fiscal 2026 supplemental budget law](#) (Sec. 36 of [Ch. 101 of the Acts of 2026](#)), which included winter relief assistance for cities and towns, an initiative that was a top MMA priority for Fair Share surtax spending.

The supplemental budget allows cities and towns to amortize snow and ice deficits from the 2025-26 winter season for up to three years, and appropriates \$100 million to reimburse cities and towns for snow

and ice management costs, or infrastructure repairs, resulting from harsh winter conditions. The funding will be distributed based on two formulas, with \$80 million to be distributed based on road miles and \$20 million to be distributed to offset costs incurred in communities hardest hit by this past winter's blizzard.

The DLS bulletin provides accounting guidance for the new [Winter Recovery Assistance Program](#) (WRAP) program reimbursements, in addition to amortization processes.

The DLS website offers additional information on [provisions for emergency expenditures under Chapter 44, Section 31](#).

The DLS also offers [searchable Municipal Finance Legal Guidance online](#).

For additional support regarding WRAP



Following last winter's snowstorm activity, the Division of Local Services' Bureau of Accounts has issued guidance regarding amortizing fiscal 2026 snow and ice deficits and associated accounting of state reimbursements related to fiscal 2026 snow and ice expenses.

apportionments and reimbursement processes for eligible projects, cities and towns are advised to contact their local aid district contacts at the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. ●

WRAP program accepting applications for winter-related needs

A state program designed to help municipalities address winter-related transportation infrastructure needs is accepting applications through Sept. 4 for extreme hardship cases.

The [Winter Recovery Assistance Program](#) provides supplemental funding to cities and towns for transportation infrastructure improvements needed as a result of severe winter weather. A [fiscal 2026 Fair Share supplemental budget](#) includes \$100 million for the program.

The WRAP funding will be distributed in two categories:

- \$80 million to be distributed by a formula based on each municipality's locally owned lane mileage
- \$20 million to be awarded through a grant program to communities facing extraordinary hardship from winter storms

For communities seeking infrastructure assistance due to extreme winter weather, the Massachusetts Department

of Transportation opened the [WRAP Extraordinary Hardship Funding Grant Application](#) on July 22.

Municipalities have until Sept. 4 to apply for the \$20 million in funding. The program is open to all municipalities, but projects must be located on municipally owned roadways, and each community may submit only one application for the funds.

The [WRAP program website](#) has complete information. ●

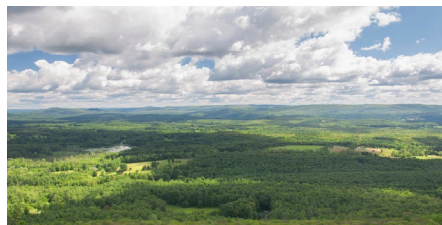
State continues PILOT listening sessions

The Commission on PILOT for State-Owned Land is continuing its series of listening sessions this fall to solicit feedback on the state program.

The commission hosted five in-person sessions in July, and will host three more in September, along with two virtual sessions in October.

The Commonwealth owns more than half a million acres of land, including state parks and forests, wildlife management areas, beaches, and military training facilities. Because this property is exempt from local property taxation, the state administers a program that provides payments to municipalities in lieu of taxation.

The commission is seeking input from municipal leaders, residents and other interested stakeholders, and findings



The Commission on PILOT for State-Owned Land will hold additional listening sessions this fall to solicit feedback on the state program that makes payments to municipalities in lieu of taxation for state-owned properties.

from the listening sessions will inform the commission's recommendations.

In-person sessions will be held as follows:

- Sept. 15, 6-7:30 p.m., Orange Town Hall

- Sept. 22, 2-3:30 p.m., Sterling Town Hall
- Sept. 24, 2-3:30 p.m., Groton Center

Virtual sessions will be held on Oct. 1, 5-6:30 p.m., and Oct. 6, 3-4:30 p.m.

[Registration is available online](#), though walk-ins are welcome.

In advance of each session, the commission will send out materials that provide an overview of the PILOT program. Attendees are encouraged to ask questions during the session.

Those unable to attend are invited to share their thoughts with the commission using [an online form](#).

Gov. Maura Healey established the Commission on PILOT for State-Owned Land last August through [Executive Order 645](#). ●

Connect 351 program is taking shape

By Owen Page

Excitement continues to build for Connect 351, the MMA's annual conference, and attendee registration will open on Oct. 1.

Connect 351 will return to Boston's Seaport District, at the Menino Convention and Exhibition Center, on Jan. 21 through 23.

The conference offers a diverse program of events, including timely, information-packed workshops, inspiring speakers, countless networking opportunities, membership business meetings, receptions, awards programs, and other engaging activities.

"Walkability Wizard" Jeff Speck will be the conference's keynote speaker, discussing the benefits of walkable communities and planning strategies on Friday morning, Jan. 22.

Exhibitors are already filling the rows of the annual Trade Show, where more than 250 companies, nonprofits, and government agencies will be showcasing the latest innovations, technology and services of interest to municipal officials. Sponsorship opportunities are open as well.

Applications for the MMA's Municipal Innovation, Municipal Website, and Town Report Contest awards are open through Oct. 30, with awards to be presented during Connect 351.

The 2026 conference will open on the afternoon of Thursday, Jan. 21, with the



Amherst Recreation Outreach Director Becky Demling (center) chats with colleagues during Connect 351 last January in Boston.

Trade Show, a block of six workshops, two professional development and career networking sessions, including a Women Leading Government session with Boston Globe reporter Emily Sweeney, a reception on the Trade Show floor, and a Belonging in Municipal Affairs reception (held at the Omni Hotel next door). The Trade Show and Headshot Station for members will open at 2 p.m.

The Trade Show and conference programming continues all day on Friday, with an opening general session, two blocks of informative workshops (six in each), the annual Women Elected Municipal Officials Luncheon, networking opportunities, and

other events.

Saturday opens with MIIA's Annual Business Meeting and Breakfast, member business meetings, and the MMA Annual Business Meeting, with the conference concluding at 12:30 p.m. with a networking lunch.

The MMA continues to develop the program, and updates, including hotel information, will be available on www.mma.org in the coming weeks and months.

Trade Show

The Trade Show will be open on Thursday, Jan. 21, from 2 to 5:30 p.m., and on Friday, Jan. 22, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. An opening reception will be held on Thursday from 4 to 5:30 p.m. The Trade Show will not be open on Saturday, Jan. 23.

More information will be available soon on the series of Learning Labs that will be held on the Trade Show floor.

The Trade Show web page has complete information, including sponsorship opportunities, a contract for exhibit space, a new exhibit hall floor plan, and the list of exhibitors and sponsors from the 2026 event. The MMA will update the online floor plan as exhibit contracts are received, and sponsors and exhibitors will be updated continually on the event website.

If you know of a company that would be interested in sponsoring or exhibiting but is not currently listed, contact the MMA's event and development specialist, Stacey Compton-Maga, at tradeshow@mma.org or 617-426-7272, ext. 154. ●



Mayors discuss tourism

Kate Fox, executive director of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, talks to mayors from across the state during a meeting of the Massachusetts Mayors' Association on July 22 in Revere. Topics included the recent World Cup, this year's 250th anniversary celebrations, available grant programs, the Made Possible campaign, and the office's partnership with local communities.

\$45M awarded to protect against climate impacts

The Healey-Driscoll administration on Aug. 13 announced more than \$45 million in grants for 97 projects that will help communities across Massachusetts better withstand flooding, extreme heat, coastal erosion, and other climate impacts.

The funding, awarded through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' new [Environment and Climate \(ECO\) One Stop program](#), will help strengthen infrastructure, restore and enhance natural resources, and improve public safety while making it easier to access state funding for climate resilience projects.

The administration announced the first round of ECO One Stop grant awards at Winter Island Park in Salem, where funding will support coastal bank restoration that protects the shoreline from storm damage and erosion. The project will improve public safety and pedestrian access, restore native vegetation, and preserve archaeological and historic resources dating back 6,000 years.

The administration said the funding will help communities protect residents, strengthen roads, dams, coastlines and other critical infrastructure, and lower costs.

The inaugural ECO One Stop pilot round includes seven state grant programs supporting projects that reduce climate risks and strengthen communities, including [Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness \(MVP\) Action](#), [Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal](#), [Coastal Resilience](#), [Coastal Habitat and Water Quality](#), [Cooling Corridors](#), [Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance](#), [Culvert Replacement Training](#)



Culverts are among the climate resiliency projects being funded by \$45 million in grants awarded through the new Environment and Climate One Stop program.

[Site](#), and [Planning Assistance](#).

A total of 97 projects received awards, including 71 municipal projects, 14 regional planning agencies, seven nonprofit organizations, two Tribes, and three other public entities.

Funded projects include:

- **South Hadley:** Removing outdated dam control structures and restoring wetlands to reduce flood risk
- **Chaubunagungamaug Band of Nipmuck Indians:** Designing a Community Climate Resilience Hub
- **Plymouth:** Adding green infrastructure and tree plantings downtown to reduce flooding and extreme heat
- **Westborough:** Designing replacements of three undersized culverts to improve stormwater management
- **Devens:** Planting trees near critical community facilities to provide relief from extreme heat
- **Haverhill:** Developing a sustainable water supply plan to support future housing and economic growth

Gov. signs terms bill for transportation bond law

Gov. Maura Healey has signed a bill that outlines the state borrowing terms to fund a \$1.4 billion fiscal 2027 [transportation bond law](#).

The transportation bond package authorizes \$300 million for the Chapter 90 local road and bridge maintenance program, as well as the following infrastructure investments:

- \$500 million for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Bridge and Pavement Lifecycle Asset Management Programs
- \$200 million for transportation improvements that support expanded

housing development

- \$200 million for a new Parkway Resilience Improvement and Safety Modernization (PRISM) investment program
- \$200 million for the MBTA's Rail Reliability Program

The Legislature sent the terms bill to the governor on July 31, and she signed it on Aug. 6.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has been accepting applications for Chapter 90-eligible projects, but reimbursements could not be issued

- **Revere:** Launching a residential flood resilience retrofit program
- **Boston:** Restoring wetlands and streams at the Boston Nature Center
- **Martha's Vineyard:** Creating a comprehensive salt marsh restoration strategy across the island

Visit the [ECO One Stop grants page](#) for the full list of projects.

"The ECO One Stop program combines the power of many of the state's major environmental grant programs in one place, so municipalities can act quickly and think creatively about how to invest in their communities," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper in a prepared statement. "Through this investment, we're making sure that water has a safe place to go during downpours, that communities can cool down when temperatures rise, and that our most treasured natural resources are preserved for generations to come."

Energy and Environmental Affairs sought extensive feedback from applicants about their experience using the new system, and will be working to incorporate improvements into the next 2027 grant round.

ECO One Stop is a key initiative under [ResilientMass](#), the statewide climate adaptation plan to reduce risk and strengthen communities in the face of climate change impacts. The program is modeled on the success of [Community One Stop for Growth](#), a similar combined grant program that focuses on economic development and housing. ●



Gov. Maura Healey has signed a law outlining borrowing terms for a fiscal 2027 transportation bond law that includes \$300 million for the Chapter 90 local road and bridge maintenance program.

until the governor signed the associated terms bill.

– Violet Gehr

Gov. Healey signs PROTECT Act into law

By Ali DiMatteo

Joined by Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll and surrounded by dozens of state and local leaders and immigrant advocates, Gov. Maura Healey signed the [PROTECT Act](#) into law on Aug. 5 in Chelsea.

The law is aimed at keeping federal immigration enforcement out of “sensitive places” such as courthouses, schools, childcare centers and healthcare facilities.

The House and Senate passed separate versions of the legislation in late July, and a six-member House-Senate conference committee produced a compromise bill reconciling differences in the two versions.

The bill signed by the governor used the broader scope of protected areas offered in the Senate’s version, thereby restricting warrantless arrests by immigration enforcement officers in courthouses, schools, childcare centers and healthcare facilities.

These establishments will need to create guidance and model policies on interactions related to law enforcement agents, with each school district ensuring it has a written emergency response plan related to these interactions by Sept. 1 or the first day of school, whichever is earlier.

The law codifies the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court’s “Lunn” decision by reinforcing that local officers cannot arrest or detain a person based on an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainer alone. It also prohibits any new 287(g) agreements for civil immigration enforcement. The state’s only current 287(g) agreement between the Department of Correction and ICE is allowed to remain intact.

The law also prevents officers from inquiring about immigration status during routine policing, and creates new civil liability for ICE agents by allowing victims



Gov. Maura Healey signs the PROTECT Act at an Aug. 5 event in Chelsea attended by Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll and dozens of state and local leaders and immigrant advocates. (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor’s Press Office)

of unjustified actions to sue them in state court.

The original legislation was filed earlier this year by members of the Black and Latino Legislative Caucus and is closely related to an [executive action](#) by Gov. Healey to restrict the activity of federal ICE agents on state property. ●

State order bans sale of kratom products

By John Ouellette

An executive order banning the manufacture, distribution and possession of unregulated kratom products across Massachusetts took effect on Aug. 28.

Kratom is a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia, the leaves of which contain active chemical compounds that act on the brain’s opioid receptors, [according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency](#).

Kratom products are widely sold in smoke shops, convenience stores and gas stations in various forms, with claims that they boost energy, relieve pain, manage mood, or help with opioid withdrawal.

Products can vary significantly in their potency and ingredients, according to the administration, making it difficult for consumers to know what they are purchasing or the potential health risks. Kratom has been associated with a range of health effects and can lead to physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms similar to opioid withdrawal.

Gov. Maura Healey announced her emergency order, along with new public education efforts about health risks and efforts to connect people with treatment and recovery services, on Aug. 13. The order took effect two weeks later.

“Customers should be able to trust that the products being sold in stores are safe,”

Healey said in a prepared statement.

The emergency order, issued by Massachusetts Public Health Commissioner Robbie Goldstein, temporarily places all forms of kratom into Schedule I under Massachusetts law, making it unlawful to possess or sell without a Massachusetts Controlled Substances Registration. The order took effect following a 14-day notice period and will remain in effect for up to one year.

The administration said the order gives local boards of health and other municipal officials additional authority to take enforcement action against retailers selling kratom products. Under state law (Ch. 94C, Sec. 2A), municipalities will be authorized to take enforcement action against licensed commercial establishments that continue to sell kratom. Enforcement actions include, but are not limited to, cease-and-desist notices, citations, and suspension of municipal licenses or permits, including permits to operate, according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Four Massachusetts retailers that sell kratom have filed a lawsuit in Suffolk County Superior Court seeking to block the emergency order, contending that Goldstein lacks the authority to place kratom into Schedule I, failed to satisfy state requirements to justify the emergency order,



An executive order effectively banned the sale and possession of kratom products across the state as of Aug. 28.

and too broadly applied the order to all kratom products rather than just synthetic derivatives.

The DPH said it is providing information and guidance to local boards of health, health care providers and substance use treatment programs about the new restrictions, the health risks associated with kratom, and available treatment and recovery services.

The DPH will hold an informational webinar for local public health officials to support implementation of the order, and provides resources at mass.gov/kratom.

Treatment is available for people experiencing kratom withdrawal or dependence. Individuals seeking help for themselves or others can call or text “HOPE” to 800-327-5050 to reach the Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. ●

Energy affordability legislation goes to conference

By Josie Ahlberg

Separate bills passed by the House and the Senate to address rising energy costs and the state's evolving energy needs are now in a conference committee, which was established in mid-July to reconcile differences between the bills.

The House and Senate conferees held their first meeting on July 29.

The [Senate passed its version](#) of a sweeping energy affordability bill on July 1, following the [House's passage of its bill](#) in March.

The House and Senate bills take different approaches to addressing energy affordability while continuing to make progress on clean energy efforts statewide.

The House bill ([H. 5175](#)) focused on changes to the Mass Save program, which provides services, rebates, incentives, and training to promote energy efficiency statewide. The bill would create nearly \$1 billion in savings by reducing funding for the program through 2027.

The Senate bill ([S. 3166](#)) would narrow the scope of the Gas System Enhancement Program, which is designed to repair or replace aged natural gas infrastructure, in order to realize \$1.46 billion in savings.



A legislative conference committee is discussing separate bills passed by the House and the Senate to address rising energy costs and the state's evolving energy needs.

These proposals would result in lowering related surcharges on consumer bills.

The House and Senate bills also include several policy provisions relevant to cities and towns.

Both bills would 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 provision would not impact municipal aggregation programs.

The Senate bill would strike a section of state law that caps the amount of solar generation — currently set at 10 megawatts — for which a city or town may obtain net metering credits. Rather than removing the cap, the House's bill would raise it to 20 megawatts.

Both the Senate and House bills would require municipalities to use an online platform created by the state and designed to streamline and accelerate the permitting process for small, residential solar arrays. If a municipality does not use the state's platform, an equivalent would have to provide baseline efficiencies (including online submission for permit documents and forms and electronic approvals).

The Senate bill would require the state platform to be provided at no cost to cities and towns, and includes more explicit responsibilities for the Department of Energy Resources to facilitate the use of the platform.

The Senate adopted an amendment supported by the MMA to allow cities and towns to use Section 53G consultants for the new local clean energy siting and permitting process.

On July 29, the MMA submitted [a letter](#) outlining municipal priorities to the conference committee.

Gov. Maura Healey got the process started last year when she [filed a bill](#) that sought to lower energy costs for consumers, bring more energy into Massachusetts, increase utility accountability and promote innovation. ([See the bill's website for details.](#)) ●

DLS 'What's New in Municipal Law' seminars are Sept. 17 and 24

The Division of Local Services legal staff will offer the annual "What's New in Municipal Law" seminars for local officials on Sept. 17 in Waltham and Sept. 24 in Holyoke.

The DLS will also offer virtual seminars that replicate the in-person ones, in four parts, on Sept. 28 through Oct. 1, from 10 a.m. to noon each day.

The in-person seminars, which will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., will kick off with a general morning session highlighting recent legislation and court decisions pertaining to local government, including Appellate Tax Board cases, and DLS updates.

The afternoon will feature three concurrent workshops on:

- **Treasurer/collector issues**, including betterments, credit cards and reward points, obscure liens and related processes, third-party requests



for shared bank accounts, federal tariff taxes and U.S. Postal Service changes

- **Accounting issues**, including betterments, credit cards and reward points; obscure liens and related processes; third-party requests for shared bank accounts; and federal tariff taxes and Postal Service changes
- **Assessing issues**, including the proposed Mass Ready Act (environmental bond bill), veteran exemptions including the implementation of the HERO Act,

Postal Service changes, state-owned land commission, trust issues, solar panels on parsonages, legislative proposals, and the Servicemember Relief Act and Clause 56

The Waltham session will be held at the Bentley University Conference Center, and the Holyoke session will be held at the Log Cabin Banquet and Meeting House. Lunch will be served.

Local officials can [register online](#) for the in-person and virtual sessions. Space is limited, and registrations must be received by Sept. 10.

The registration fee is \$100.

Questions can be directed to dlsregistration@dor.state.ma.us.

The Massachusetts Association Assessing Officers will grant four hours of continuing education credits to assessors attending this program. ●

MMHR fall conference to focus on employee benefits

Employee benefits will be the focus of the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources' annual fall conference on Sept. 17 and 18 in Falmouth.

The conference will open with a keynote workshop about mental and emotional health led by Alicia Davis, partner at Transformative Leadership Strategies, who brings 30-plus years of experience with well-being and leadership development. Attendees will gain practical strategies for supporting their own well-being and will learn how to cultivate resilience, manage stress effectively, and create a healthier, more sustainable approach to leadership.

Thursday afternoon will include a session on retirement accounts led by representatives from Empower along with Littleton Human Resources Director Michelle Vibert. The session will cover strategies for improving employee retirement readiness, compliance and risk mitigation, updates to SECURE 2.0, and Roth and 457B accounts.

The final Thursday workshop, led by Springfield Benefits Manager Cameo



Alicia Davis



Cameo Restrepo



Caitlyn Julius

Restrepo and Springfield Assistant HR Director and Benefits Administrator Caitlyn Julius, will explore the essentials of benefits auditing.

Thursday will conclude a networking reception.

The conference will resume on Friday with a networking breakfast at 8 a.m.

The morning will feature a session on strategies for Medicare and healthcare planning led by Shrewsbury Benefits Coordinator Nick Hawes, followed by a panel discussion on employee wellness initiatives.

The conference will conclude with a session on employee open enrollment led by representatives from the Employers Association of the NorthEast.

The agenda will also feature networking activities and a legislative update by

MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman.

Registration and a networking breakfast will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday.

The conference will be held at the Sea Crest Beach Hotel. The registration fee is \$400 for the full conference, or \$250 for Thursday only.

The agenda and registration link are available at www.mma.org.

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

MMA hosting Fiscal Summit for all members on Oct. 1

The MMA will hold its second annual Fiscal Summit on Oct. 1 to examine the fiscal challenges facing municipalities across the Commonwealth.

The event is being hosted by the Massachusetts Select Board Association, but all municipal officials are invited to attend.

The agenda will feature the following:

- An MMA update on the current municipal fiscal landscape
- A comprehensive overview of funding sources available to municipalities
- A panel discussion on effective budget collaboration among boards and committees

Registration and a networking coffee will begin at 8:30 a.m. The program will begin

at 9 a.m. and conclude at 12:15 p.m. Lunch will be served.

Registration and the full agenda will be made available at mma.org in the coming weeks.

The event will be held at Lake Pearl at 299 Creek St., Wrentham. The registration fee is \$30.

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

State awards nearly \$11.3 million in unpaved road grants

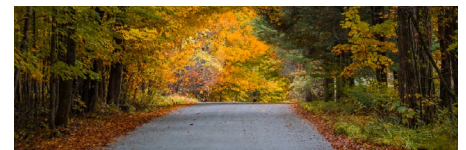
The Healey-Driscoll administration on July 21 announced nearly \$11.3 million in the Unpaved Roads Program grants to help cities and towns across Massachusetts maintain, repair, and improve locally owned dirt and gravel roads.

The Unpaved Roads Program, administered by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, awarded funding for 48 communities to invest in equipment, design or construction projects that support travel, local infrastructure, and accessibility on local roads.

Unpaved roads are a critical component of the local transportation network in many communities, Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said in a prepared statement.

"These investments will help cities and towns improve safety, reliability and resilience while giving local officials the flexibility to address the needs that matter most in their communities," Driscoll said.

Funding amounts between \$92,417 and \$821,150 were awarded to Acushnet, Barre, Becket, Bernardston, Blandford, Brewster, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Fairhaven, Gill, Goshen, Hatfield, Heath, Hinsdale, Holland, Leverett, Monson, Monterey, Nantucket, New Braintree, North Attleborough, Northfield, Orange, Petersham, Phillipston, Plainfield, Plymouth, Plympton, Princeton, Richmond, Royalston, Rutland,



In July, the state awarded \$11.3 million in the Unpaved Roads Program grants to 48 communities for maintenance, repairs, and improvements on locally owned dirt and gravel roads.

Sandisfield, Savoy, Shelburne, Shutesbury, Stockbridge, Tolland, Wareham, Warwick, Wellfleet, Westford, Whately, Windsor and Worthington.

The list of funding recipients and amounts is [available online](#).

\$15.3M awarded for commercial-to-housing conversions

The Healey-Driscoll administration on Aug. 25 announced \$15.3 million in Commercial Conversion Tax Credit Initiative awards to support five projects that will transform vacant or underused commercial properties into 856 new rental homes in Boston, Dedham, Springfield, Westford and Worcester.

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll made the announcement in Westford, where a former hotel at 219 Littleton Road will be redeveloped into 300 new rental homes, the largest project supported in this round by number of homes.

The other projects in this second round of awards will adaptively reuse historic downtown buildings, convert an office building in Boston's Financial District, and redevelop obsolete commercial buildings into new housing, Driscoll said.

In addition to creating housing, she said, the projects will preserve historic buildings, support transit-oriented development, and help revitalize downtowns.

"Commercial conversions can solve two challenges at once," Driscoll said. "They create homes where people want to live and help communities breathe new life into properties that have been vacant or obsolete."

Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Juana Matias noted that



The Healey-Driscoll administration announced \$15.3 million in Commercial Conversion Tax Credit Initiative awards to support five adaptive reuse projects, including 294 Washington St. in Boston, which is next to the historic Old South Meeting House.

commercial conversion projects can be difficult to finance, but the Commercial Conversion Tax Credit Initiative "helps close that gap."

The Commercial Conversion Tax Credit Initiative, established through the [Affordable Homes Act](#), which Gov. Maura Healey signed in 2024, supports eligible construction and substantial rehabilitation costs for projects that will be primarily residential.

The projects receiving awards in this round are:

- Historic Clark Block Rehabilitation,

Worcester, \$2.33 million

- 219 Littleton Road, Westford, \$3 million
- Main Street Redevelopment, Springfield, \$3 million
- Vantage Apartments, Dedham, \$3 million
- 294 Washington, Boston, \$4 million

Earlier this year, the administration announced nearly \$8.4 million to support five projects that will create 339 new homes in Boston, Fitchburg, New Bedford, Pittsfield and Worcester. ●

MMCA to hold regional breakfast on Sept. 25 in Newburyport

All city and town councillors are invited to a Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association regional breakfast meeting on Sept. 25 at Newburyport City Hall.

The program will focus on the growth of accessory dwelling units. Newburyport

Planning Director Andy Port and Zoning Administrator and Enforcement Officer Jennifer Blanchet will share their experience with balancing the need for housing with regulatory requirements.

Attendees will have the opportunity to share questions and ideas with each

other as well as the speakers.

The free meeting will run from 8 to 10 a.m. Registration is [available online](#).

Contact: Member Program Manager Denise Baker at dbaker@mma.org

MMA webinar on Sept. 29 will cover Build for Mass

The MMA will host a webinar on Sept. 29 covering the new [Build for Mass](#) program, the Commonwealth's first general municipal infrastructure lending program.

Build for Mass aims to provide municipalities with flexible, low-interest financing to address funding gaps, advance priority projects, and maximize

access to federal resources.

Representatives from Build for Mass and MassDevelopment will review the program, provide examples of eligible infrastructure projects, and explain the application process.

[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

MMA Webinars

Designing safer streets

The MMA hosted a webinar with local regional planning commissions on July 23 to discuss how municipalities can plan and design safer streets.

Ali Kleyman, Vision Zero program manager for the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization, defined “vision zero” as a “proactive and systems-based approach to traffic safety.”

“The vision zero approach asks us — the planners, engineers, policymakers, public health professionals — to keep roadway users safe by focusing on all aspects of the transportation system: safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe road design, and post-crash care, in addition to safe road users,” Kleyman said. “Creating this layered approach to keeping people safe is key to vision zero. When one thing goes wrong, or when one person makes a mistake, there’s another solution in place that can keep people safe.”

Vision zero can be accomplished through infrastructure, such as speed humps or signage, or policies and processes, such as implementing lower speed limits and driver education requirements.

Transportation Program Manager Colleen Medeiros highlighted how the Cape Cod Commission developed tailored town profiles that compile crash statistics and recommend countermeasures to prevent future incidents.

Robert Raymond, transportation data services director for the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, said municipalities can integrate vision zero principles into their community master plans to advance safety, as seen in the town of Barre, or secure federal Safe Streets For All (SS4A) grant

Organizational alignment

The MMA hosted a second webinar on July 30 focused on strategic planning and organizational alignment.

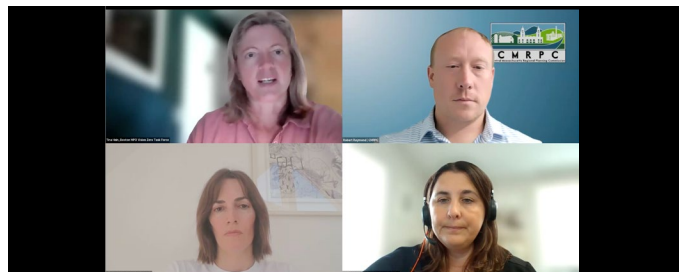
Great Barrington Town Manager Liz Hartsgrove briefly reviewed the content of the first session to kick things off, defining local government and why it’s important for all employees to be aligned in a shared mission.

Hartsgrove said aligning an organization starts from the very beginning — when people are hired and onboarded — by letting them know what the organization’s values are and making sure those are reflected in the job description and the interview process.

“Without planned alignment,” Hartsgrove said, “the community is not a true reflection of the values and direction of the community.”

Hartsgrove frequently returned to a core concept: a municipality’s culture is the product of its values and behaviors, multiplied by consistency.

She concluded the session by reviewing the four steps of an implementation roadmap: assessing who you serve and what their needs or wants are; creating shared commitments; designing



Panelists discuss strategies for creating safer streets during a recent MMA webinar. Speakers included, clockwise from top right, Robert Raymond, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission’s transportation data services director; Cape Cod Commission Transportation Program Manager Colleen Medeiros; and Ali Kleyman, Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Vision Zero program manager. Tina Hein, top left, Holliston Select Board vice chair and outreach coordinator for Massachusetts Safe Routes to School, moderated the panel.

Date: July 23

Length: 60 minutes

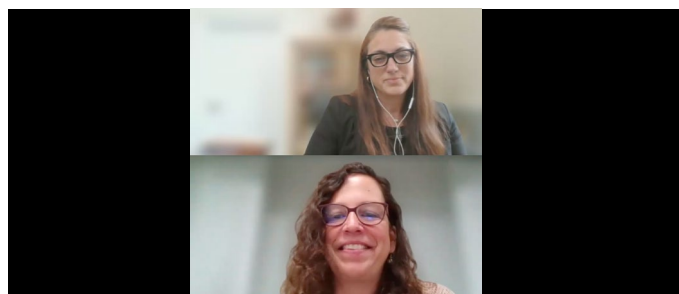
[VIEW WEBINAR ↗](#)

funding.

Webinar speakers discussed their experience using SS4A funding for data analyses, public safety campaigns, road and walk audits, and regional safety action plans.

Tina Hein, vice chair of the Holliston Select Board and outreach coordinator for Massachusetts Safe Routes to School, moderated 15 minutes of questions and answers, addressing inquiries regarding adoption of a regional action plan, addressing driver inattention, and working with local law enforcement.

– *Kristianna Lapierre*



Panelists discuss organizational alignment and planning during a recent MMA webinar. Speakers included Great Barrington Town Manager Liz Hartsgrove, top, and Brewster Assistant Town Manager Donna Kalinick, who also served as moderator.

Date: July 30

Length: 75 minutes

[VIEW WEBINAR ↗](#)

thinking questions; and turning insights into action.

Brewster Assistant Town Manager Donna Kalinick moderated 20 minutes of questions and answers, addressing inquiries regarding navigating multiple priorities, when to relax relationships between departments, and how best to conduct a cultural swab while adhering to the open meeting law.

– *Kristianna Lapierre*

MMA Webinars

Municipal borrowing, bond ratings

The MMA hosted a webinar on municipal bond ratings on Aug. 18 featuring Kristy Tofuri, a managing director at the Boston office of HilltopSecurities, an investment banking firm that serves as an advisor to cities and towns among other clients.

Tofuri outlined the municipal borrowing process and the key players involved, and gave an overview of how bond ratings work and why they're critical for a municipality's fiscal health.

Tofuri said the borrowing process begins when an issuer identifies a capital project, progresses through local authorization and legal drafting, moves to financial determinations and evaluations, and concludes with the bond sale, settlement, and ongoing debt payments.

Credit ratings influence a municipality's borrowing costs.

"The stronger the credit rating, or better the credit rating, the lower the yields are," Tofuri said. "The investor is willing to accept a lower rate on your bonds, because on the surface they are seen as a safer investment."

She said credit rating agencies, such as Moody's, Fitch Ratings, and S&P Global Ratings, evaluate each municipality based on: economy and institutional framework, management, finances, and debt and contingent liabilities.

Improving the management score is the best way to

Digital accessibility challenges

An MMA webinar on Aug. 4 reviewed some of the top challenges municipalities are facing in regards to digital accessibility.

The webinar featured accessibility specialists from the [Commonwealth's Accessibility Center for Consulting, Education and Support Services](#) (ACCESS) team.

Accessibility Training Coordinator Adam Gojanovich reviewed considerations and strategies for:

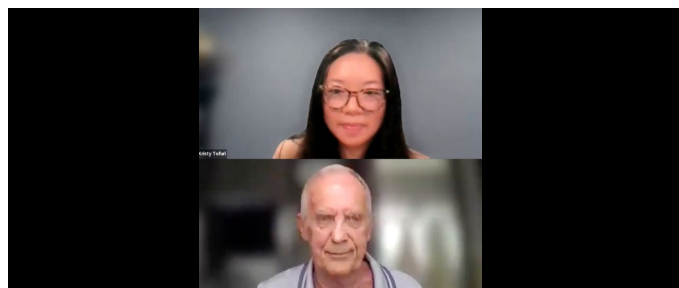
- Developing accessible meeting minutes and redline documents
- Deciding if a document should be in a PDF format
- Archiving documents
- Plug-ins for websites

He warned that so-called accessibility overlays "are things that we want to be very, very cautious about."

"We, at the state, have a specific policy against them," he said. "These things that claim to automatically fix a website, add additional tools to the page, provide a false sense of security. They can cause additional issues. They do not prevent lawsuits, and in some cases, can cause lawsuits."

Gojanovich discussed a website that will launch soon — [accessibility.mass.gov](#) — to provide checklists, training, and a document decision tree to help municipalities with accessibility requirements. Municipalities may also sign up for the ACCESS team's office hours for specific questions.

Susan Noyes, director of the Office of Municipal and School Technology, and Mindy Johnson, documents and



Kristy Tofuri, top, managing director at the Boston office of HilltopSecurities, discusses municipal borrowing and bond ratings during a recent MMA webinar. Arlington Finance Committee Member Allan Tosti moderated the webinar.

Date: Aug. 18

Length: 75 minutes

[VIEW WEBINAR ↗](#)

strengthen a credit rating, she said. To achieve this, Tofuri suggests establishing and adhering to policies, as well as regular reporting, financial forecasting, and capital planning.

Arlington Finance Committee Member Allan Tosti moderated 20 minutes of questions and answers, addressing inquiries regarding the correlation between municipal reserves and its bond rating, how often financial policies should be updated, and what to do when a project doesn't move forward.

— Kristianna Lapierre



Panelists discuss digital accessibility during a recent MMA webinar. Speakers include Accessibility Training Coordinator Adam Gojanovich, top left, and Mindy Johnson, documents and communications accessibility coordinator, top right, both from the Massachusetts Accessibility Center for Consulting, Education and Support Services. The panel was moderated by Susan Noyes, bottom, director of the Office of Municipal and School Technology.

Date: Aug. 4

Length: 75 minutes

[VIEW WEBINAR ↗](#)

communications accessibility coordinator at ACCESS, moderated 20 minutes of questions and answers, addressing inquiries regarding which department an accessibility coordinator should work in, recommendations for presenting large budget tables, and posting slide decks from public meetings.

— Kristianna Lapierre

Webinar topic suggestion form available

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

Town Report Contest entries due Oct. 30

The MMA is accepting entries through Oct. 30 for its Annual Town Report Contest.

First-, second- and third-place winners will be selected from each of four population categories: less than 5,000; 5,001-15,000; 15,001-30,000; 30,001-plus. Winners will be recognized and given a certificate during the MMA's Connect 351 conference in January 2027.

Judging criteria include:

- Attractiveness of report cover and layout
- Material arrangement
- Presentation of statistics and data
- Summary of the year's achievements
- Evidence of local planning for the future
- Practical utility of report

Each entry will be reviewed by two judges, chosen based on their expertise in the field and their ability to remain impartial.

To enter, please complete the [form on the MMA website](#) with a link to, or a PDF of, your town report. Entries are due by Friday, Oct. 30.

For more information, visit the [MMA website](#) or email awards@mma.org. ●

Entries sought for municipal website contest

The MMA is accepting nominations for its annual municipal website awards, which will be presented during the MMA's Connect 351 conference in January 2027.

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

To enter the contest, chief municipal officials may simply [fill out a short online nomination form](#). The entry deadline is Friday, Oct. 30.

The awards recognize the best municipal websites in five population categories: under 5,000; 5,001-12,000; 12,001-25,000;

25,001-35,000; and 35,000-plus. One winner is selected from each category.

Judges evaluate municipal websites based on the following criteria:

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

- Availability of public records
- Clear branding as the official municipal government site
- Robust search function
- Mobile-responsive design
- Details about municipal departments
- Visual appeal and overall experience

Please note that previous winners are not eligible to re-enter the contest unless their website has undergone a significant redesign.

For more information, email awards@mma.org. ●

State opens expression of interest period for ECO One Stop

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs announced that it will open its expression of interest period for the Environment and Climate One Stop (ECO One Stop) program on Sept. 8.

[ECO One Stop](#), launched last December, is a streamlined grant application for climate and environmental resilience projects in Massachusetts.

The expression of interest (EOI) period will run through Oct. 16.

The EOI process is optional, but highly recommended, for applicants considering submitting an application to ECO One Stop for fiscal 2028.

Submitting an EOI allows applicants to provide a summary of their project idea and receive early feedback from relevant grant program staff before the formal application period begins in early 2027. This initial step is completed through a simple online form that will be posted on the [ECO One Stop website](#).

This year, potential applicants can

submit up to two EOIs, with the exception of regional planning agencies, which are permitted to submit up to four EOIs.

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs notes that staff may not be able to provide feedback on project ideas that come in after the EOI deadline.

EOI overview webinar

On Sept. 15 at 11 a.m., the office will host a webinar to provide an overview of the EOI submission and feedback process, including updates made to the process for this year's round. EEA staff will discuss the EOI submission form and the feedback call process, and will reserve time to answer attendee questions.

[Webinar registration is available](#) online. The webinar will be recorded and posted on the [ECO One Stop website](#). Questions about the webinar can be sent to ecoonestop@mass.gov.

Project type webinars

In addition to EOI feedback calls, the office will be hosting a set of webinars this fall focused on popular ECO One Stop project types. The webinars, offering guidance for potential applicants, will cover the following project types:

- Land Use Planning, Oct. 27, noon-1 p.m. ([register](#))
- Stormwater Management, Nov. 3, noon-1 p.m. ([register](#))
- Culvert/Small Bridge Upgrade or Removal, Nov. 10, noon-1 p.m. ([register](#))
- Dam/Levee Repair, Upgrade or Removal, Nov. 17, noon-1 p.m. ([register](#))

Registration links and recordings will also be made available on the [ECO One Stop website](#).

Those who applied to the fiscal 2027 round of the ECO One Stop and would like to receive feedback on their past application should contact EcoOneStop@mass.gov. ●

MMA-Suffolk offering 3 sessions of finance, HR seminars

The MMA and Suffolk University will be offering three Municipal Finance Management Seminar programs and three Municipal Human Resources Seminar programs during the 2026-27 academic year — in the fall, winter and spring.

Municipal Finance

The Municipal Finance Management Seminar is for municipal employees interested in furthering their careers in municipal finance, or employees who are new to municipal finance.

The seminar provides an overview of municipal finance in Massachusetts, including the structure and purpose of local government, municipal budgeting systems and sources of revenue, financial reporting and record keeping, financial management, principles of property assessment, the intersection of human resources and financial resources, and best practices in local government finance.

Participants must be employed by a city or town, and must have the approval of their municipal manager, administrator or mayor to apply.

Finance seminars will be held via Zoom over the course of five Fridays, with the class schedule as follows:

- Fall 2026: Oct. 30, Nov. 6, Nov. 13, Nov. 20, Dec. 4; session is fully enrolled
- Winter 2027: Jan. 8, Jan. 15, Jan. 29, Feb. 5, Feb. 12; registration opens Oct. 21
- Spring 2027: March 5, March 12, March 19, March 26, April 2; registration opens Dec. 9

“We’ve seen great success with the

program, which addresses a longstanding need,” said John Petrin, a retired town manager and senior fellow and liaison for the MMA-Suffolk programs. “We’re filling an important gap in preparing the next generation of municipal finance professionals.”

Students are expected to attend all course sessions, participate in class activities, and complete all course assignments. Each session can accommodate up to 25 students, and the cost is \$925.

Registration for each session will be hosted on the [MMA’s event registration website](#).

Registration is first-come, first-served. Students will be vetted to ensure that they’re a municipal employee and that there are no more than three participants per municipality.

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

Municipal Human Resources

The Municipal Human Resources Seminar covers human resources management, policies and practices specific to Massachusetts cities and towns. Topics include hiring and onboarding, benefits administration, policy development, collective bargaining, and employee reviews and evaluations. Students also review relevant labor laws and best practices in municipal human resources management.

The HR seminar is designed for municipal employees interested in furthering their career in municipal human resources, employees who are new to municipal human resources, and employees who work in a

municipal function with human-resources-adjacent tasks. More than 175 participants have completed the seminar since its inception in 2024.

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

- Fall 2026: Sept. 25, Oct. 2, Oct. 9, Oct. 16, Oct. 23; session is fully enrolled
- Winter 2027: Jan. 29, Feb. 5, Feb. 12, Feb. 19, Feb. 26; registration opens Oct. 27
- Spring 2027: April 9, April 16, April 23, April 30, May 7; registration opens Jan. 12

Registration for each session will be hosted on the [MMA’s event registration website](#). Registration is first-come, first-served. Students will be vetted to ensure that they’re a municipal employee and that there are no more than three participants per municipality.

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

More information

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

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

ATFC to hold Annual Meeting on Nov. 7

Local finance committee members are invited to the Association of Town Finance Committees’ Annual Meeting on Saturday, Nov. 7, at the Sharon Community Center.

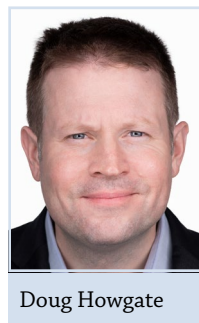
The opening session will feature a panel discussion with MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine and Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation President Doug Howgate to discuss the current fiscal climate and how it is impacting local budgets, including an increase in Proposition 2½ overrides.

The meeting will continue with four educational workshops, running

concurrently during two time slots, on the following topics: budgeting 101, overrides and alternative options, deconstructing the school budget, and financial trend monitoring.

The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and end at 2 p.m.

All local officials are welcome to attend. The cost is \$65 for dues-paying ATFC



Doug Howgate

finance committee members and \$75 for nonmember finance committee members and other local officials.

The full agenda and online registration are available on www.mma.org.

As a reminder, the 2025 edition of the Finance Committee Handbook was published last October and is available at no cost to all ATFC members. Email Kat Christy at kchristy@mma.org to request your digital copy.

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

MSA seeks nominations for its Board of Directors

The Massachusetts Select Board Association, a member group of the MMA, is seeking nominations for its 2027 Board of Directors.

Nominations will be accepted for four officer positions: president, first vice president, second vice president, and secretary, all of whom serve a one-year term.

The five district representatives are also up for election this year, for two-year terms.

The MSA districts are as follows:

- District 1: Berkshire, Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin counties
- District 2: Essex and Middlesex counties
- District 3: Bristol, Norfolk and Suffolk

counties

- District 4: Barnstable, Dukes, Nantucket and Plymouth counties
- District 5: Worcester County

With the exception of secretary, MSA board members also serve on the MMA Board of Directors.

Any select board member in Massachusetts may complete the [online nomination form](#) and submit their name for consideration. The form must be completed by Oct. 16.

MSA board responsibilities include attendance at MSA and MMA Board meetings. The MMA board meets on the second Tuesday of most months from 10 a.m. to

2 p.m. These meetings are typically hybrid: Zoom as well as in-person at locations across the state. The MSA board also meets monthly via Zoom.

Board responsibilities also include working with MMA staff to develop agendas and identify speakers for MSA conferences and webinars, and participation in these events throughout the year. Previous participation in MMA events is strongly preferred.

After interviewing all nominees, the MSA Nominating Committee will prepare a slate of nominations for election during the MSA's Annual Business Meeting, to be held during Connect 351, the MMA's annual conference, on Jan. 23 in Boston. ●

MassCEC seeks feedback on Green School Works

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center is inviting school and municipal officials to complete [an online survey](#) to provide feedback on the Green School Works program.

The Clean Energy Center said the survey responses will help its staff improve the application process, strengthen program design, and better support schools pursuing clean energy projects.

Prior participation in the Green School Works program is not required to fill out the survey.

More information about the Green School Works program is [available online](#). ●

MMCA seeks nominations for its Board of Directors

The Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, a member group of the MMA, is seeking nominations for its Board of Directors.

Any councillor in Massachusetts may complete the [online nomination form](#) and submit their name for consideration. The nomination deadline is Nov. 1.

Nominations are sought for three officer and five district representative positions on the MMCA Board of Directors. These include president, first vice president and second vice president. Officers serve a one-year term, district representatives serve a two-year term.

Additionally, nominations are sought for the position of MMA Vice President.

[Board member responsibilities](#) include attendance at MMCA and MMA board meetings. The MMA Board of Directors meets on the second Tuesday of most months, at locations throughout the state, including Boston, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. MMCA Board responsibilities also include assisting in planning MMCA events and attendance at in-person and virtual meetings for councillors.

After interviewing all nominees, the MMCA Nominating Committee will prepare a slate of nominations for election during the MMCA's Annual Business Meeting, to be held during Connect 351 (the MMA's annual conference) on Jan. 23, 2027, in Boston.

In performing its responsibilities for identifying, recruiting and recommending candidates to the MMCA Board, the

Nominating Committee is committed to including qualified candidates who reflect diverse backgrounds. Previous attendance at MMA and MMCA in-person and virtual events is strongly preferred.

For more information about the MMCA, visit www.mma.org/members/councillors.

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

Managers focus on messaging

Provincetown Assistant Town Manager Dan Riviello speaks during a panel on municipal communications during a meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association on July 16 in Bridgewater. The panel, which was moderated by Easton Deputy Town Administrator Sean Dugan, included Stephen Addonizio, the assistant to the town manager/public information coordinator in Weston; Amanda Smith, the communications director in Dedham; and Aubrey Thomas, assistant town administrator in Carlisle.



Falmouth, Hudson awarded library construction grants

At its July 9 board meeting, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners awarded provisional construction grants totaling \$20.5 million, along with \$614,000 in provisional Green Library Incentives, to the towns of Falmouth and Hudson, through the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program.

“Libraries don’t just increase literacy, they also increase economic activity and revitalize areas where they are built,” said MBLC Director Maureen Amyot. “With state funding ... these communities will build energy-efficient, sustainable libraries that ensure free access to a community gathering space, knowledge, and technology for all.”

Falmouth was awarded \$7.2 million for the construction of a new East Falmouth Branch. The current library is not accessible — the children’s room is located in the former garage and can only be entered via a ramp, which is not ADA compliant — and the building’s structural integrity is starting to deteriorate, according to a recent assessment.

The Falmouth project will demolish the existing structure and construct a new, fully accessible and energy-efficient 8,670 square foot library on the same site.

Hudson received \$13.3 million for a renovation and addition project. The current library operates out of a Carnegie building constructed in 1905, with additions dating to 1929 and 1966. The lack of space, inadequate technology, and inaccessibility of the current building make it difficult to meet the needs

of the community, especially children and teens.

The Hudson project will renovate the historic Carnegie library, demolish the existing additions, and build a new addition.

Provisional construction grants for these projects are between 35% to 50% of their estimated eligible project costs. These municipalities have until April 30, 2027, to accept their provisional grant awards through town meeting and ballot votes.

Falmouth will also receive \$215,842 in Green Library Incentives for its project, and Hudson will get \$398,571.

Green Library Incentives are 3% of the construction grant award and are disbursed when projects certify that they have complied with one of three sustainable and resilient design and construction pathways as specified in the [grant round program notice](#).

The MBLC had approved [Planning and Design grants](#) for Falmouth and Hudson in January 2025, and the projects were waitlisted for construction grants until funding became available through the state’s capital plan.

The Falmouth and Hudson projects recently completed the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program Level of Design independent review, which ensures that each project is meeting program design guidelines.



The public libraries in Falmouth and Hudson have received a total of \$20.5 million in construction grants, along with \$614,000 in provisional Green Library Incentives, from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

The Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program has benefited more than 250 towns and cities since its inception in 1987. [Funding to support the MPLCP](#) grant round was included in the [Mass Leads Act](#), an economic development package signed into law in November 2024.

MPLCP projects are currently underway in the following communities: Amherst, Blandford, Deerfield, Fitchburg, Springfield, and Westford.

The [Swansea Free Public Library](#), [Sawyer Free Library in Gloucester](#), and Shutesbury Library recently celebrated the completion of library projects.

Learn more about the program on the [MBLC website](#), the [Building Literacy podcast](#), and the [MPLCP Municipal Impact website](#). ●

DCR offering monthly floodplain management sessions

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation is offering a monthly Floodplain Basics “Lunch and Learn” training series that provides practical guidance, insights, and Q&A sessions for communities facing flooding challenges.

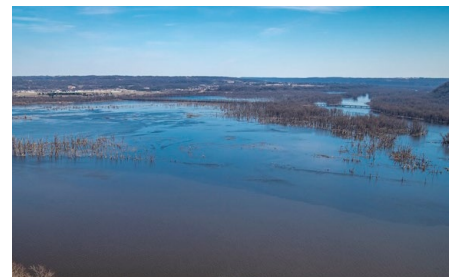
Sessions are held on the third Wednesday of each month from noon to 1:30 p.m. and will continue through December. Topics include interpreting flood maps and insurance studies, development permitting, and flood resistant

construction.

DCR is also offering intermediate courses for experienced officials. Certified floodplain managers and Massachusetts certified building officials are eligible to receive continuing education credits for these sessions.

Participants must register for sessions in advance.

The full course calendar and details, with links to registration, is [available online](#). ●



The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation is offering a monthly Floodplain Basics “Lunch and Learn” training series.

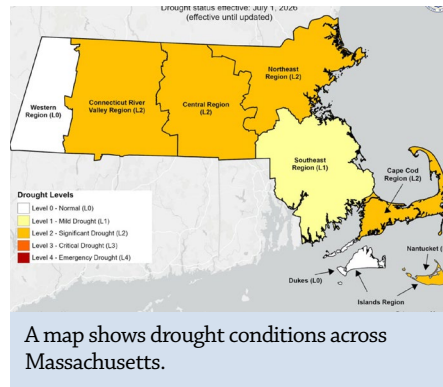
Drought conditions improve throughout Massachusetts

Drought conditions improved across Massachusetts following above-average precipitation in July, but concerns remain, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper announced on Aug. 7.

The Northeast region is now at Level 2: Significant Drought, while the Southeast Region improved to Level 1: Mild Drought. The Western Region and Dukes County are now at Level 0: Normal.

The Cape Cod, Connecticut River Valley, and Central regions, along with Nantucket County, remain at Level 2: Significant Drought.

Precipitation in July was between 4.5 and 9.5 inches of rain, with much of the state seeing above-average rainfall during the month, Tepper said. Despite



the rainfall, drought conditions persist because groundwater takes a while to recover from dry periods. Groundwater levels remain well below normal in eastern Massachusetts, and particularly on Nantucket.

Recent rainfall has been encouraging, Tepper said, but full recovery can only happen with continued precipitation.

“We all have a role to play, and continuing to conserve water will help protect our water supplies,” Tepper said.

The state’s [drought status and resources are available online](#).

The state has also developed [drought management](#) and [water conservation](#) resources for individuals and municipalities to reduce strains on the water supply. Some immediate steps that communities can take include water restriction enforcement, establishing water-use reduction targets, and providing drought and water conservation information to residents and businesses. ●

DLS, MARPA to host municipal conference on Oct. 5

The Division of Local Services and the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies will host the 2026 MARPA and DLS Statewide Municipal Partnerships Conference on Oct. 5 in Worcester.

The conference aims to bring together municipal and regional leaders from across the Commonwealth for a half day of networking, conversations on pressing issues, and the sharing of best practices.

The event will run from 9 a.m. to 12:30

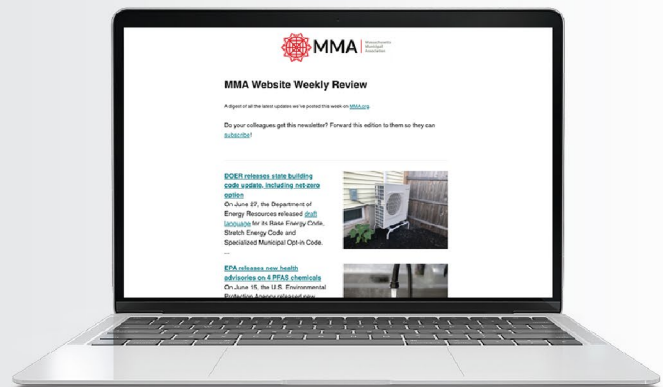
p.m. at the Hogan Campus Center at the College of the Holy Cross. The registration fee is \$20.

The [event website](#) has more information and registration details. ●

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Grants awarded for local infrastructure projects

The Healey-Driscoll administration on July 21 announced \$900,000 in grant awards for local infrastructure projects through the Municipal and Tribal Technical Assistance grant program.

The program, administered by the [Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office](#), provides technical assistance for projects that have received, or are pursuing, federal funding.

Building local capacity is essential to moving infrastructure projects forward, Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said in a prepared statement.

"I know firsthand that local officials often have to balance many competing needs with limited resources, and these grants will give communities the tools they need to advance key projects," Driscoll said.

Several local officials expressed gratitude for the assistance.

Woburn Mayor Michael Concannon said a Municipal and Tribal Technical Assistance grant will support a new fish



The Healey-Driscoll administration announced grants through the Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office's Municipal and Tribal Technical Assistance grant program for projects including hazard mitigation work to prepare for future disasters.

passage that will "serve as a beacon of nature-based education for visitors of all ages."

Becket Town Administrator Katherine Warden said a turbine project funded through the MTTA grant will provide renewable energy for Becket Town Hall and parts of the town's highway garage.

Whately Town Administrator S. Peter

Kane said that without the grant funding, the town "would have struggled to update its Hazard Mitigation Plan, leaving residents more vulnerable to future disasters."

Needham Town Manager Katie King said her town's funding will go toward updating its Hazard Mitigation Plan, which will help the town "better prepare for future hazards by improving risk assessment and planning strategies to protect our residents, infrastructure, and essential services for years to come."

Receiving between \$4,000 and \$200,000 in Municipal and Tribal Technical Assistance Awards were the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Becket, Bellingham, Clarksburg, Conway, Deerfield, Franklin, Gill, Hatfield, Marion, Montague, Needham, Northampton, Pelham, Plainville, Rowe, Shelburne, Tyngsborough, Walpole, Whately, Woburn and Worthington.

More information about the programs is [available online](#). ●

Grant funding available for dredging projects, equipment

The Healey-Driscoll administration on July 30 announced the availability of grant funding for important dredging projects that improve navigational safety, strengthen working waterfronts, and support the state's maritime economy.

The application deadline is Sept. 17.

The grants, administered by the Seaport Economic Council, will provide funding for shovel-ready coastal dredging construction projects and regional dredging equipment purchases.

Eligible applicants include Massachusetts coastal communities, public harbor commissions, county commissions, and regional public entities



Municipalities can apply for grants through the Seaport Economic Council for dredging projects that improve navigational safety, strengthen working waterfronts, and support the state's maritime economy.

representing two or more coastal municipalities.

Funding amounts will be between

\$100,000 and \$1 million.

The grant program is part of the administration's ongoing support for and investment in coastal community resilience, which includes [reorganization](#) of the Seaport Economic Council along with a \$100 million reauthorization, and the 2025 [Resilient Coasts report](#), which outlined a comprehensive statewide strategy to help coastal communities protect residents, strengthen local infrastructure, and safeguard the state's natural resources.

Additional grant information and application materials are available on the [Seaport Economic Council's website](#). ●

Gateway City projects receive \$18.6 million in tax credits

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities announced that it has approved projects in Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Pittsfield, Taunton and Worcester for participation in the [Housing Development Incentive Program](#).

The projects, expected to create 662 housing units, will receive \$18.6 million in state tax credits.

The July 9 announcement was made in Fall River, where Mayor Paul Coogan said the state program provides significant assistance.

"As the need for housing continues to grow, this program helps create valuable housing assets that strengthen our community," Coogan said.

The [Housing Development Incentive](#)

[Program](#) provides tax credits to support market-rate rental and homeownership projects that bolster downtowns, reuse vacant or underused buildings, and help communities expand their housing supply.

Visit the Housing Development Incentive Program website for more information. ●

State awards \$890,000 for civics education

The Healey-Driscoll administration on Aug. 18 announced \$890,000 in Civics Teaching and Learning Grants for civics education.

The grants, funded through the state's Civics Project Trust Fund, will support educator professional development, civics curriculum development, and hands-on learning experiences.

Civics projects allow students to take active roles in their education and build collaborative skills, Education Secretary Steve Zrike said in a prepared statement.

"These grants will expand access to meaningful civic learning experiences and help students see how they can make a positive impact in their schools and communities," he said.

Funding amounts between \$5,500 and \$74,980 were awarded to the following schools and districts: Andover, Arlington, Attleboro, Avon, Bellingham, Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter



The Healey-Driscoll administration announced Civics Teaching and Learning Grants to support educator professional development, civics curriculum development, and hands-on learning experiences.

School in Franklin, Boston, Cambridge, Christa McAuliffe Charter School in Framingham, Gill-Montague Regional School District, Gloucester, Greenfield, Hadley, Lowell, Malden, Milford, New Bedford, Newton, Norwood, Old Rochester Regional School District, Pittsfield, Prospect Hill Academy Charter School in Cambridge, Quabbin

Regional School District, Stoughton, Taunton, Waltham, West Springfield, and Westwood.

Early this summer, the administration [announced Teaching for Civic Empowerment](#), a new professional learning initiative designed to strengthen civics instruction. The new statewide effort aims to provide free, high-quality professional learning opportunities to 6,000 educators over five years to increase educator confidence and expertise with civics instruction.

In June, the administration released [final recommendations for a statewide high school graduation framework](#) designed to ensure every Massachusetts student graduates prepared for college, careers and civic life. The recommendations emphasize civic knowledge and skills through coursework and hands-on learning, including Civics Action Projects. ●

MCOA seeks annual award submissions

The Massachusetts Councils on Aging is accepting nominations through Sept. 4 for its annual awards, which honor individuals, groups and programs that have significantly impacted the lives of older adults.

Local leaders are encouraged to nominate champions of the older adult community for their work and dedication.



Categories include Director of the Year and Innovation of the Year.

Visit the [MCOA website](#) for award criteria and nomination forms.

Awards will be presented at the MCOA Fall Conference, to be held Oct. 22-24 at the Sea Crest Resort in Falmouth.

For questions, contact kelly@mcoaonline.org. ●

State awards \$368 million in loans for clean water projects

In July and August, the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust's Board of Trustees approved \$367.7 million in low-interest loans and grants to municipalities through the Massachusetts State Revolving Funds.

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

More than \$335 million in clean water project loans went to Barnstable, the Boston Water and Sewer Commission, Chatham, Eastham, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Hull, Lowell, Nantucket, New Bedford, Orleans, Provincetown, Revere and Swampscott.

The Dracut Water Supply District and the towns of Pepperell and Yarmouth received nearly \$31.7 million in drinking water project loans.

The town of Upton and the South Grafton Water District received cybersecurity loans of \$30,000 and \$15,000, respectively. Upton also received a \$30,000 grant for cybersecurity improvement.

In The Beginning Preschool, East End House, and Frances Jacobson Early Childhood Center received \$3,000 each for school water improvement.

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



Over the summer, the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust's Board of Trustees approved \$367.7 million in low-interest loans and grants to help communities build or replace water infrastructure.

Administration awards fishing, conservation grants

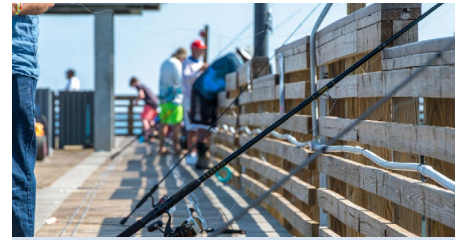
The Healey Driscoll administration in July announced the award of nearly \$3.4 million in grants for projects that support land conservation, wetland restoration and flood reduction, and saltwater fishing access.

The grants include:

- \$50,000 from the [Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Fund](#) to the towns of Truro, Barnstable and Chatham to support saltwater recreational fishing access improvement projects, such as boat launch repairs and signage directing anglers to a marine forecast report
- More than \$1 million through the

[Division of Ecological Restoration to partnerships](#) led by the Housatonic Valley Association, Buzzards Bay Coalition, Merrimack River Watershed Association, Charles River Watershed Association, Ipswich River Watershed Association, and Blackstone Watershed Collaborative to support river and wetland restoration, water quality improvement, and climate resilience

More than \$2.2 million through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' [Landscape Partnership Grant Program](#) to projects in Worthington, Colrain, Heath and Wareham for multi-partner projects that strengthen ecological integrity, promote



Funding awarded through the Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Fund will support saltwater recreational fishing access improvements in Truro, Barnstable and Chatham.

economies dependent on natural resources, and expand public outdoor recreation access ●

U.S. Fish and Wildlife habitat restoration program opens

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is accepting applications for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, which helps private landowners restore and protect habitats for fish and wildlife through technical assistance and financial support, provided by cooperative agreements.

Eligible applicants include state and county governments, municipalities, private higher education institutions, tribes, and colleges and universities.

The application deadline is Sept. 30, and the maximum award is \$1 million. Visit [Grants.gov](#) for more program information and application details.

Applicants seeking technical or financial assistance from the program must consult with a local Partners Program office before developing or submitting an application. Visit the [Fish and Wildlife website](#) for local offices and contact information. ●



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is accepting applications through Sept. 30.

Send us your Municipal Innovation Award entries!

- Has your community been working on a new and unique project?
- Do you have a new or different solution to a problem facing your community, and possibly others in Massachusetts?
- Has your community found a way to improve efficiency in providing municipal services?

If so, your community should enter the MMA's Innovation Award contest!

The Kenneth Pickard Municipal Innovation Award is sponsored each year by the MMA to recognize municipalities that have developed unique and creative projects or programs to increase the effectiveness of local government. It is named in honor of Kenneth Pickard, executive secretary of the Massachusetts League of Cities and Towns from 1969 to 1973.

Any city or town that is a member of the MMA is eligible to apply. The awards will be presented at the Connect 351 in January 2027.

HOW TO ENTER

- Fill out the summary sheet found on the [MMA website](#), including a description of the project, the groups and individuals involved, goals, strategy, results and funding structure.
- Have your community's chief municipal official sign the [nomination form](#).
- Include any additional materials that would assist the judges in understanding the project or program. Feel free to send photos, brochures, maps, newspaper articles, videos, etc.

JUDGING

Entries are judged by the following criteria:

- Project originality or novelty
- Adaptability to other communities
- Cost-effectiveness
- Efficiency or productivity
- Improvement of a municipal service/administration/performance
- Consumer/community satisfaction

DEADLINE

Entries are due by Friday, Oct. 30.

Please send one electronic copy to awards@mma.org. For more information, email awards@mma.org.

Entries MUST include a summary sheet and signed nomination form and must be submitted by email.

New farmland planning resources published

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources has published new farmland planning resources for municipalities, regional planning agencies and land trusts.

One of the resources, "[Planning for Farmland in Massachusetts: An Overview at the Municipal and Regional Level](#)," covers tools for supporting and protecting farmland and understanding the role agriculture plays in a community.

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources is offering a webinar on Sept. 23 at noon to provide an overview of the new resource and discuss key components of the document. [Registration is available online](#),

and questions can be sent to MDAR Farmland Action Plan Coordinator Katharine Otto at Katharine.s.otto@mass.gov.

The department has also published an [online resource guide](#) for municipalities participating in the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program. The resources include a [new document](#) that outlines the application and enrollment process for the APR program, which serves to permanently preserve farmland for economic, cultural, and environmental purposes.

Additional information is available [online](#) or by contacting APR Acquisition Coordinator Ron Hall at ronald.hall@mass.gov. ●



The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources is offering a webinar on Sept. 23 to provide an overview of a new farmland planning resource issued by the department.

State awards grants to protect forests, improve outdoor recreation

The Healey-Driscoll administration on Aug. 12 announced \$225,450 in grants to five rural communities and two conservation and development organizations in western Massachusetts to protect forests, improve outdoor recreation, and strengthen the local economies that depend on the region's natural resources.

The grants, awarded through the [Woodlands Partnership Program](#) and administered by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, support locally led conservation and economic development projects to expand forest access, restore and



The state awarded \$225,450 in grants to five communities and two conservation and development organizations in western Massachusetts to support locally led conservation and economic development projects.

maintain woodlands, improve trails and infrastructure, and develop long-term

planning.

Supporting rural communities supports the whole Commonwealth, Gov. Maura Healey said in a prepared statement.

"Through the Woodlands Partnership, we're giving communities the resources to invest in their future and build on the incredible natural assets that make Western Massachusetts such a great place to call home," said Healey.

The following municipalities and organizations received funding amounts of between \$12,950 and \$75,000: Deerfield River Watershed Association, Franklin Land Trust, Leyden, Rowe, Peru, Williamstown, and Windsor. ●

Annual AltWheels Fleet Day set for Oct. 5 in Norwood

Municipal fleet managers can learn about sustainable transportation options and engage with clean transportation decision makers and innovators at the 23rd annual AltWheels Fleet Day on Oct. 5 in Norwood.

The day-long event will feature speakers, ride and drive opportunities, exhibitor booths, networking, and educational panels and presentations on the newest alternative fuel and infrastructure options.

The event features real-world solutions and the latest innovations in fleet electrification, alternative fuels, charging infrastructure, and mobility technology.

The MMA is a co-host, along with the



Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, the Massachusetts Clean Cities Coalition, and Mass Mobility Hub.

AltWheels is offering an early admission rate of \$90 until Aug. 13, a \$100 general admission rate from Aug. 14 through Sept. 13, and a late admission fee of \$125 starting on Sept. 14.

The event will be held at the Four Points by Sheraton in Norwood.

The nonprofit AltWheels seeks to build a sustainable transportation and energy vision by "showcasing vehicle and fuel technologies, educating passenger and fleet consumers on best practices, promoting real choices that exist in the marketplace, and stimulating the demand for choices that will improve our health, air quality and survival."

Last year's Fleet Day drew 350 attendees representing more than 30 fleets from 16 states. The event's vehicle showcase featured 29 advanced-technology vehicles.

Visit the [AltWheels website](#) for more information or to register. ●

Town Forest Conference is Oct. 17 in Andover

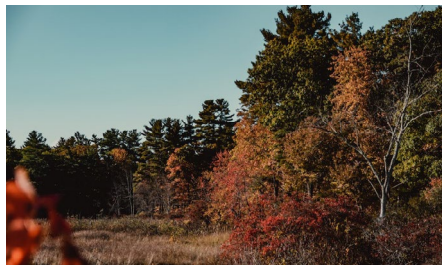
The annual Massachusetts Town Forest Conference, which fosters collaboration and conversation among a range of professionals and volunteers who contribute to community forest management, will be held on Saturday, Oct. 17, at West Elementary School in Andover.

The free, full-day conference recognizes local efforts to support the climate resilience of community forests, and underscores the critical functions that town forests play in local ecosystems.

The conference features exhibits, presentations, networking opportunities, and field tours. The audience includes foresters, planners, arborists, conservation commission members, land trusts, nonprofit organizations, forest landowners, and more.

This year's theme is "Stewardship: The Preservation, Health, and Growth of New England Town Forests in the 21st Century."

The event will include a keynote



The Massachusetts Town Forest Conference on Oct. 17 will feature educational speakers, networking opportunities, and tours of Andover's natural resources.

discussion on caring for forests with ecological forestry, as well as speakers from the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the town of Andover, the city of Haverhill, the Andover Village Improvement Society, Essex County Greenbelt, and Mass Audubon.

Attendees may sign up for one of three field tours: Deer Jump Reservation; Wood Hill/Bald Hill Reservation; or the Retelle Reservation.

Licensed foresters and timber harvesters are eligible to receive continuing education credits for their attendance.

Registration and coffee, and a chance to meet with exhibitors, will begin at 9 a.m.

Lunch and refreshments are included with registration for the event, which will conclude at 4:30 p.m. [Online preregistration is required.](#)

The roots of the Town Forest Conference trace back to 1928, when the Massachusetts Forestry Association orchestrated the first gathering of town forest committees in Boston. In 2013, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation re-established the conference in commemoration of the centennial of the state's town forest enabling law, the Town Forest Act of 1913.

Questions may be directed to Mike Downey at michael.downey@mass.gov.

DCR awards \$131,000 for volunteer fire departments

At an event at the Brookfield Fire Station on Aug. 7, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation announced \$131,000 in grants to 45 rural, call, or volunteer fire departments across Massachusetts.

The grants, awarded through the Volunteer Fire Capacity program, help departments train personnel, prevent forest fires, and strengthen emergency response.

Eligible departments must have at least 80% call or volunteer firefighters, be compliant with National Incident Management System standards, and be a state-recognized fire department. The municipalities also must have fewer than 10,000 residents.

Two communities were added to the Volunteer Fire Capacity program this year, along with a \$14,000 funding increase over the previous year.

Volunteer and call firefighters are



The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation in August awarded \$131,000 in grants to 45 rural, call, or volunteer fire departments through the Volunteer Fire Capacity program.

essential to public safety in many communities, Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said in a prepared statement.

"These grants will help departments purchase the equipment, protective gear and training they need to strengthen their response capabilities and continue

keeping their neighbors safe," Driscoll said.

Massachusetts wildfire seasons are growing longer, according to annual data. In 2025, the state experienced 1,161 wildfires, which burned approximately 925 acres.

Funding amounts of between \$815 and \$3,500 were awarded to Adams, Barre, Brimfield, Brookfield, Buckland, Chilmarn, Clarksburg, Colrain, Dover, Essex, Gosnold, Granville, Huntington, Leverett, Mattapoisett, Montague, Monterey, Montgomery, New Braintree, New Marlborough, North Brookfield, Oak Bluffs, Pelham, Petersham, Plympton, Royalston, Shelburne, Sherborn, Shirley, South Deerfield, South Hadley, Stow, Sutton, Three Rivers Fire District, Tisbury, Tolland, Townsend, Wales, Warren, Wendell, West Barnstable Fire District, Williamsburg, Williamstown, Windsor, and Worthington. ●

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Continued from page 2

to the realities presented in "[A Perfect Storm](#)," and advancing predictable,

multi-year Chapter 90 funding for local roads and bridges.

By partnering early with the governor and the Legislature, we can build a

stronger foundation for fiscal 2028 that protects essential municipal services and supports our communities through every season. ●

Super El Niño: Preparing for the weather ahead

By Jennifer Ranz

With a strong El Niño expected to influence weather patterns this fall and winter, municipalities have good reason to watch the forecast and review seasonal preparedness plans.

El Niño, the warm phase of a naturally occurring climate pattern in the Pacific Ocean, can alter the jet stream and influence temperatures, precipitation, and storm tracks thousands of miles away. The current event is gaining strength quickly and is [expected to intensify through the fall](#), likely peaking sometime between October and January.

In its [Aug. 13 update](#), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported a greater than 90% chance of a very strong El Niño during the fall and winter of 2026-2027, and a 69% chance it could exceed the strength of any El Niño on record since 1950.

A stronger El Niño [can make certain weather patterns more likely](#), but does not guarantee them. That uncertainty matters



Municipalities are advised to be mindful of building, drainage and outdoor safety considerations in the coming months, amid forecasts of a stronger El Niño this fall and winter.

especially in New England, where conditions can vary considerably from one El Niño event to another.

[Past strong El Niño events](#) in the region have generally brought warmer-than-average temperatures, although no two seasons are alike. At the same time, [El Niño tends to suppress Atlantic hurricane development](#), and forecasters have lowered expectations for hurricane activity this season.

Still, the more likely scenarios are worth considering when planning for fall and winter.

Rain and temperature swings

Historically, strong El Niño events tend to favor warmer winter temperatures in the Northeast. [Local forecasts](#) point to above-normal temperatures, more precipitation, and the possibility that some storms produce rain or mixed precipitation rather than snow.

A recent [Boston Globe analysis](#) adds that strong El Niño winters can bring more thaws, fewer sustained stretches of deep cold, and an uptick in coastal storms such as nor'easters.

For municipal buildings, a milder winter does not necessarily mean fewer weather-related concerns. More frequent transitions between rain, snow, ice, and thawing conditions can contribute to freeze-thaw cycles, ice dams, damaged flashing and roof membranes, blocked drainage, and water intrusion.

■ MIIA continued on 30

MIIA expands healthy meal delivery program

By Jennifer Ranz

Municipal employees enrolled in health insurance through the MIIA Health Benefits Trust now have access to discounted, chef-prepared meals through MIIA's partnership with Nutré Meal Plans.

Following a successful pilot in 15 Massachusetts communities, the program is now available to 164 member municipalities participating in MIIA's Health Benefits Trust, which provides Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts coverage to more than 28,000 municipal employees statewide.

Nutré, a family-owned company based in Peabody, prepares fresh meals that are delivered directly to customers' homes. The program offers an option for employees looking to balance healthy eating

with busy work and family schedules.

Nationally, [roughly a third of U.S. adults eat fast food on any given day](#), often citing convenience as the main reason.

"We've been looking for a way to make healthy eating as convenient and affordable as fast food for employees in our member communities," said Chris Bailey, director of MIIA's Health Benefits Trust. "We're excited to partner with Nutré to help make that vision a reality."

Pamela Kealey, human resources director in the Newburyport Public Schools, said teachers responded positively to the pilot program, particularly the flexibility in choosing meals and the convenience of having them fully prepared and delivered.

"Being able to offer something that helps employees put a healthy meal on the

table, while also giving them back some valuable time, is a meaningful benefit," Kealey said. "On a busy weeknight, that can make a real difference."

Eligible MIIA/Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts subscribers enrolled in an active health plan receive \$25 off per household each week on qualifying Nutré orders. Employees in participating communities also receive 10% off each order and 40% off their first order. A minimum of five meals is required.

While the discounts are available only through the Health Benefits Trust partnership, Nutré meal delivery is available to anyone.

To access the discount, MIIA/BCBSMA subscribers can visit gonutre.com/miia, click "Access Your Benefit," and enter your name and date of birth. ●

Around the Commonwealth

Winchester

Town seeks voter feedback after override loss

As Winchester, like many municipalities in Massachusetts, faces rising costs and revenue constraints, town officials launched citizen engagement efforts to better understand what was behind a recent Proposition 2½ override loss and to consider next steps.

On March 21, Winchester residents defeated an \$11.5 million override — \$9 million for operations and \$2.5 million for capital stabilization — by about 300 votes. The defeat broke a streak of seven successful Proposition 2½ requests since 2017 for debt exclusions, capital stabilization, and an operating override.

Afterward, the town launched a survey and hosted three listening sessions to gather resident input. Town officials said they hoped the conversations would inform how they structure future financial requests and build the messaging around them.

“I’m a consultant by profession, and one thing I’ve learned in my 30-plus years is, you can’t solve the problem unless you understand why,” said Select Board Member Michelle Prior, who was the board’s chair at the time of the election. “You can’t expect to just roll it forward and ask again, without understanding what went wrong with what you just did.”

After the election, Winchester had to close a fiscal 2027 budget gap, which involved using \$3.5 million from free cash and eliminating more than 30 full-time-equivalent school positions, according to Anthea Brady, the current Select Board chair.

The survey and listening sessions sought to understand how the pre-election messaging affected voters’ decisions.

“What did and what didn’t people hear?” Brady said. “What have we communicated that maybe didn’t reach them, or they didn’t quite like? Or we didn’t communicate in a way that they got?”

The town sought feedback about residents’ awareness of, and participation in, the election; their sources of information



In recent months, the town of Winchester has launched a survey and held listening sessions to understand the public sentiment behind a recent override defeat.

regarding town finances; additional information they would have wanted; their views on timing considerations, the efficacy of the messaging, and the override amount itself; their reasons for voting in support or against the override; and their preferences in ballot question structure.

Winchester received 256 survey responses, and about 40 people attended listening sessions in June. Of the 256 survey respondents, 244 said they were aware of the election, and 225 of them voted.

Override supporters emphasized a desire to maintain school and municipal services, while those who voted against it cited affordability issues, concerns about school-related costs, and questions about whether Winchester had exhausted all other efficiencies first.

Respondents offered mixed feedback about preferred ballot question formats, but in general, people wanted more information earlier, and in plain, factual language that spelled out the bottom-line consequences of each possible outcome.

Winchester’s State of the Town Committee mounted a year-long public preparation effort, but the \$11.5 million figure didn’t emerge until five or six weeks before the election, Brady said, suggesting that town officials needed a longer runway to explain the amount and the implications.

Prior said the feedback suggested that the override’s proponents needed to engage more with residents who had questions or doubts, including growing worries about their own economic prospects. Visits to the food pantry were rising before the

election, Prior said, and more scholarship funds were being sought to help families access preschool and afterschool care.

“We were using things like, ‘Oh, it’s only, you know, 100 bucks a month,’” Prior said. “I mean, saying it’s like a cup of coffee (per day) isn’t really going to fly if people are concerned about job stability, or they’re paying for college, or they’ve just retired.”

In advice for other communities, Brady and Prior recommended messaging the need as early as possible; using clear, factual language to describe the impacts of different votes; having a go-to website or forum for information; and engaging with all constituencies and viewpoints.

Town leaders haven’t yet decided on pursuing another override request, but they’re starting a long-range financial planning committee to examine Winchester’s financial needs.

Better messaging alone won’t make the financial challenges disappear, they noted. Rising financial pressures, including health insurance spikes, general inflation, energy costs and other expenses, mean costs are outpacing the revenue-raising capacity of Proposition 2½.

“So I think at this point in time it’s causing a lot of challenges, and probably a number of other communities in Massachusetts are seeing those same things, right?” Brady said. “It’s not just us.”

— *Jennifer Kavanaugh*

Revere

City opens public spaces, celebrates neighborhood revitalization

An extensive period of investment and revitalization for a transit-oriented neighborhood located next to Revere Beach and an MBTA stop culminated with a celebratory ribbon-cutting in May for the opening of Fitzhenry Dog Park.

The multiyear investment in Revere’s Shirley Avenue corridor, which prioritized community engagement and vision, was made possible by collaborative efforts between the city, state agencies, neighborhood groups and local businesses.

■ **COMMONWEALTH** *continued on 24*

Around the Commonwealth

COMMONWEALTH

Continued from page 23



Officials from Revere City Hall partnered with state agencies and local stakeholders to reimagine public spaces in the city's Shirley Avenue neighborhood.

The public space improvements, which include the renovated Flaherty Square and a Shirley Avenue pocket park, were largely resident-driven through a participatory budgeting process.

Over the last decade, the Shirley Avenue neighborhood began to see significant housing development, primarily of studio and one-bedroom apartments, along with public investments.

"It's one of our older neighborhoods in the city, and certainly over the last two decades was in a bit of a need of revitalization," said Mayor Patrick Keefe Jr.

The participatory budgeting process was part of a broader partnership with MassDevelopment through the [Transformative Development Initiative](#), which partners with communities to strengthen downtowns and commercial districts in Gateway Cities. Beginning in September of 2022, Revere had a program fellow, Laura Christopher, who focused on accelerating growth and development and community center development in the neighborhood. The designation is typically for three years, but Revere's was extended for an additional year.

"And along with TDI, we had a full suite of state resources — through MassDevelopment, through [the Executive Office of] Housing and Livable Communities, through the Executive Office of Economic Development — for targeted investment in the neighborhood," said Planning and Community Development Chief Tom Skwierawski. "So we had a lot of eyes on the neighborhood,

and we had a lot of funding going toward the neighborhood."

Seeking to prioritize community wants and needs, the city used federal CARES Act and Community Block Development Grant funding, matched by funding from the Housing Choice Program and Revere's Community Improvement Trust (a local fund dedicated to community projects, supported by fees from developments requiring a special permit or variance), to pull together over \$500,000 to "take the show on the road," Skwierawski said, to engage with residents at in-person meetings, community events, and through an online platform. At these points of engagement, people were able to show support for various projects and priorities using ranked-choice voting.

More than 600 people voted, Skwierawski said, and the three new parks are a direct result of the process.

"Everyone had a chance to vote on some of the specific areas that they were looking to see improved and how they were looking to see dollars spent," Mayor Keefe said. "Of course, open space revitalization was one of the top areas, specifically the dog park, which was high on a lot of people's lists."

A small, city-owned, vacant lot was transformed into a landscaped area with seating as the site of the Shirley Avenue pocket park, also known as the community forest.

Residents had informally used Fitzhenry Park as a dog park for years before the investment upgraded the space. And Flaherty Square, which had previously been a traffic island, was turned into a seating area with new landscaping and trees.

The partnership with MassDevelopment has concluded, and with it the additional staff capacity provided by the program fellow, Skwierawski said. The city is now working on some additional neighborhood priorities that came out of the process, including a tree master plan, public art, and a decorative lighting project, to be completed sometime in the fall.

"It's probably been, at this point, well over a million dollars of investment," Skwierawski said.

Having a TDI program fellow, the

cumulative funding resources, and invested community partners were key factors in being able to complete a project of this magnitude.

"You have to be patient, take small steps," Keefe said. "You have to be willing to allow for investment. Make sure that it matches what you're looking for, but don't let perfect stand in the way of something really good."

—Meredith Gabriliska

Harwich

Town, nonprofits breathe new life into historic firehouse

The town of Harwich has partnered with local nonprofit groups to turn a vacant firehouse into affordable housing units and a community space.

The Bank Street Firehouse project is the culmination of efforts by the town, the Harwich Fire Association (membership is active and retired Harwich firefighters), and the Harwich Conservation Trust. Today, the former fire station has an event space, three one-bedroom apartments, an office, and items from the Fire Department's history, including the town's restored 1927 fire engine.

The Bank Street Firehouse dates back nearly 100 years and served as Harwich's fire station until 1995, when the Fire Department moved to a new station. The old firehouse was subsequently used by the town's harbormaster and local Boy Scout troops, but it eventually fell into disrepair. Plans to demolish the structure never came to fruition.

Harwich Fire Chief David LeBlanc said the Fire Association started looking at the building around 2020.

"They thought it would be a really cool project to buy the building and rehabilitate it, and store the town's original fire truck there," he said.

The station sits on land adjacent to the Cold Brook Preserve, a retired cranberry bog owned by the Harwich Conservation Trust that has been restored to as a habitat accessible via trails.

Discussions between the Fire Association and the Conservation Trust led to a formal

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Around the Commonwealth

COMMONWEALTH

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The post-renovation Bank Street Firehouse has three one-bedroom apartments, an office space, and a community gathering space. (Photo courtesy Harwich Conservation Trusts/Gerry Beetham)

request for proposals in 2022.

“There were some criteria put forward by the town,” LeBlanc said. “They were looking for a specific partner to facilitate what the town felt the best use would be for the building.”

The joint bid was successful.

“We weren’t the high bidder,” said retired Harwich Fire Chief Norm Clarke, “but we presented a package that was the best for the community.”

Clarke said renovating the fire station would require about \$1 million. The partnership applied for and received funding from the town’s Community Preservation Committee, given the building’s historic significance and its educational potential due to its proximity to Cold Brook Preserve. They secured further funding from the town’s Affordable Housing Trust, on the condition that the renovation include affordable housing units.

“I think the strong community partnership between the Fire Association and the Harwich Conservation Trust really turned this whole project into something that the whole community can get behind,” said Harwich Town Administrator Jay McGrail.

For all the years it went unused, the building was still in relatively good shape. Renovations finished earlier this year, and the event space is open for rentals. The rental process for the apartments is ongoing, Clarke said, but the application process is slated to open this fall.

Harwich Conservation Trust Executive Director Mike Lach recommended that

communities be “open to opportunities for redevelopment of existing structures and properties that can create multiple community benefits.”

McGrail added, “If you’re able to work with strong community partners and think outside the box on a number of broad perspectives, like recreation, conservation and housing ... the sky’s the limit.”

— Owen Page

Sharon

Town finds new home for community garden

Through a collaborative effort by town departments, the community garden group and the Trustees of Reservations, the town of Sharon recently relocated its popular and long-standing community garden to [Moose Hill Farm](#), a Trustees’ property.

The [Sharon Community Garden](#), launched in 1974 as a program independent from the town, had previously been located in Deborah Sampson Park. The land it was on had been slated for a new multi-use sports field, so the garden needed to be relocated. During the site search process, the Recreation and Conservation departments decided to reach out to the Trustees of Reservations, who were immediately interested. Work to prepare the site began in January, to ensure it was ready for planting in the spring.

“We have a diverse crowd here [at the garden],” said Donna Whitehead, Sharon Communications Specialist. “We have people from different backgrounds, different countries. There are herbs you might not be familiar with, and they swap tips, and they swap recipes.”

The garden group is about 50 years old.

“They have all been working together for a long time,” Whitehead said, “and they help each other out.”

The initial lease for their new location is for 10 years. The town appropriated \$100,000 for the move, which covered building fencing and an irrigation system. The Department of Public Works prepared the site for the garden, relocated a shed and provided compost. Fees charged for using the plots will support the program



The Sharon Community Garden, recently relocated to Moose Hill Farm, has an average of 80 families tending 110 plots each year. (Photo courtesy town of Sharon)

moving forward.

About 80 families are currently tending the 110-plot garden, and one plot is set aside for the Trustees to use for educational purposes.

“It’s just a very cool example of a municipality, a nonprofit, and a group of residents getting together and making something happen and coming up with a solution that works for everyone,” Whitehead said.

A story about the community garden was featured in the second edition of the town’s new monthly online newsletter, [Sharon Matters](#). The newsletter came out of the town’s goal to increase communication efforts after a long-time newspaper ceased publication, particularly finding ways to reach those who may not use social media platforms.

The newsletter is available on the website and is emailed to subscribers.

“All towns need to be creative on how to get through all the noise, and newsletters have become a good way for towns to communicate important information to their residents,” Whitehead said. “It could end on that information aspect, but if it’s also the fun stuff. Residents will come back when it’s time to learn about when to register to vote, pay your dog license fees, that kind of thing.”

— Meredith Gabrilksa

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

People



Chad Lovett

Chad Lovett became the new town administrator in Norwell on June 22.

Before coming to Norwell, Lovett served for two-and-a-half years as the town administrator in Blackstone.

Previously, he served for four years as the director of facilities and capital planning in Wrentham.

Lovett earned a master's degree in public administration from Suffolk University, after completing the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program. He also has a bachelor's degree in public administration from Southern New Hampshire University.

In Norwell, Lovett replaced **Darleen Sullivan**, who served the town for more than 13 years, the last several of which as town administrator.



Susan Pimental

Susan Pimental became the new town administrator in Rehoboth on July 1.

Pimental had been serving as Rehoboth's director of finance and compliance for more than

three years, and had served on the town's Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee. Previously, she was the chief financial officer for Bristol County Sheriff's Office, the managing partner and general manager of Hillside Country Club, the chief financial officer for Paramount Restaurant Supply Corp., a partner with Reality Check Inc., and an accounting manager at New Dimensions Accessories. She has also worked as a financial consultant.

She has a bachelor's degree in accounting from Bridgewater State University.

In Rehoboth, Pimental replaced **Deborah Arruda**, who had served

the town for eight years in various positions.



Kieran Meehan

Kieran Meehan became the new town administrator in Townsend on July 10, after serving as the interim town administrator since the beginning of the year.

Meehan joined Townsend as the housing and grants administrator in March 2025. Previously, he has worked as a real estate agent for Sotheby's International Realty, a database administrator for the Groton School, a housing manager at Harvard Business School, and an account manager and client services specialist for REZ-1.

He has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Saint Michael's College, and a graduate certificate in strategic management from the Harvard Extension School.

He served for six years on the Dunstable Select Board, until 2026.

In Townsend, Meehan replaced **Nelson Mui**, who left to become the deputy administrator of administration and finance for the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority.



Robert Fennessy

Robert "Bob" Fennessy became the new town administrator in Plympton on July 27, after serving for three months in an interim capacity.

Before coming to Plympton, Fennessy had served for seven months as the interim town administrator in Halifax. He previously served for two years as the town administrator in Carver, for five years as the town administrator in Kingston, and for two years as the town administrator in Boylston. He served for six terms on the Select Board in Plainville, where he

also served on the Finance Committee, the Conservation Commission and the Elementary School Council.

An attorney, Fennessy has also run his own law firm and worked as a senior project manager for Capital Strategic Solutions. He has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and psychology from Northeastern University, a master's degree of education in public administration from Boston University, and a law degree from UMass Law School.

In Plympton, Fennessy replaced **Elizabeth Dennehy**, who left in April to become town administrator in Easton.



Elizabeth Alwan

Elizabeth "Lizzie" Alwan became the new town coordinator in Warwick on Aug. 3.

Alwan has been serving on the Leverett Board of Health since 2023. She has also served on a state mental

health board and worked for more than four years at the National Academy of Public Administration in various roles, including senior research associate and communications specialist. She has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in public policy and administration, both from UMass Amherst.

In Warwick, Alwan replaced **David Young**, who retired recently after serving for two decades in town.



Kristen Las

Kristen Las will become Shrewsbury's first deputy town manager on Nov. 2, returning to a town where she previously served for 12 years in numerous roles.

Las has been serving as the town manager in Westford

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since February 2023. Previously, in Shrewsbury, she served as the principal planner, economic development coordinator, and assistant town manager. She has also been a lecturer at Clark University and a senior planner for Beals and Thomas Inc. in Southborough. She serves on the boards of the Middlesex 3 Coalition and the 495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership, and has held several leadership roles in the Massachusetts chapter of the American Planning Association.

Las has a bachelor's degree in geography from Penn State, and a master's degree in community development and planning from Clark University.



Melissa Murphy Rodrigues

North Andover Town Manager **Melissa Murphy Rodrigues** spoke about "Leading With Empathy" on the Aug. 14 episode of the [GovLov podcast](#). During the episode, Rodrigues, who has served in North Andover

for the past seven years, spoke about what empathy looks like in government leadership. She also shared advice about maintaining empathetic leadership while making tough decisions.

The episode was hosted by **Marissa Baum**, head of communications in East Hartford, Connecticut. Last November, Baum spoke at a Women Leading Government event that featured Rodrigues as a panelist.

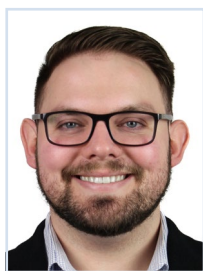


Kevin Mizikar

Shrewsbury Town Manager **Kevin Mizikar** was featured in a LinkedIn article last month called "[Leadership That Endures](#)." The article, written by **Ben Thatcher**, the city manager in Boerne, Texas,

describes Mizikar's path into public service, his work in Shrewsbury, and his approach to leadership. Thatcher had met Mizikar in April at the Athenian Leadership Program sponsored by the International City/County Management Association and the College of Charleston. Mizikar, who had previously completed the program, had returned there as a facilitator.

Mizikar is first vice president of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and serves on the MMA Board of Directors.



Jordan Berube

Jordan Berube joined the MMA and MIIA on July 20 as an IT technical support assistant, a new position in the organization.

Previously, Berube had been working as an IT field service technician III at BAE Systems Inc., and worked as an IT field services engineer at Skanska USA Inc. and as an IT help desk technician at Alliance Funding Group. He is working toward a bachelor's degree in computer science from Southern New Hampshire University.



Abigail Ferrone

Abigail Ferrone joined the MMA on Aug. 31 as the new legislative coordinator.

For the past year, Ferrone worked as a legislative researcher for Rep. Angelo Puppolo Jr., and before that as a legislative intern for Sen. Robyn Kennedy. She has interned at Speak for the Trees (now Tree Boston), and at the district offices of U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren and U.S. Rep. Jake Auchincloss. She has a bachelor's degree in political science and philosophy from Simmons University, and expects to receive her master's degree in public administration from Framingham State University in May 2027.

At the MMA, Ferrone replaced **Daniel Yi**, who worked at the MMA for four years and left last month to attend Boston College Law School.



Jonah Wolf

Jonah Wolf joined the MMA on July 20 as a legislative intern.

Wolf is majoring in psychology and economics at UMass Boston, and is expecting to graduate in December. He previously worked as an associate at Biohub Nash, developing more than 450 spreadsheets about life sciences companies in the Nashville area. He was also a storyboard artist and writer for BigTinyTales Productions, creating storyboards and collaborating with a creative team to research and outline educational content for children's animated programming.

Wolf will be interning at the MMA through November.



Norman DiPietri

Norman DiPietri joined MIIA on July 27 as the new senior risk management trainer.

DiPietri has worked in safety management and risk control over the past two decades, in areas including general industries, heavy civil and vertical construction, engineering, environmental, railway, surface mining, maritime, insurance risk control, bioresearch and municipal safety. In recent years, DiPietri has worked as a regional safety manager at Cushman and Wakefield, as a town safety manager in Natick, and as a senior project safety manager at Moderna.

DiPietri has extensive experience training employers and insurance industry clients in workplace safety and risk control. He has an Occupational Safety and Hazard Administration CSHO

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construction safety certification, numerous other OSHA safety training certifications, an associate's degree in criminal justice from MassBay Community College, and a bachelor's degree in sociology from Framingham State College.

At MIIA, DiPietri replaced **Kimlee Lindgren**, who retired last October.



Maureen Montanus

Maureen Montanus became the new director of risk management for MIIA Member Services at Cabot Risk Strategies on June 1.

Previously, Montanus worked as a senior risk

management consultant for Cabot for eight years, providing a range of services to communities served by MIIA. She has also worked as a risk consultant for TriNet and in loss control for Alexander & Schmidt, developed curriculum at the OSHA Training Institute Education Center in Keene, New Hampshire, served as an adjunct faculty member at Keene State University, and worked as a field property loss adjuster at Safeco Insurance.

Earlier in her career, Montanus was a managing partner in several Boston restaurants when then-Mayor **Thomas Menino** appointed her to a city task force for nightclub safety, following the

2003 Station Nightclub fire that left 100 dead and injured more than 200 others in West Warwick, Rhode Island. The experience — which involved developing a crowd management program and other safety checklists and resources for nightclubs — inspired her to earn her master's degree in occupational safety and health from Keene State, and to focus on a career in safety.

At Cabot, Montanus replaced **Stephen Batchelder**, who worked at the company for more than two decades. He started there in 2005 as the director of claim operations, and became a vice president in 2016. Before his retirement in late June, he devoted more than four decades to claims and risk management work.



David Hildt

David Hildt, a former MMA board member who served as Amesbury's second mayor, died on July 16 at age 79.

Hildt served as mayor from 2002 to 2006, and served as president of the Massachusetts

Mayors' Association in 2005. He had also served on the Amesbury City Council and the School Committee.

Geoffrey Walker, a Newbury Select Board member and longtime public servant, died on July 6 at age 79.

Walker had been on the Select Board for



Geoffrey Walker
(Photo courtesy town of Newbury)

17 years at the time of his death. Over the past three decades, he had served on numerous other boards and committees, including the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, the Merrimack River Beach Alliance and the Merrimack

Valley Planning Commission, according to an announcement from the town. A longtime environmental advocate, he received numerous awards and recognitions for his conservation work.

Calling the loss of Walker a "big void to fill in the town of Newbury," the Select Board on Aug. 11 voted to wait until the annual town election next May to fill Walker's seat, when his term would have been completed.

Paul Brindle III, a former city councillor and mayor in Pittsfield, died on July 28 at age 87.

An Air Force veteran, Brindle served for three terms on the City Council during the 1970s, and then was mayor from 1976 to 1980.

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.

Public Works Expo set for Sept. 16-17 in Marlborough

The Massachusetts Highway Association will host the 47th New England Public Works Expo on Sept. 16 and 17 at the Royal Plaza Trade Center in Marlborough.

The show features some of the latest heavy equipment, construction and municipal and highway products and services from regional and national vendors.

Admission is free, and attendees may register in person.

The 2025 Public Works Expo featured more than 220 vendors and had 2,200 attendees.

The expo will be open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sept. 16 and from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sept. 17.

The event will feature a two-hour block of educational seminars each day, as well as a complimentary lunch for all attendees.

For more information, visit www.nepublicworksexpo.org.



The 47th New England Public Works Expo, to be held on Sept. 16 and 17 in Marlborough, will feature the latest municipal and highway products and services from regional and national vendors.

DPU to offer siting and permitting process webinar

The Department of Public Utilities' Public Participation and Siting Divisions will host a webinar on Sept. 17 to provide an overview of the Energy Facilities Siting Board's new siting and permitting process for large clean energy infrastructure.

The webinar, to be held from noon to 1:30 p.m., will cover each phase of the process, from pre-filing consultation

and engagement to the conclusion of the adjudicatory proceeding. DPU staff will highlight opportunities for public participation and intervening in a proceeding, review key changes under the new regulations, and offer a look into how the EFSB evaluates projects and reaches its decisions.

The session is intended for those interested in learning more about the

new EFSB consolidated permit process for large clean energy infrastructure, including municipal officials, regional planning agencies, and community-based organizations. Interpretation and translation services are available upon request.

Registration is [available online](#). To request language access accommodations, email dpu.ej@mass.gov. ●

KEYNOTE

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From 2003 to 2007, Speck was director of design at the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., where he oversaw the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design, as well as the Mayors' Institute on City Design.

In 2007, he founded Speck & Associates, now called Speck Dempsey. He published "Walkable City" in 2012, and "Walkable City Rules: 101 Steps to Making Better Places," in 2018, both of which are well-regarded by planners in the field and have been translated into numerous languages.

At [Speck Dempsey](#), where his partner is Chris Dempsey, former state assistant transportation secretary, Speck has worked on projects for Massachusetts

communities including Lowell, Concord and East Longmeadow. In Watertown, Speck created a plan for making the five-spoked Watertown Square more pedestrian friendly, and he has presented "The Walkable City," a two-day program at Harvard University featuring planner and Watertown City Manager George Proakis.

Speck has considerable experience working with rural communities, where residents also "desire and deserve walkable, livable places where they can gather to shop, worship, recreate, and relax," he told the MMA.

While at the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design, Speck worked with rural leaders from across the country to develop best practices in rural planning and design. In rural areas, where people depend heavily on cars to travel among far-flung places, he takes a different approach to helping communities improve livability

for residents, focusing particularly on road safety improvements and incremental changes designed to fit within the fiscal constraints often faced by rural communities.

Speck's firm has worked with Lancaster, the oldest town in Worcester County, and with Freeport, Maine, Cold Spring, New York, and White Salmon, Washington. In Zapata County, Texas, where 14,000 residents occupy an area larger than Berkshire County, Speck led a multi-day workshop focusing on community building, gateways, streetscapes, zoning, and design guidelines.

"Every town, no matter how small, deserves a walkable heart — one that is built for people, not cars," Speck said. "[This] approach to town planning, placemaking, and street design can help every community in the Commonwealth build a stronger identity and a safer, more vibrant future." ●



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Municipal communicators gather in Foxborough

Andrew Cassidy, the MBTA's senior director of digital strategy and engagement, discusses digital storytelling during a meeting of Massachusetts Municipal Communicators on Aug. 20 in Foxborough. The meeting also featured a digital accessibility panel with Adam Gojanovich, accessibility training coordinator at the Accessibility Center for Consulting, Education and Support Services (ACCESS); Mindy Johnson, documents and communications accessibility coordinator at ACCESS; Lilia Melikechi, communications and training manager at the Massachusetts Office on Disability; and Rob Dias, assistive technology information specialist at the Massachusetts Office on Disability.



DEVELOPMENT BILL

Continued from page 1

The MMA strongly opposes both proposals, stating that these types of by-right provisions undermine essential local decision-making and bypass community input.

Also concerning is a provision in the Senate bill that would create a “preference modifier” for all grant applicants that have specific zoning or land-use policies for all discretionary and competitive grant funding across all agencies.

Alcohol

The Senate bill includes multiple provisions related to alcohol laws, including an MMA priority to return control of bar and restaurant liquor licenses to cities and towns. The Senate also included local-option provisions for municipalities to permit happy hour pricing on alcoholic beverages and to allow public drinking in designated areas, as happened this past summer under a pilot program.

Public meetings

The Senate bill includes a key MMA priority, to codify existing remote and hybrid public meeting flexibilities, as well as remote provisions for representative town

meetings. These existing authorizations are set to expire next year. The Senate included a provision aimed at limiting nuisance open meeting law violation complaints, allowing a municipality to seek relief from the attorney general’s office if a complainant files more than 12 complaints within a year.

Municipal buildings

The Senate bill would create a commission to study the concept of a Municipal and Public Safety Building Authority. The commission’s charge would be to develop a framework to assist cities and towns with the construction, rehabilitation, and long-term management of municipal and public safety facilities, a long-time priority of the MMA.

Smart growth

The Senate bill would update payments for Chapter 40R Smart Growth zoning.

Other provisions

Both the House and Senate bills include provisions that would:

- Standardize site plan review
- Create an opt-in program for communities wishing to convert commercial buildings to housing
- Create regulations related to

micromobility devices, including a speed tier classification system and standardized definitions for ridership and safety

- Allow municipalities to create bylaws allowing for tenants of multifamily buildings to have a right of first refusal when the building is sold

Funding

Grant authorizations in the Senate bill include:

- \$25 million to support the Downtown Vitality Fund
- \$25 million for Creative Economy and Cultural Infrastructure grants
- \$20 million for community development financial institutions
- \$75 million for the development and application of AI

Subject to funding, the Senate bill would require an AED at any public facility holding a sporting event or activity.

Under legislative rules, the conference committee has until Jan. 5, 2027, the beginning of the next, two-year legislative session, to work out the differences between the two bills and vote on a final report. ●

MIIA

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MIIA advises communities to maintain proper insulation, ventilation, and roof drainage to help reduce freeze-thaw damage. If snow is already present, rain can also add significant weight to accumulated snow and ice, increasing stress on roofs. Monitoring roof conditions, keeping drains functional, and addressing uneven snow and ice accumulation remain important even during a warmer winter.

A test for drainage

Heavy rain can quickly expose existing building vulnerabilities. MIIA recommends keeping roof drains, gutters, and stormwater drains clear, checking sump pumps and known water-entry points, and confirming that water sensors and alert contacts are operational. Buildings with basements or a history of water intrusion may warrant closer attention.

MIIA’s water-loss prevention guidance also recommends knowing the locations of water and utility shutoffs and maintaining building schematics, so staff

can act quickly when a leak or water loss occurs.

Coastal communities have an added concern: [NOAA has warned](#) that El Niño can contribute to more frequent high-tide flooding along parts of the East Coast by influencing storm tracks and storm surge. NOAA provides [water-level forecasts](#) to help track changing coastal conditions.

Different vulnerabilities

Even with [Atlantic hurricane activity expected to be lower overall](#), damaging storms remain possible. Coastal storms, nor’easters, and severe thunderstorms can still bring strong winds, power outages, and property damage.

Ahead of significant storms, MIIA advises inspecting rooftop equipment, trimming dead and damaged tree limbs, securing outdoor equipment and other objects that could become airborne, and testing emergency generators.

Preparedness extends beyond the physical building. Communities should review emergency response roles, backup communications, and procedures for

maintaining essential operations during outages. Staff should know which contractors and vendors to contact during an emergency, and who has authority to make time-sensitive response decisions.

[Agility Recovery](#), a MIIA partner, also recommends establishing emergency communications before a storm and taking steps to protect critical equipment and records from potential flood exposure.

Seasonal outlooks can’t tell us exactly when a storm will hit or whether winter will be snowy, icy, or rainy, but they can indicate which conditions are more likely. With El Niño expected to strengthen into fall and winter, the outlook can serve as a useful planning tool. It’s a good time to review known vulnerabilities, watch forecasts as they evolve, and make targeted preparations now to protect municipal buildings, employees and operations.

MIIA members can access a range of preparedness and risk mitigation resources, including seasonal preparedness checklists, at emiia.org/risk-management-resources. ●

Classified Advertisements

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Fire Chief

Town of Sunapee, N.H.

For generations, Sunapee has been protected by call firefighters who respond from their homes and workplaces. That tradition continues. What's new is the leadership behind it. The person selected will be the first to hold this position full-time — with the opportunity to build the systems, training pipeline, and long-range plans a modern call department needs, while protecting everything that already works. The department operates two stations with roughly 22 call firefighters and EMS providers, responding to everything from structure fires and highway collisions to water rescues on Lake Sunapee. Salary \$97,000 to \$145,000, commensurate with qualifications and experience. First review of applications begins Sept. 4. Full details, including qualifications and how to apply, are in the position guide found here: www.sunapeenh.gov/fire-department-emergency-medical-services/job-opening/town-sunapee-full-time-fire-chief.

Director of Public Works

Town of Wilton, N.H.

The town of Wilton is looking for a hands-on leader to head our Department of Public Works. Do you enjoy leading a team that gets things done? Wilton would love to hear from you. This is a chance to make a visible, lasting difference in the daily life of our community. About the department: Wilton's Department of Public Works manages and maintains the infrastructure our community depends on. From roadways and bridges to parks and municipal grounds. The department is currently made up of a Highway Division and a Parks, Recreation, and Grounds Division, and works closely with the Cemetery Trustees, the Sewer and Water Commissions, and the Recycling and Transfer Station to support townwide services. As director, you'll be supported by a part-time public works coordinator, and a Highway Division that may include a foreman and a team of truck drivers/laborers who also lend a hand to other town departments as needed. What you'll do: Lead winter maintenance operations — plowing, sanding and salting — and pitch in behind the wheel when needed. Oversee the upkeep and improvement of town roads, bridges, buildings, and grounds. Build and manage the department's annual budget, and guide procurement and contracting for public works projects. Supervise, train, and support a team of dedicated field and maintenance staff. Coordinate with the Sewer and Water Commissions, Recycling and Transfer Station, and other town partners. Act as the in-field manager of the town's stormwater management and environmental compliance efforts. Represent Public Works before the Select Board, Town Administrator, boards, and the public. Serve as part of Wilton's emergency response team, on call for storms and other emergencies. What we're looking for: A bachelor's degree in engineering, construction management, public administration, environmental science, or a related field, plus three-plus years of progressively responsible experience in engineering, construction, or public works

leadership — or a high school diploma/equivalent with six-plus years of progressively responsible experience leading public works, construction, or similar teams, including 10-plus years of operating heavy equipment. (An equivalent combination of education and experience will also be considered.) A valid CDL-A or CDL-B (or the ability to obtain one), and a valid New Hampshire driver's license. Strong communication skills and comfort working with town boards, staff, contractors, and residents. Willingness to be on call for emergencies and, ideally, to live within about 20 miles of the DPW garage. Why Wilton? You'll join a close-knit New Hampshire community where your work is visible and valued — the roads you maintain, the parks you tend, and the emergencies you respond to all directly shape daily life in Wilton. It's a role with real independence, a supportive town administrator and Select Board, and the opportunity to help shape the department's future as it grows. All new equipment, including trucks and an excavator; and an updated Road Surface Management Program and GIS services to boot. Learn more at www.wiltonnh.gov/government/departments/human_resources.

Public Safety Telecommunicator

Town of Truro

The town of Truro is accepting applications for one full-time and one part-time Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST). PSTs receive emergency and non-emergency calls, dispatch police and fire personnel, provide emergency medical instructions, and perform other duties. Certifications in enhanced 911, CJIS, APCO Basic Telecommunicator, EMD-APCO, CPR/First Responder are preferred, but will train. The starting hourly rate for both positions is \$31.43 per hour. For the full-time position, the hourly rate does not include overtime, educational incentive, holiday pay, EMD stipend, and shift differential. Please send a cover letter and résumé via email to jcjalise@truro-ma.gov. The town of Truro is

an equal opportunity employer, and does not discriminate because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual preference, national origin, or disability and complies with the laws and standards of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Department of Labor. The application period will remain open until filled.

Town Administrator

Town of Douglas

The Town Administrator serves as the chief administrative officer of the town in accordance with a special act of the Legislature. The town administrator provides policy recommendations to the Board of Selectmen and implements policies adopted by the board. The administrator is the personnel director, and appoints most department heads, supervises the activities of municipal departments, prepares the annual budget, and capital improvement plan, and manages the business and administrative affairs of the town. The town administrator shall act under the direct supervision of the Board of Selectmen. The job description for this position, as well as an employment application, are available on the town of Douglas website at www.douglas-ma.gov. This is a full-time, benefit eligible, salaried position with a starting pay range of \$165,000 to \$185,000, depending on experience. Send a cover letter, resume, references/letters of reference to: Town of Douglas Selectmen's Office, Attn: Executive Assistant Lisa C. Freeman, 29 Depot St., Douglas, MA 01516 or lrfreeman@douglas-ma.gov by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 8. This position will remain open until filled. The town of Douglas is an equal opportunity employer and service provider.

Chief of Police

City of Medford

The city of Medford is seeking a highly qualified, experienced, and forward-thinking law enforcement executive to serve as its next Chief of Police.

■ CLASSIFIEDS *continued on 32*

Classified advertising rates and information

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

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

Classified advertising rates

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

Member rates

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

Nonmember rates

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

Beacon deadlines and publication dates

The Beacon is published on the first business day of each month, except in the summer, when a combined July-August issue is published in mid-July.

October Beacon

Deadline: September 25
Publication: October 2

November Beacon

Deadline: October 26
Publication: November 2

Placing an ad

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

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

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

See www.mma.org for details.

Classified Advertisements

CLASSIFIEDS

Continued from page 31

This is an exceptional opportunity to lead a metro Boston police department as it continues its positive momentum to deliver exceptional police services. The chief of police is the senior executive of the Police Department and is responsible for overall administration, strategic direction, operational performance, professional standards, and community trust. The successful candidate will bring broad command-level experience, strong professional judgment, and a demonstrated commitment to ethical policing, organizational integrity, and service-centered leadership. Key Attributes Sought: The city is seeking candidates who demonstrate: Extensive command-level law enforcement experience in a municipal or similarly complex policing environment. Sound judgment and calm decision-making in high-risk, high-visibility situations. A reputation for integrity, fairness, ethical conduct, and accountability. Strong administrative, organizational, labor relations, and fiscal management capabilities. Commitment to community policing, procedural justice, problem solving, and partnerships. Professional credibility with sworn and civilian personnel, municipal leadership, unions, community members, and regional partners. Required and Preferred Qualifications: A minimum of 10 years, or equivalent experience, in municipal, state, federal, campus, transit, or military policing, including five years in a progressively responsible law enforcement management role. Experience leading a full-service police department or major operational division is strongly preferred. Bachelor's degree in a related field is required; master's degree or equivalent executive-level education is preferred. Certification or eligibility for certification as a police officer in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or ability to obtain certification within the city's timeframe, is required. Salary and Benefits: Salary range: The salary range is \$245,000 to \$265,000, dependent on experience and qualifications. Benefits: Comprehensive municipal executive benefits package, including health insurance, retirement, paid leave, and benefits consistent with city policy. Candidates should apply online at www.GovHRjobs.com with resume and cover letter by Sept. 28. All questions should be directed to Jon Fehlman, Senior Consultant, MGT, at 847-380-3240, ext. 142. The city of Medford is an equal opportunity employer.

Chief Financial Officer City of Amesbury

The city of Amesbury (17,500), seeks a seasoned public sector finance manager to serve as the city's next CFO. With a strong mayor/council form of government, the CFO serves as the de facto chief administrative officer, reporting to a "strong" mayor. The CFO serves as the city accountant and is expected to have a hands-on role while coordinating and overseeing the Assessors, Finance and Administration, and Treasurer/Collectors. The assistant city accountant, procurement and liability manager, and part-time financial analyst report directly to the CFO. A Standard and Poor's bond rating of AA, fiscal 2027 operating budget just over \$93 million, with approximately \$40 million of that attributed to schools. The city also has Water and Sewer enterprise funds. Bachelor's degree (master's

preferred) and seven-plus years of progressively responsible public management experience related to finance and administrative functions; or an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job. Salary range to \$160,000, plus \$4,500 stipend for service on the Retirement Board; starting salary DOQ/E. EOE. Potential candidates can learn more at www.mrigov.com/career. To apply, submit a resume and cover letter, in confidence, as a single PDF to recruitment@mrigrv.com by Sept. 21.

Water Technician Town of Groton

The town of Groton Water Department is seeking qualified applicants for a full-time (40 hour) Water Technician. The hourly range is \$32.02 to \$42.47 based on experience. The water technician is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the water pumping stations, treatment and distribution systems, to ensure adequate and reliable water for domestic use and fire protection. Provides the general public with the best possible service for the least cost; oversees the completion of any assigned projects; monitors all maintenance of buildings and repair of water system(s), new construction, wells, pumping stations, water tanks, and customer relations; assists in coordinating the needs and operations of the Water Department with all interested and affected parties, such as town agencies and private property owners. Communicates with contractors and developers to ensure that end users' interests are protected. Coordinates the work of outside contractors and professional engineers. Provides emergency response to water and ensures efficient and economical repairs; resolves customer complaints; intervenes with staff to resolve disputes over water quality and inadequate pressures. On-call rotation required (30-minute radius preferred). All other duties as assigned. The position requires a high school diploma or equivalent; three to five years related experience; advanced technical training or coursework in civil or sanitary mechanical engineering preferred; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Possession of a Massachusetts Drinking Water Supply, Grade I-Treatment, Grade II Distribution, and valid Driver's License. To apply, please send your cover letter and resume to Melisa Doig, Human Resources Director, Town Hall, 173 Main St., Groton, MA 01450 or humanresources@grotonma.gov. For questions, call 978-448-1145. Job description is available by request. Deadline for applications: Sept. 11. The town of Groton is an equal opportunity employer.

Custodian I Town of Groton

The town of Groton Department of Public Works is accepting applications for a 40 hour/week Custodian I position. The pay range is \$21.29 to \$30.40 based on experience. The Custodian I position performs routine building cleaning duties for municipal buildings and all other duties as required, including mowing and snow clearing. High school diploma or equivalent, and driver license are required; must also be able to make basic math computations; understand and follow oral and written instructions and work independently. Must

be able to demonstrate possession of the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform custodial work. Must have skill in use of hand and power cleaning tools. There is occasional lifting up to 10 pounds, and seldom lifting up to 100 pounds. To apply, please complete a job application and submit to Melisa Doig, Human Resources Director, Town Hall, 173 Main St., Groton, MA 01450 or by email to humanresources@grotonma.gov. For questions, call 978-448-1145. Job description is available by request. Deadline for application: Sept. 18. The town of Groton is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

SERVICES

Municipal Energy Services

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

Tax Title Legal Services

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

Municipal 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.

■ CLASSIFIEDS continued on 33

Classified Advertisements

CLASSIFIEDS

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Learn more at www.VADARsystems.com. Locally owned and operated at 20 Main St., Suite G1, Acton, MA 01701.

Municipal Accounting and Consulting Services

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

Executive Recruiting, Management and Governance Consulting Services

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

Municipal Support Services

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

Special Counsel, Public Construction and Infrastructure Services

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

508-665-4310.

Public Management Consultants

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

Human Resources Consulting

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

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.

Town Counsel Services

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

information on the legal services that KP Law provides, please visit www.k-plaw.com or contact Lauren Goldberg, Esq., at 617-556-0007, or toll-free at 800-548-3522, or at lgoldberg@k-plaw.com.

Human 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.com, post to our job board at govhrjobs.com, or contact our team of experts at 847-380-3240.

Labor Counsel Services/Municipal Human Resources Specialists

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

Town Counsel/Legal Services

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

Executive Recruitment and Municipal Management

Groux-White Consulting LLC is a full-service municipal management consulting firm specializing in executive recruitment, interim management, form of government studies, organizational effectiveness evaluations, strategic and financial planning and conflict resolution. Tom Groux and Rick White, One Pelham Road, Lexington, MA 02421; rickwhite58@verizon.net; 781-572-6332; www.grouxwhiteconsulting.com. ●

Calendar

SEPTEMBER

8 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, hybrid board meeting, 8:45-9:45 a.m., Shrewsbury Public Library, Shrewsbury. Contact: MMA Member Program Manager Denise Baker

8 MMA Board of Directors, hybrid meeting, 10-11:45 a.m., Shrewsbury Public Library, Shrewsbury. Contact: MMA Chief of Staff Elanienne Coste

8 Local Government Advisory Commission, hybrid meeting, 1-2 p.m., Shrewsbury Public Library, Shrewsbury. Contact: MMA Chief of Staff Elanienne Coste

10 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Devens Common Center, Devens. Contact: MMA Member Program Manager Denise Baker

17-18 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, fall conference, Sea Crest Hotel, Falmouth. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Martin Davis

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

25 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, regional meeting, 8-10 a.m., Newburyport City Hall. Contact: MMA Member Program Manager Denise Baker

29 MMA webinar, infrastructure financing program, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre

OCTOBER

1 Massachusetts Select Board Association, Fiscal Summit, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Lake Pearl, Wrentham. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Martin Davis

8 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, boot camp, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Foxborough Community Center, Foxborough. Contact: MMA Member Program Manager Denise Baker



The Beacon

Massachusetts Municipal Association

3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108

13 MMA Board of Directors, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., long-range planning meeting, The Conference Center at Waltham Woods, Waltham. Contact: MMA Chief of Staff Elanienne Coste

19 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, state event at ICMA Annual Conference, 6-9 p.m., Gladstone's, Long Beach, California. Contact: MMA Member Program Manager Denise Baker

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

NOVEMBER

5 Women Leading Government, meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Lake Pearl, Wrentham. Contact: MMA Member Program Manager Denise Baker

7 Association of Town Finance Committees, annual meeting, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Sharon Community Center, Sharon. Contact: MMA Member Program Manager Denise Baker

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

10 MMA Board of Directors, hybrid meeting, 10-11:45 a.m., MMA office, Boston. Contact: MMA Chief of Staff Elanienne Coste

10 Local Government Advisory Commission, hybrid meeting, 1-2 p.m., State House, Boston. Contact: MMA Chief of Staff Elanienne Coste

19-20 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, fall conference, Hotel Northampton, Northampton. Contact: MMA Member Program Manager Denise Baker

DECEMBER

3 Massachusetts Mayors' Association, holiday dinner, 5 p.m. Contact: MMA Membership and Project Assistant Katherine Christy

10 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, joint holiday meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Publick House, Sturbridge. Contact: MMA Member Program Manager Denise Baker and MMA Member Program Coordinator Martin Davis

JANUARY

21-23 Connect 351, MMA's annual conference, Menino Convention and Exhibition Center and Omni Boston Hotel, Boston. Visit connect351.org or contact MMA Conference and Meeting Planner Timmery Kuck.

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

MMA contacts

Denise Baker can be reached at dbaker@mma.org

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For more information, visit www.mma.org.