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## **FY25 state budget close to release**

#### By Jackie Lavender Bird

Legislative leaders announced on July 17 that they have an "agreement in principle" on a compromise fiscal 2025 state spending plan, though the bill had not been released as of publication of this issue of The Beacon.

The MMA is closely following these developments and will post updates on<u>www.mma.org</u> as soon as possible. The state's fiscal year began on July 1, but the state has been operating on an interim budget for July.

Budget bills passed this spring by the <u>House</u> (H. 4601) and <u>Senate</u> (S. 2800), each totalling roughly \$58 billion, reflect a commitment to a fiscal partnership with municipalities, but there are a series of differences on some accounts affecting cities and towns, and the MMA weighed in to support the higher appropriation in each case.

Here's a review of key municipal budget issues:

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Newton Mayor Ruthanne Fuller discusses the importance of local aid in the fiscal 2025 budget during the June 11 virtual meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission.

#### **Appropriations**

**UGGA:** The Senate appropriated \$1.3 billion for Unrestricted General Government Aid, an increase of \$38.1 million, or 3%, over the fiscal 2024 level of funding, while the House approved a 1% increase. With property taxes tightly capped by Proposition 2½, the MMA has been pointing out that cities and towns rely on adequate state revenue sharing — particularly through UGGA — to provide essential municipal and school services, ensure safe streets and neighborhoods, and maintain vital infrastructure. The MMA has asked the conference committee to support the Senate's UGGA proposal.

**Chapter 70:** Both the House and Senate bills would fund Chapter 70 aid at more than \$6.8 billion, representing a commitment to fund the Student Opportunity Act in line with the originally intended schedule. Both chambers also recognized the challenges facing "minimum aid" districts — nearly three-quarters of all school districts and proposed a significant increase in minimum aid above the \$30 per student proposed by the governor in January. The House budget bill calls for minimum new aid of \$104 per student, while the Senate proposes \$110. The MMA has asked the conference committee to support the Senate's proposal.

**Special education:** Both the House and Senate budget bills would fully

**BUDGET** continued on 21

# Economic development bills head to conference committee

#### By Ali DiMatteo

Multi-billion-dollar economic development bond bills passed by the <u>House</u> <u>on June 27</u> and the <u>Senate on July</u> <u>11</u> appear headed to a House-Senate conference committee to work out the differences.

The \$2.8 billion Senate bill (<u>S. 2869</u>) and the \$4.1 billion House bill (<u>H. 4804</u>) include many of the same investments of interest to municipalities, including:

- \$400 million for <u>MassWorks</u> grants for local infrastructure
- \$100 million for the <u>Rural</u> <u>Development Fund</u>
- \$150 million for the <u>Public Library</u> <u>Construction Program</u> to help municipalities update and rehabilitate

these essential facilities

- \$100 million for grants, through the <u>Seaport Economic Council</u>, to provide support for the state's 78 coastal municipalities to withstand and adapt to the impacts of climate change
- \$400 million for climate technology bonding authorizations

The Senate adopted an amendment, known as SAPHE 2.0, that would create a statewide action plan for bolstering public health services, while providing important fiscal safeguards for municipalities.

The Senate also adopted a "happy hour" amendment to allow for the local adoption of rules around serving discounted

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** continued on 26

#### 2024 MMA Board of Directors

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

#### **Executive Committee**

John McLaughlin, MMA President and MMCA President Councillor, Waltham

Jamie Hellen, MMA Vice President Town Administrator, Franklin

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

Ruthanne Fuller, MMaA First Vice President Mayor, Newton

Andrew Hogeland, MSA President Select Board, Williamstown

Nicole LaChapelle, MMaA President Mayor, Easthampton

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Kevin Sullivan, ATFC First Vice President Finance Committee, Hanson

Brendan Sweeney, MMCA First Vice President Councillor, Beverly

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# **Executive Director's Report**

### **Exciting changes at the MMA**

In this column, I'd like to talk about a recent and exciting change in the organizational structure of the MMA.

For many years, the MMA has been organized into four principal divisions: Administration and Finance, Communications and Membership, Legislative, and MIIA. This structure has served both the organization and its members well, providing an array of services and information that have become synonymous with the MMA itself.

With an eye toward enhancing these already high-performing teams and the member services that they provide, I have decided, effective July 1, to split the Communications and Membership Division into two separate divisions: a Membership Division led by Candace Pierce as Senior Executive and Membership Director, and a Communications Division led by John Ouellette as Senior Executive and Communications Director. This change means that John joins the MMA's Senior Management Team and reports directly to me as executive director.

Functionally, I expect this transition to be seamless, and from a member perspective it should maintain, and more than likely enhance, your experience with the MMA.

The change reflects the growth and evolution of the MMA, just as the work of cities and towns continues to grow and evolve. A couple years ago, Membership



By Adam Chapdelaine

added <u>webinars</u> to its portfolio, and more recently Candace has been leading our <u>diversity</u>, <u>equity and inclusion initiatives</u>. Communications has added the <u>Massachusetts Municipal</u> <u>Data Hub</u> and the online <u>Handbook for Massachusetts</u> <u>Select Boards</u>, with ambitions to expand its services to better meet your needs and support all areas of this organization.

This organizational change recognizes how essential communications is to our success.

As we roll out this change, there are a few things that I'd like to underscore. First, I want to express my gratitude to Candace for her exemplary work leading the combined division over the years of her tenure. She has done a wonderful job stewarding the critical functions of both membership and communications and her work has put us in a place where considering this change became possible. Though our communications work will now take place in a separate division, I know that John and I will continue to rely on Candace's knowledge and experience as we navigate the increasingly choppy waters of media and social media in the 21st century.

I also want to state very clearly how excited I am to be able to promote John into his new role. Later in July, he will reach an incredible milestone of working at the MMA for 30 years, during which time he

■ DIRECTOR'S REPORT continued on 31

## The **Beacon**

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

## MMA announces new name, location for conference

Big changes are in store for the MMA's annual conference in January, as the event moves to the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center and expands into a third afternoon.

To coincide with these changes, the event — which has been known for 45 years as the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show — also has a new name: Connect 351.

The new name is meant to convey the value of connection for members when they attend the conference, as well as the MMA's role in connecting all 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts.

"With the change of location to a new, larger and modern facility, it seemed like a great opportunity to reconsider how we describe and talk about our main event," said MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine. "The shorter and more conversational name, we think, conveys the essence of the event and our collective pride in our state's 351 municipalities."

In a process that included interviews with MMA members, an MMA team led by Communications Director John Ouellette worked with the firm Holland Mark to arrive at the new name. The next phase of the branding project will be the development of graphic elements, which will be rolled out next month.

Connect 351 will be held at the BCEC and the adjoining Omni Boston Hotel in Boston's Seaport District. The lively neighborhood, also known as the South Boston Waterfront, has numerous restaurants, cafes, entertainment venues, retailers and activities, including the Institute of Contemporary Art.

The 2025 conference will open earlier than in past years, on Thursday, Jan. 23. Registration will open at 2 p.m., as will the Trade Show and the Headshot Station for members. A late-afternoon reception will be held on the Trade Show floor, providing an opportunity to meet with exhibitors. Additional Thursday programming will be announced this fall.

The Trade Show and conference programming will continue all day on Friday, Jan. 24. Saturday's events will include member business meetings and workshops, and the conference will conclude at 3:30 p.m.

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The MMA's annual conference, now called Connect 351, will take place at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center and adjoining Omni Boston Hotel from Jan. 23 through Jan. 25 in Boston's Seaport District.

"With the change of location to a new, larger and modern facility, it seemed like a great opportunity to reconsider how we describe and talk about our main event. The shorter and more conversational name, we think, conveys the essence of the event and our collective pride in our state's 351 municipalities." - MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine

The MMA is continuing to develop the program, and updates will be posted on <u>www.mma.org</u> in the coming weeks

and months. As always, the conference will feature 18 timely and informative workshops, inspiring speakers, countless networking opportunities, membership business meetings, receptions, awards programs and other activities.

Registration for Connect 351 will open on Oct. 1.

#### **Trade Show**

The 2025 Trade Show will be open on Thursday, Jan. 23, from 2 to 5:30 p.m., and on Friday, Jan. 24, 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. 25.

Booth selection and sponsorship opportunities are now open to all companies, nonprofits, and government agencies looking to connect with MMA members. Visit the <u>2025 MMA</u> <u>Trade Show web page for</u> <u>details</u>, including spon-

sorship opportunities, the contract for exhibit space, the up-to-date exhibit hall floor plan, and a list of 2024 exhibitors and sponsors.

As exhibit contracts are received, the MMA will update the online floor plan. Sponsors and exhibitors will be updated continually on the <u>Trade Show web page</u>.

The MMA's Trade Show provides an opportunity to meet representatives of companies, government agencies and nonprofits with products and services that benefit local governments.

If you know of a company that would be interested in sponsoring or exhibiting but is not currently listed, contact Advertising & Trade Show Manager Karen LaPointe at klapointe@mma.org or 617-426-7272, ext. 154.

For more information about the conference, visit <u>www.mma.org/Connect351</u>.

## **Conference committee continues work on housing**

#### By Ali DiMatteo

A House-Senate conference committee is working out differences between multi-billion-dollar bond bills passed by each chamber to kickstart housing production across Massachusetts.

The Senate passed a \$5.4 billion housing bond bill on June 27, after the House passed its \$6.5 billion version on June 5.

The Senate bill's significant investments include \$375 million for the HousingWorks Infrastructure Program and \$275 million for innovative, sustainable and green housing initiatives.

Both the House and Senate bills include \$2 billion for the rehabilitation, repair and modernization of more than 40,000 public housing units across the state, an increase of \$500 million over what Gov. Maura Healey proposed in the Affordable Homes Act she filed last October.

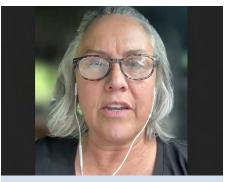
Both bills would allow accessory dwelling units as-of-right in single-family zones, a provision that would preempt almost all local authority and existing regulations on ADUs.

The House bill includes \$1 billion to expand the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority's water and sewer services to areas north and south of Boston, but the Senate's bill does not.

While both bills would create a "seasonal communities" designation and commission, the Senate version includes \$50 million for housing solutions in those communities.

The Senate bill would allow inclusionary zoning bylaws or ordinances to be passed by a simple majority, rather than a two-thirds vote, if the local rule requires that no more than 13% of units to be affordable. Bylaws or ordinances that exceed the 13% threshold would require a two-thirds vote for adoption locally.

Neither bill includes the governor's proposed local-option transfer fee on high-value real estate transactions, which is supported by a number of communities, including Boston. The fee would be used to fund affordable housing efforts in municipalities that adopt it.



Easthampton Mayor Nicole LaChapelle speaks in support of the proposed Affordable Homes Act during a virtual meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission on June 11.

Several amendments supported by the MMA were adopted in the Senate bill, including a provision that would double Chapter 40R Smart Growth payments to communities that have Smart Growth zoning districts.

The six-member conference committee is working to report out a bill for passage before the end of the formal legislative session on July 31.

### House bill would establish a new tax title process

#### By Ali DiMatteo

The House on June 26 passed a bill to establish a new process for municipalities when they foreclose on a property for unpaid property taxes and the value of the property is greater than the tax debt.

The bill (<u>H. 4801</u>) comes in response to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Tyler v. Hennepin County in May 2023, which struck down a process similar to what has been used in Massachusetts.

In the case of a foreclosure, the House bill would require a municipality to hold the surplus equity in an escrow account until it can be paid to the former owner. The bill would allow the municipality to deduct a number of carrying costs, including water, sewer and maintenance, as well as costs associated with

the appraisal and sale of the property. The bill would allow the municipality to purchase or sell the property after appropriate notice is given, and to sell it by auction after one year.

The bill would expand notice requirements by requiring that the notice be made in several languages and that it be understandable by the "least sophisticated consumer."

The bill would expand the term length of a payment plan between a municipality and a delinquent taxpayer from five years to 10, and lower the amount of the initial payment required from 25% of the taxes owed to 10%.

The bill would be retroactive to May 25, 2023, the date of the Supreme Court decision, so a former owner, previous holder of a right of redemption, or



A House bill would establish a new process for foreclosures due to non-payment of property taxes.

successors whose property was foreclosed on after that date would be able to file for the return of excess equity.

The bill has been sent to the Senate, with the hopes of a solution by the end of the formal legislative session on July 31.

## MMA seeks input for Annual Meeting workshops

The MMA is seeking topic suggestions from members for the timely, informative and interactive workshops that are a key component of the MMA Annual

Meeting & Trade Show each January.

Please offer your input on topics that would help you in the work you do in your city or town. To submit ideas, use our convenient online form.

The 2025 MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show will be held on Jan. 23-25 in Boston. .....

## **Clean energy bills include permit process changes**

#### By Josie Ahlberg and Adrienne Núñez

On July 17, the House approved a bill that would reform the process for siting and permitting clean energy infrastructure such as solar arrays, wind turbines and battery storage.

## The Senate <u>passed a largely similar ver</u>sion of the bill on June 25.

Both bills include a requirement for all cities and towns to approve small clean energy infrastructure project applications through a consolidated permitting process within 12 months. Should a municipality not act on the permit within that time frame, the permit would be automatically approved, allowing the project to operate under standard conditions.

This local consolidated permitting process would apply to clean energy infrastructure generation projects under 25 megawatts and clean energy infrastructure storage projects under 100 megawatt hours. Regulations and guidance for this process would be developed by a new Division of Clean Energy Siting and Permitting housed within the Department of Energy Resources.

Through the proposed consolidated process, it's unclear whether a municipality would be able to effectively deny a permit application, either in whole or in part, beyond simply determining compliance with standards that would be set through the rulemaking process.

This consolidation of the local permitting process was a central theme of the final recommendations of the 28-member <u>Commission on Energy</u> <u>Infrastructure Siting and Permitting</u>. The policy was <u>not supported by the</u> <u>MMA</u> during the commission's work, and was a concern articulated to both <u>the Senate</u> and <u>the House</u> as they considered their legislation.

The MMA has long advocated for a local option for the consolidated permitting process at the local level, and supported amendments to create such a process for small clean energy projects. These amendments were not adopted in the final House and Senate versions.

The Senate adopted two amendments supported by the MMA: one to provide



Clean energy bills passed by the House and Senate would reform the process for siting and permitting clean energy infrastructure, including solar arrays.

a technical correction to the definition of local government, and one to provide deadline relief for municipalities in the event they are unable to complete an approval within 12 months because an applicant fails to respond to information requests or changes major elements of the proposed project.

Both the House and Senate bills include several other proposals recommended by the Commission on Clean Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting, including:

- Creation of a public participation office, with support for intervenors and community engagement
- Clarification and simplification of electric school bus and supply procurement practices for municipalities
- Guidance on community benefit agreements to support municipalities as they consider permit application impacts and community needs, and as they navigate the community benefit agreement processes
- Creation of a new clean energy infrastructure dashboard

The bills propose reforms that would require the <u>Energy Facilities Siting</u> <u>Board</u> to approve large projects through a consolidated permitting process within 15 months. This would apply to clean energy infrastructure generation projects over 25 megawatts and clean energy storage projects over 100 megawatt hours.

The bills also would expand EFSB membership to include municipal representation, a concept long supported by the MMA. The final composition of the EFSB will need to be worked out in the House-Senate conference committee process.

Both climate bills propose the establishment of a "site suitability methodology" to minimize or mitigate the social and environmental impacts of clean energy infrastructure projects. Such a framework could be

applied to all clean energy infrastructure projects, including those under local jurisdiction. Program details would be determined through a regulatory process under the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

The Commonwealth is striving to reach a net zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2050 through a range of initiatives, including shifting energy generation to sources like wind and solar while electrifying transportation and heating and cooling systems in buildings.

The House and Senate bills are intended to advance these goals by expediting upgrades to the electric grid and speeding up review and approval of clean energy generation and storage projects at the state and local level.

The Senate adopted an amendment to expand the state's bottle redemption law, <u>an issue long-supported by the</u> <u>MMA</u>, by including most beverage containers and increasing the 5-cent deposit to 10 cents per container. The House did not include this provision, and has yet to act on a separate <u>Senate bill addressing</u> <u>plastic waste</u>, which is before the House Ways and Means Committee.

Differences between the House and Senate bills will now need to be resolved through a conference committee before a final bill can be passed by the Legislature and sent to the governor.

## **Court finds CCC regulations cannot be retroactive**

#### By Ali DiMatteo

An Essex Superior Court <u>decision</u> on June 10 upheld a contract between the city of Haverhill and a marijuana retailer in the city, finding that regulations issued by the Cannabis Control Commission last September cannot be applied retroactively.

The parties in the case — the city and a business called Haverhill Stem — had entered into a host community agreement in 2018 that required the business to pay the city 3% of its gross sales as a community impact fee for five years.

Stem argued that the CCC's 2023 regulations governing host community

agreements, promulgated under <u>Chapter</u> <u>180 of the Acts of 2022</u>, applied retroactively, and therefore the impact fee was void. But the court found that the 2023 regulations could only be applied prospectively, to agreements approved after Chapter 180 took effect on Nov. 9, 2022.

"Chapter 180 of the Acts of 2022 ... and the resulting amendments to the regulations ... do not retroactively govern the parties' rights and obligations under their Host Community Agreement," the court wrote.

The court also found that host community agreements executed before the November 2022 date should not be subject to an annual review by the CCC.

"[T]he CCC's review of the HCA 'at each license renewal' applies only to those license applications approved after November 9, 2022," the court wrote.

The court further stated that "the CCC has no authority to contradict what this Court has concluded is a legislative intent that the 2022 amendments to [Section] 3(d) apply prospectively."

The Haverhill decision is not binding precedent, but is expected to be relied upon by other courts.

## Governor signs transportation bond terms bill

#### By Adrienne Núñez

Gov. Maura Healey signed a bill on June 27 outlining the terms for state borrowing that will fund the transportation bond law signed in May — the final step in the process before funds are made available.

The bond law includes \$200 million for the Chapter 90 local road and bridge program for fiscal 2025 and \$175 million for specified additional infrastructure programs.

The additional programs include \$25 million for a supplemental road maintenance program favoring rural communities, and \$25 million for each the following six transportation-related programs:

- Municipal Pavement Program
- Municipal Small Bridge Program



Gov. Maura Healey has signed a bill outlining the terms for state borrowing to fund the transportation bond law enacted in May.

- <u>Complete Streets</u>
- Municipal Bus Enhancement Program
- Mass Transit Access grant program
- Municipal/RTA Electric Vehicle Fleets

#### program

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

The <u>Chapter 90</u> reimbursement program benefits every community in Massachusetts, and municipal officials across the state have expressed their appreciation for having the transportation bond and terms laws enacted in time to potentially put funds to use during the current construction season.

• <u>View Chapter 90 amounts for each city</u> <u>and town</u>

### **Annual Town Report Contest entries due Oct. 31**

The MMA is accepting entries 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 Annual Meeting & Trade Show in January 2025.

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 <u>form on</u> <u>the MMA website</u> with a link to, or a PDF of, your town report.

Entries are due by Thursday, Oct. 31.

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

## Veterans services bills remain in conference

#### By Ali DiMatteo

A House-Senate conference committee is working out differences between broad veterans services bills, known as the HERO Act, passed in each branch.

The <u>House passed its version on May 22</u>, and the <u>Senate passed a largely similar</u> <u>bill on June 13</u>.

The bills, which aim to modernize and increase veterans benefits, are a mix of policy changes and tax incentives.

They would:

- Expand the definition of "veteran" for the purposes of some benefits to include those who have served in the National Guard or as a reservist in any branch of the armed forces
- Increase annual payments to disabled

### **Conference committee works on IT bond bill**

#### By Ali DiMatteo

A House-Senate conference committee is working out differences between technology bond bills passed this spring by each chamber.

The bills, both known as the FutureTech Act, aim to modernize the state's IT and cybersecurity infrastructure, and include funding for several municipal grant programs.

The House passed its \$1.23 billion bond bill on May 15, and the Senate passed a largely similar bill on June 6.

The bills include funding for a number of technology projects, including artificial intelligence and emerging technology, as well as for upgrading and modernizing



A conference committee in the Legislature is reconciling differences between House and Senate veterans services bills.

veterans from \$2,000 to \$2,500 over two years

- Increase tax credits for small businesses that hire veterans
- Expand veteran motor vehicle benefits, including waiving veterans plate fees

government information systems.

• \$30 million to support the Municipal

• \$25 million to support the Community

\$150 million for local and regional IT

\$110 million for the Commonwealth

Digital Roadmap, to standardize the

user experience across state agencies

communication through applications

such as live chat, and SMS technology

and create new lines of constituent

Included in the bills are:

Fiber Grant Program

Compact IT Grant Program

security improvement projects

• \$750 million to improve service

delivery to the public, including

• Expand veteran property tax exemptions

The Senate added a provision that would require public school districts to offer support services to a military-connected student if their parent or guardian is called to active duty.

Both the House and Senate versions of the bill would expand access to mental health services for veterans and would create a working group to review alternative therapies for mental health treatments for veterans, including psychedelic therapies.

The HERO Act was initially <u>filed by Gov.</u> <u>Maura Healey</u> last November.

The six-member conference committee is working to report out a bill for passage before the end of the formal legislative session on July 31.

amendments to add funding for local IT and cybersecurity projects, and to provide oversight to the funding by requiring the secretary of Administration and Finance to report annually on project expenditures.

The bills are a mix of 10- and 30-year bonds, and use an additional \$400 million in anticipated federal funding.

With previous IT bond acts set to be exhausted in fiscal 2025, <u>Gov. Maura</u> <u>Healey got the process started by filing</u> <u>her IT bond bill in January</u>.

The six-member conference committee is working to report out a bill for passage before the end of the formal legislative session on July 31.

 well as for upgrading and modernizing
 The Senate version includes several

 MassCEC posts Green School Works program concept, holds webinars

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center has issued a Draft Program Concept for the <u>Green School Works</u> program and is holding webinars this summer for municipal and school officials and other stakeholders to provide an overview of the program and to solicit feedback and answer questions.

Created as part of the fiscal 2024 state budget, Green School Works will provide financial support to K-12 public schools or districts to install or maintain clean energy infrastructure. Funding will go toward project implementation as well as support for building-specific decarbonization assessments and plans and high-level, district-wide decarbonization planning.

On July 12, the MassCEC posted the draft program concept and request for information on its <u>program web page</u>. The RFI seeks to gauge interest and insight from K-12 school building decarbonization stakeholders on the design of the Green School Works program.

The first of two webinars was held on July 17. The second will be held on July 23 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. (<u>Click here to register</u>.)

According to the MassCEC, the webinar will be particularly helpful for the following stakeholders:

- K-12 school professionals or administrators
- Parents or guardians of K-12 public school students
- School decarbonization advocates
- Municipal officials
- Electrification or decarbonization technical assistance providers or implementers
- General and specialized contractors
- Tax credit experts for public entities

Questions may be sent to greenschools@ masscec.com. •

## Federal funding opportunities now available

#### By Adrienne Núñez

The state's Office of Federal Funds and Infrastructure is highlighting the following <u>six funding opportunities open</u> <u>to municipalities</u>, with applications due between July and September:

- <u>Pilot Program for Transit Oriented</u> <u>Development</u>, which provides funding to communities to integrate land use and transportation planning around a new fixed guideway or core capacity improvement project (Applications due July 22.)
- <u>Broadband Technical Assistance</u>, which provides competitive cooperative agreement funding to receive or deliver broadband technical assistance and training that promotes the expansion of broadband in rural areas (Applications due Aug. 20.)
- Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant Program, which supports publicly accessible electric vehicle charging and alternative fueling infrastructure in urban and rural areas, and Alternative Fuel Corridors through two funding categories of grants: Community Charging and Alternative Fueling Grants (Community Program), and Charging and Alternative Fuel Corridor Grants (Corridor Program) (Applications due Aug. 28.)
- Safe Streets and Roads for All, which supports planning and demonstration activities, including projects and strategies to prevent death and serious injury on roads and streets involving all roadway users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, users of public transportation, personal conveyance and micromobility



The Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program is one of six current municipal funding opportunities being highlighted by the state's Office of Federal Funds and Infrastructure.

options (e.g., scooters, skateboards, roller skates, wheelchairs), motorists, and commercial vehicle operators (Applications due Aug. 29.)

- <u>Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program</u>, which funds projects that seek to reduce the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions and improve habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species. (Applications due Sept. 4.)
- National Culvert Removal, which seeks to to meaningfully improve or restore anadromous fish passage through the replacement, removal or repair of culverts or weirs, which may include infrastructure to facilitate fish passage around or over the weir and weir improvements (Applications due Sept. 23.)

In addition, the Office of the Secretary of Transportation has released a <u>Notice of Funding Opportunity</u> for the <u>Reconnecting Communities Program</u>'s Capital Construction Grants and Community Planning Grants. The program funds projects that reconnect communities by removing, retrofitting or mitigating highways or other transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity, including to mobility, access or economic development. Applications are due Sept. 30.

#### Federal funding bill

<u>The Federal Funds and Infrastructure</u> <u>Office</u> offers <u>support to municipalities</u> in pursuit of federal grants, which includes posting grant announcements and leading a monthly virtual <u>Massachusetts</u> <u>Federal Funds Partnership</u> meeting.

The Healey-Driscoll administration and the Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office have been advocating for the creation of a Commonwealth Federal Matching and Debt Reduction Fund to provide a funding source for the state and communities to be used to meet the required local match for grants. A federal funding bill filed by Gov. Maura Healey last October would leverage up to \$750 million in interest generated annually by the state's stabilization fund to capitalize the matching fund. Healey's bill would also provide \$12 million for technical assistance to help municipalities with grant tracking, grant writing and implementation.

The Senate approved the federal funding bill on Jan. 11, and the House approved its version on Feb. 28. The two bills have small differences awaiting resolution in a conference committee, which includes Sens. Michael Rodrigues, John Cronin and Patrick O'Connor and Reps. Aaron Michlewitz, Jack Lewis and Mathew Muratore.

## MMA seeks input on local roadway needs with Chapter 90 survey

#### By Daniel Yi

The MMA will be sending its biennial Chapter 90 funding survey this summer to chief municipal officials and public works and highway department officials in all 351 Massachusetts cities and towns.

The survey asks communities for their assessment of what it would cost to maintain their local roads in a state of good repair.

The MMA and local officials across the

state recognize the Chapter 90 program as a critical resource to ensure the health of local economies and the well-being of Massachusetts cities and towns. Up-todate information about local road and bridge maintenance needs is key to the MMA's transportation funding advocacy efforts, particularly with a new legislative session set to begin in January.

Information gathered through the Chapter 90 survey provides concrete data to help inform legislators and the public through educational materials, public statements, and testimony to the Legislature and state transportation administrators.

To ensure the most accurate picture of local roadway conditions and resource needs, the MMA is seeking as many responses as possible. Please watch for the release of the survey in mid-August and share it widely within your professional networks.

For more information about the upcoming survey, contact Project and Research Assistant Daniel Yi at dyi@mma.org. •

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## Meet Ciara Barber, city and town hall explorer

#### By Jennifer Kavanaugh

For 9-year-old Ciara Barber, visiting city and town halls often means receiving the VIP treatment — holding audiences with mayors and town managers, seeing banners with her name on them, ringing clock tower bells, touring records vaults and secret passages, and accepting swag bags.

And then there's the ice cream. Lots of ice cream.

Ciara Barber recently completed her tour of all of the state's city and town halls — 351 of them — by car, boat and even plane. With her mother, Blue Barber, and her uncle, Adam Barber, she started her tour last July in her hometown of Worcester and finished it on June 1 in the island town of Gosnold. And over the past year, the <u>Instagram account</u> cataloging the girl's municipal travels has captured the public's attention, garnered media coverage, and earned her new friends in city and town halls across the state.

The tour idea came about after Adam Barber saw a graphic explaining that state Lottery funds benefit all 351 cities and towns, and the family was amazed that 351 municipalities could fit in such a small state. Blue Barber, who works in higher education, was about to have July and August off with her daughter, and they decided that visiting city and town halls would make for a good summertime adventure.

"We were kind of like, well, what are we going to do this summer?" Blue Barber said. "We could sit around, or we could, you know, put 7,000 miles on the car and go see the entire state."

The family tried to enter as many city and town halls as possible, though a photo on the front doorstep sometimes had to suffice during weekends. On their most intense day, they visited 25 city and town halls. Ciara Barber quipped that "we wanted nothing to do with each other" after 10 hours in the car.

As news of the Barber family's quest emerged through their Instagram posts and local media coverage, municipalities started rolling out the red carpet.

"These places were just so, so kind," Blue Barber said. "They'd have gift baskets for her, and she's got all sorts of municipal merch," such as challenge coins and water bottles.



Ciara Barber arrives at her final destination, Gosnold Town Hall, on June 1, left, and poses with Westfield Mayor Michael McCabe while serving as mayor for a day last August. (*Photos courtesy Barber family*)

"These places were just so, so kind. They'd have gift baskets for her, and she's got all sorts of municipal merch." - Blue Barber

At Boston City Hall, Ciara Barber met Mayor Michelle Wu, who lauded the girl for her "determination, passion and excitement for civic involvement." She also toured a secret staircase in Newton City Hall with Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, got a local history lesson from Revere Mayor Patrick Keefe Jr., toured the records vault in Salem, and rang the clock bell in the tower in Marblehead. In Worcester, a clerk showed the Barbers their original birth certificates.

In Westfield last August, Ciara Barber served as mayor for a day, and enacted a new law declaring that visitors to City Hall should get chocolate. With a banner and a delegation of city employees greeting her, she toured a fire truck, a bucket truck and the City Hall vault, and received a proclamation commemorating her visit.

"I decided to make her mayor for the day to make her trip more memorable," Mayor Michael McCabe told the MMA. "What her future holds is unclear, but her appetite for knowledge will serve her well." In Fall River last August, Mayor Paul Coogan greeted Ciara Barber with a key to the city, a citation, a goodie bag and a tour of his office.

"When you have someone so young reaching out to learn about local government and showing an interest, it's important to show appreciation and encouragement," said Coogan, a former educator.

The family had initially hoped to complete their tour last summer, but the effort extended into this spring due to some harder-to-reach communities. Eventually, they were able to reach the Islands with a little help from Cape Air.

Time will tell if the whirlwind municipal tour has enticed Ciara Barber into a local government career. During much of the tour, she had resolved to become a mayor/ singer, but now, she said, "I want to be a gamer." About to enter fourth grade, she has more modest goals for this summer.

"Sit around and do nothing," she said. "I am so tired."

Blue Barber said municipal officials are still inviting them to visit.

"We've got a few people that are like, 'Hey, we have ice cream," she said. "Oh, if you have ice cream, I think we're going to continue. You know, definitely not on as hardcore a schedule, but gradually, as we please."

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## Coastal communities join forces to tackle climate change

#### By Jennifer Kavanaugh

With their municipalities stationed along the coastal front lines of climate change, leaders of 24 cities and towns have formed the Massachusetts Coastal Communities Alliance to share information and resources for addressing rising seas, increasingly routine flooding, and intensifying storms.

Unveiled on World Environment Day, June 5, the alliance aims to provide a platform for information-sharing and peer-learning among local leaders of coastal communities, according to Salem Mayor Dominick Pangallo, who initiated the effort.

The communities will coordinate on plans and actions, identify funding and technical assistance opportunities, and discuss best practices, innovative policies, and successful projects, Pangallo said. The group recently held its first meeting virtually, and plans to visit a member city or town this summer to view the community's climate-related work and challenges firsthand.

"As leaders of coastal communities, we are all concerned about the escalating impacts we're witnessing due to the climate crisis," Pangallo said. "Through this new alliance, we can further collaborate with one another as we work to protect our communities. ... We each bring a powerful and important perspective to the work ahead."

Pangallo said several factors contributed to the alliance's launch, including the Healey-Driscoll administration's creation this past fall of the <u>ResilientCoasts</u> <u>Initiative</u>, federal funding opportunities through the <u>Bipartisan Infrastructure</u> <u>Law</u> and the <u>Inflation Reduction Act</u>, and the work of <u>Climate Mayors</u>, a national network of more than 750 U.S. mayors dedicated to climate leadership that includes Pangallo and 10 other Massachusetts mayors.

Pangallo said he hopes that a close working relationship will form between the coastal alliance and the ResilientCoasts Initiative, and the group plans to invite administration officials to a future meeting. As municipalities look to the initiative for technical assistance and policy guidance, he said, the alliance can be a partner that can explain the challenges faced by communities, as well as



Salem Mayor Dominick Pangallo, shown speaking last year at an event on the city's waterfront, has organized the Massachusetts Coastal Communities Alliance to address the effects of climate change. (*Photo courtesy city of Salem*)

municipal innovations and leadership.

Salem now regularly feels the effects of climate change. Earlier this year, Pangallo said, a storm surge destroyed one of the city's sea walls, and ran over several others.

While the city has a hazard mitigation plan, invests in capital projects, and shares a climate action plan with Beverly (<u>Resilient Together</u>), municipal resources are limited. Much of Salem's eight square miles contains neighborhoods, public and senior housing, businesses and institutions, historic assets, and public infrastructure that remain in harm's way, Pangallo said, adding that "critical public facilities are in danger of being rendered inaccessible or inoperable."

In the announcement about the alliance, a number of local leaders emphasized the need to collaborate around a challenge that's bigger than any one community.

"These are life safety issues for seacoast communities," said Swampscott Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald. "We need to make investments now to protect our communities and region."

For Nahant, a 1.1-square-mile peninsula jutting into the ocean on the North Shore, the alliance represents an opportunity to work with other communities facing similar challenges, according to Town Administrator Antonio Barletta.

"There is no larger issue for our community," Barletta said. "We aren't just experiencing eroded coastline, we are often prevented from accessing the mainland during storms, which significantly impacts our ability to provide emergency services."

Provincetown is also surrounded by the sea on three sides, and Town Manager Alex Morse said he hopes the alliance will help him protect his community.

"With significant recurring impacts to residences, businesses and public infrastructure," Morse said, "we understand the importance of coastal communities working

together to further resilience efforts and find sustainable solutions that allow our community, and those like it, to thrive."

Chelsea was seeking a regional approach to resilience, according to City Manager Fidel Maltez.

"As a coastal community, we live the impacts of rising sea levels, worsening storms, and increased heat island effect, every day," Maltez said. "As an environmental justice community, many of our residents lack the capacity to bounce back after a climate event."

Pangallo said he hopes the alliance will also serve as a tool for information sharing for residents and businesses in the communities, "to help private property owners identify strategies, approaches, and resources to assist them in their own resiliency efforts and to help coalesce their feedback to advocate for changes and programs to support them."

The alliance currently includes chief municipal officials from Beverly, Bourne, Chelsea, Gloucester, Hull, Ipswich, Lynn, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Marblehead, Marion, Martha's Vineyard Commission, Milton, Nahant, Newburyport, Peabody, Plymouth, Provincetown, Rockport, Salem, Salisbury, Scituate, Swampscott, Swansea and Wareham. Pangallo has invited leaders from 75 coastal communities to join.

"We're hoping that in the coming weeks and months we can welcome additional city and town leaders to the group," Pangallo said. ●

## Senate OK's bill to reduce plastic waste

#### By Josie Ahlberg

On June 20, the Senate passed a bill intended to reduce plastics pollution and waste statewide, including a statewide plastic bag ban, a provision long supported by the MMA.

Many municipalities across Massachusetts have adopted local plastic bag bans as a means of encouraging consumers to bring their own reusable bags, purchase reusable or recycled paper bags, or forgo bags altogether, thereby reducing waste. Plastic bags routinely clog sorting equipment at recycling facilities, causing costly delays and hazardous conditions for employees. Efforts to raise awareness about whether plastic bags can be recycled in municipal collections are expensive and time-consuming for municipalities.

The Senate bill (<u>S. 2833</u>) would also prohibit state agencies from procuring single-use plastic bottles and create a statewide recycling program for bulky plastic materials, including child car



A Senate bill intended to reduce plastics pollution includes a single-use plastic bag ban.

#### seats.

The bill includes an <u>MMA legislative</u> <u>proposal</u> that would require producers of non-flushable wipes to clearly label their products as "non-flushable" and create a campaign to raise awareness. When flushed, these products have been causing costly clogs and sanitary sewer overflows and fouling pumps — issues that cost approximately \$10 million annually to address statewide. The MMA <u>testified in support of this</u> <u>policy last fall</u>, stressing the cost-saving potential for municipalities and water treatment facilities, as well as the opportunity to protect public health and the environment.

The Senate considered 26 amendments to the bill, including ones to establish a statewide stewardship program to support the recycling of paint waste, like cost-saving programs now operating in 12 other states, including most of New England. The paint stewardship amendments, however, were not adopted.

The Senate did approve an amendment to ban food establishments from using black plastic, polystyrene foam, and solid polystyrene food service wares.

A separate <u>clean energy bill passed</u> <u>by the Senate in late June</u> included a provision, supported by the MMA and municipalities, to update the bottle bill by expanding the list of eligible products and raising the deposit from 5 cents to 10.

The Senate's plastics bill now moves to the House for consideration.

### Governor releases \$15.6B Capital Investment Plan for FY 2025-29

The Healey-Driscoll administration on June 13 released its fiscal 2025-29 Capital Investment Plan, which would allocate \$15.6 billion for projects and programs over the next five years, with a focus on housing, economic development, infrastructure and climate resiliency.

The <u>Capital Investment Plan</u> includes more than \$3.1 billion in fiscal 2025 an increase of \$212 million over the current fiscal year — with a focus on lowering the cost of housing and enhancing the state's economic competitiveness.

The fiscal 2025-29 plan updates the governor's first five-year capital investment plan, which was released last June. The plan is a roadmap for allocating funds that are approved in various borrowing and spending laws.

The 2025-29 plan includes a new MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund, funded with \$15 million over three years, to provide support for infrastructure and housing projects in communities that are in compliance with the <u>MBTA</u> <u>Communities Act</u> (Section 3A of Chapter 40A).

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The capital plan also directs new

resources to housing production and preservation, the climate technology industry, decarbonization and climate resiliency. The plan maintains a commitment to established economic development programs, including the <u>MassWorks</u> program and climate-focused municipal support.

The plan calls for \$2 billion for housing over the next five years, including \$400 million in fiscal 2025 to produce or preserve 5,300 housing units and make significant investments in maintenance projects across the state's 43,000-unit public housing portfolio. The plan dedicates \$108 million in fiscal 2025 to continue <u>HousingWorks</u>, an \$11 million increase.

The administration says its capital plan also reflects its commitment to economic competitiveness and meeting the state's climate goals.

Through fiscal 2029, the plan would invest nearly \$1.4 billion in the Executive Office of Economic Development, including more than \$23 million in new capital spending in fiscal 2025 to expand tech-focused sectors and bring new jobs and development to Massachusetts.

This includes \$10 million for climate technology to act on some of the ideas put forth in the economic development plan published last December: "Team Massachusetts: Leading Future Generations."

Over five years, the capital plan would put \$1.56 billion into programs designed to protect and preserve the environment and prepare the state and its cities and towns to confront the effects of climate change. That includes a doubling of support, to \$24 million in fiscal 2025, for the ResilientMass Plan — the state's blueprint for ensuring Massachusetts is prepared to withstand, recover and adapt to natural hazard events.

The plan also upholds the administration's financial commitment to replace the bridges to Cape Cod.

The plan calls for \$1.02 billion over five years for the Chapter 90 local road and bridge program and \$75 million over five years for the Municipal Small Bridge program.

## **Administration announces \$13M in Fair Share funds**

The Healey-Driscoll administration announced on June 12 that it is delivering more than \$13 million for 14 projects to support local transportation infrastructure and other needs.

According to the administration, the awards come from revenue generated by the Fair Share Amendment and are matching funds for projects and initiatives eligible for federal discretionary grants offered by the U.S. Department of Transportation. The matching funds are part of a total of \$476.5 million in Fair Share dollars that were made available for transportation investments in the fiscal 2024 state budget.

"When we empower city and town leaders to address their unique infrastructure needs, we are helping them achieve a better quality of life for their residents," Gov. Maura Healey said in a prepared statement, adding that the funded projects "will help make our state's transportation network safer and more robust — and our municipalities more interconnected."

Transportation Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt said local leaders "are knowledgeable and proactive when it comes to improving the transportation infrastructure their constituents rely on."

The Fair Share Amendment, which was passed by the state's voters in November 2022 and took effect on Jan. 1, 2023, adds a surtax on annual personal incomes over \$1 million, with the resulting revenue dedicated to transportation and education programs.



Fourteen projects are receiving more than \$13 million to support local transportation infrastructure and other needs. The awards use revenue generated by the Fair Share Amendment.

The projects receiving Fair Share funds announced today include:

- Lynnway Multimodal Corridor in Lynn: \$6.75 million for multimodal and safety enhancements
- Inland Route, various municipalities in central Massachusetts: \$3 million to support track, signal, grade crossing and bridge improvements
- Springfield Area Track Reconfiguration: \$1.75 million for preliminary work for track, signal and infrastructure improvements around Springfield Union Station
- Demonstration grant in Brockton: \$47,120 for the planning and implementation of a systemic safety pilot at three intersections

A number of regional planning agencies are receiving Fair Share funds for <u>com-</u> <u>prehensive safety action plans</u>, which will cover multiple regions throughout

### Entries sought for municipal website contest

The MMA is accepting nominations for its annual municipal website awards, which will be presented during the MMA Annual Meeting in January 2025.

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 <u>fill out a short online</u> <u>nomination form</u>. The entry deadline is Thursday, Oct. 31.

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)

- Massachusetts, including:
- Greater Boston: \$540,109
- Hampden and Hampshire counties: \$250,000
- Southeastern Massachusetts, including Fall River, New Bedford and Taunton: \$220,000
- North central Massachusetts, including Leominster: \$187,500
- Worcester County: \$120,000
- Franklin County, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket: \$115,000
- Northeast Massachusetts, including Lowell: \$93,808
- Southeastern Massachusetts, including Brockton: \$80,000
- Cape Cod: \$60,000
- Berkshire County: \$49,649

Safety action plans use a data-based approach to improve roadway safety for all users.

The \$476.5 million of Fair Share funds included in the fiscal 2024 state budget for transportation support a variety of projects and initiatives in addition to matches for federal discretionary grants awards. Fair Share line items fund bridge construction, preservation, and repair, and supplemental aid for municipalities for local road and bridge maintenance. For transit, Fair Share funds support MBTA capital investments, the exploration of means-tested fares for the MBTA, operating assistance for ferry service, and regional transit authority improvements. ●

- 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, contact Daniel Yi at dyi@mma.org. ●

## Administration details 9-month length-of-stay policy

The Healey-Driscoll administration on June 12 provided details of a new nine-month length-of-stay policy for the state's Emergency Assistance Family Shelter System.

The policy was passed by the Legislature and signed by Gov. Maura Healey at the end of April.

Emergency Assistance is for families with children or pregnant women experiencing homelessness. Last October, Healey <u>announced that the system</u> <u>had reached capacity</u> at 7,500 families. Approximately half of the families in the system are newly arrived immigrants and half are long-time Massachusetts families.

Healey called the new policy "a responsible measure to address the capacity and fiscal constraints" of the emergency assistance shelter system.

Despite the lack of a federal-level solution, she said, "Massachusetts has been going above and beyond," helping thousands of immigrants get work authorizations, jobs and English classes. She said enhanced workforce development and rehousing programs have resulted in a steady increase in families leaving the shelter system in recent months.

The Healey-Driscoll administration also published <u>guidance yesterday outlining</u> the details of the new policy.

Notices will begin going out on a rolling basis and will not affect all families immediately, so that families may receive adequate support in their transition out of the shelter system, according to the administration. Approximately 150 families will be notified in early July.

Notices will be made available in multiple languages and will tell families the



The Healey-Driscoll administration has implemented a policy to limit the length of stay for families in the emergency shelter system.

following:

- Their shelter benefit is expiring, and they are required to leave shelter within 90 days
- Whether they are eligible for a first 90day extension
- How to find out whether they are eligible for a second 90-day extension

Extension criteria include employment, training program participation, veteran status, disability status, school enrollment, imminent risk of harm due to domestic violence, imminent placement in housing and additional criteria outlined in the guidance. Families who have used both extension options and/or do not qualify for extensions may re-apply for Emergency Assistance shelter.

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities said it is working closely with providers to address questions, establish resources and facilitate effective messaging to families. The office will also provide informational resources in multiple languages to support families as they work toward exiting the EA shelter program and achieving housing stability. The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development also <u>issued</u> <u>guidance</u> on authorized training programs for qualified trainees currently residing in EA shelters. The supplemental budget appropriated \$10 million for workforce training programs administered by the Office of Labor and Workforce Development, which will be used to strengthen the administration's current programs and reach even more EA residents.

Additionally, the Department of Revenue <u>issued guidance</u> today on the administration of a tax credit for company-sponsored job training programs. The Temporary Authorized Training Tax Credit for Emergency Assistance is available to various types of businesses and corporations that provide training to an individual residing in an Emergency Assistance family shelter who is enrolled in an authorized training program.

Since November 2023, the administration has helped 3,716 immigrants apply for work authorizations, and it is expected that the vast majority have been approved. Additionally, 1,063 immigrants are enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages classes.

Overall, 1,114 EA residents have gotten jobs in the past few months, according to the administration. The number of families leaving the EA system has steadily increased each month, with more than 331 families leaving in May.

The administration also recently implemented a <u>30-day engagement</u> <u>requirement</u> at the state's safety-net sites. These sites are for families on the EA waitlist and currently serve approximately 190 families in Chelsea, Lexington and Cambridge. ●

## State officials visit border to spread word about lack of shelter

#### By John Ouellette

With immigrant families continuing to arrive in Massachusetts and the state's family shelter system filled to capacity, Gov. Maura Healey sent members of her administration to the U.S. southern border in Texas in late June to educate officials and families about the lack of shelter availability in Massachusetts

The delegation, led by Emergency Assistance Director Lt. Gen. Scott Rice, met with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Joint Task Force-North, non-governmental organizations, and families.

In a statement, Rice said the trip was an opportunity to make sure families arriving in the U.S. and the organizations that work with them "have accurate information about the lack of shelter space in Massachusetts."

"It is essential that we get the word out

that our shelters are full so that families can plan accordingly to make sure they have a safe place to go," said Rice, a retired lieutenant general of the U.S. Air Force who was appointed by Gov. Healey last October to lead the Emergency Assistance shelter program.

The administration's team visited the most common points of entry for families that later arrive in Massachusetts. The team included the Emergency Assistance incident

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■ SHELTER SPACE continued on 31

# **MMA Webinars**

## **Building a municipal brand**

An MMA webinar on June 12 offered insights and discussed challenges related to developing and using a new municipal brand.

Amesbury Mayor Kassandra Gove said the primary benefits of municipal branding are visual identity, team unification, efficiency, and competition.

"Municipalities are inherently siloed organizations with diverse professions operating under one umbrella," Gove said. "We realized the value and power of looking like a unified team, and streamlining and systemizing our brand achieved that for us."

Former Amesbury Communications Director Caitlin Thayer shared best practices for brand development and rollout, including a marketing audit and a staff plan for involvement. She said it's important to set clear guidelines for visual brand versus city seal use.

"In Amesbury, the city seal remains on official documents, such as contracts, proposals, and bills," Thayer said. "The new, visual brand appears on everything else, like business cards, uniforms and vehicle wraps."

John Magnifico, owner of Magnifico Design, reviewed the key elements of the design process: discovery, development, and definition. He emphasized the need to involve constituents throughout the process and develop ideas that align with the municipality's strategic vision.

"In reality, every city or town already has a brand — it's how

## **Funding for decarbonization**

An MMA webinar on June 25 reviewed grants and state programs available to support municipal decarbonization efforts.

Green Communities Division Director Joanne Bissetta began with an overview of the <u>Climate Leader Communities</u> program, run by the Department of Energy Resources.

"Building on the success of <u>Green Communities</u>, this program strives to encourage municipalities to adopt clean energy policies that reduce the use of fossil fuels and carbon energy," she said. "Climate Leader Communities lead by example, and municipalities are uniquely positioned to implement efficient, sustainable practices."

The Department of Energy Resources will begin accepting program applications on a rolling basis starting July 25.

Ashfield Energy Committee Chair Alexandra Osterman discussed her town's motivation and process for pursuing the Climate Leader designation. In preparation for the adoption of the specialized energy code, Osterman said it was imperative to engage with the public to build buy-in.

"We wanted to make this information accessible to residents," she said. "We let people voice their concerns, and used [that] to hone our message."

Luba Zhaurova, the director of projects for Sustainability and Resilience in Worcester, discussed her city's process for reducing municipal emissions and generating solar energy.



Local officials discuss developing and using a new municipal brand during an MMA webinar. Panelists included, clockwise from top left, Amesbury Mayor Kassandra Gove, former Amesbury Communications Director Caitlin Thayer, John Magnifico, owner of Magnifico Design, and Easton Assistant Town Administrator Sean Dugan.

Date: June 12 Length: 75 minutes

VIEW WEBINAR 7

people think and speak about your municipality," Magnifico said. "The role of brand design is to help control that conversation and create a cohesive, meaningful message that attracts residents and businesses to your community."

Easton Assistant Town Administrator Sean Dugan moderated 30 minutes of questions and answers, addressing inquiries about internal and external pushback, community engagement, and accessible design platforms.

– Lily Rancatore



Officials discuss grants and state programs that support municipal decarbonization efforts. Speakers included, clockwise from top left, Ashfield Energy Committee Chair Alexandra Osterman, MMA Legislative Analyst Josie Ahlberg, Worcester Director of Projects for Sustainability and Resilience Luba Zhaurova, and Green Communities Division Director Joanne Bissetta.

**Date:** June 25 **Length:** 75 minutes

VIEW WEBINAR 7

"We're prioritizing municipal aggregation as a primary way to reduce community emissions and reach our goal of being a zero-emission community by 2045," she said. "Progress takes time, but commitment from the top-down has helped us move projects along."

MMA Legislative Analyst Josie Ahlberg moderated a brief Q&A session, addressing inquiries about the state's strategy for working with electric companies, the cost of EVs, and solar maintenance.

– Lily Rancatore

# **MMA Webinars**

## Arts and culture in communities

An MMA webinar with the Mass Cultural Council on June 18 reviewed how municipalities can support arts and culture, as well as the benefits they offer to communities.

<u>Mass Cultural Council</u> Executive Director Michael Bobbitt discussed how municipalities across the country are shifting their approach to arts and culture. He outlined five key areas of focus for municipalities: infrastructure, planning, programming, marketing and funding.

Mass Cultural Council Program Officer Carolyn Cole discussed examples from around the state — including New Bedford, Bedford, Lowell, Harwich, Beverly and Lynn — where communities have built public support for arts, culture and tourism.

Bobbitt moderated a panel of municipal officials and volunteers from thriving cultural communities.

Newton Mayor Ruthanne Fuller said she believes it's important to prioritize arts and culture.

"Arts and culture are the antidote for division and isolation," she said. "Our creative events draw people together, and you can see the economic impact ripple throughout the community."

Fitchburg Cultural Alliance President Joe Bowen said it's important to build support locally.

"Public safety, schools, parks and recreation, and boards and commissions all play an important role," he said. "You should always seek support beyond the leader of the municipality."

Cory Shea, director of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy in Franklin, said it's important to build authentic relationships with community members. Franklin Cultural District Member Pandora Carlucci added that communication and collaboration



Panelists discuss ways that municipalities can support arts and culture during a webinar held by the MMA and the Mass Cultural Council. Speakers included, top row, left to right, Mass Cultural Council Executive Director Michael Bobbitt, Franklin Arts, Culture and Creative Economy Director Cory Shea, and Bedford Select Board Member Emily Mitchell; and bottom row, left to right, Franklin Cultural District Member Pandora Carlucci, Fitchburg Cultural Alliance President Joe Bowen, and Newton Mayor Ruthanne Fuller.

**Date:** June 18 **Length:** 60 minutes

VIEW WEBINAR 7

are essential in fostering support and building successful programs, especially via social media.

Bedford Select Board Member Emily Mitchell discussed how public art can memorialize important events and enhance the appearance of community spaces.

Bobbitt moderated 10 minutes of questions and answers, addressing inquiries about incremental funding and rural resources.

– Lily Rancatore

## To promote DEI efforts, MMA to hire chief equity officer

#### **By Candace Pierce**

In its work to integrate diversity, equity and inclusion into the organization and support the advancement of DEI across municipalities, the MMA is seeking to hire a chief equity officer.

The new position is being created with the support of the MMA Board of Directors and will report to MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine.

The senior staff person will lead the MMA in formulating and executing the organization's DEI strategies, operational practices and policies, employee training, and other initiatives that honor and value diverse backgrounds, perspectives and cultural differences.

The chief equity officer will also support



city and town governments in their efforts to become more diverse and inclusive workplaces and to champion DEI within their communities.

Position details, including instructions for applying, <u>are available on the MMA's</u> <u>job board</u>. Members are encouraged to share the posting with those who may be interested.

#### **DEI Advisory Committee**

In June, the MMA's DEI Advisory Committee met for a training on the topic of microaggressions led by Faustina Cuevas, Lynn's DEI officer and a senior advisor to the mayor.

"I'm excited to have this opportunity to offer DEI training to the members of the MMA DEI Committee," she said. "It's important, as leaders of this important work, that they have this foundational training, which helps them share their lived experiences and identities, while also developing a better understanding of how diverse people experience microaggressions, racism and more."

Cuevas will continue to lead a series of DEI training sessions for the committee.

## 51 graduate from MMA-Suffolk leadership program

#### By Kate Evarts

Fifty-one graduates received their certificates in Local Government Leadership and Management this spring as the MMA-Suffolk program completed its 21st and 22nd classes.

More than 500 municipal officials have completed the Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program since its inception in 2011.

The MMA and Suffolk University program is designed for municipal employees looking to further their careers in municipal management. Graduate-level courses cover topics including strategic leadership, budget and financial management, and human resources management.

The five-course program is held over 25 Fridays in two locations each academic year. The 2023-2024 programs were held in Barnstable and Danvers.

#### **Barnstable class**

The 2023-2024 Barnstable program graduates are:

- Paul Anderson, Water Superintendent, Brewster
- Rachel Benson, Director of Planning and Economic Development, Wrentham
- Peter J. Bertling, Parking Program Manager/Community Transportation Coordinator, Barnstable
- Melissa Carroll, Office Manager for the Select Board and Town Manager, Sandwich
- Jacob Congel, Recreation and Beach Director, Eastham
- Bryce Conroy, Appraisal Assistant, Yarmouth
- John Coulombe, Telecommunicator/ Jail Attendant, Barnstable
- Courtney Daly, Council on Aging Director, Dedham
- Cameron Durant, Human Resource Director, Fairhaven
- Jessi Finnie, Library Director, Scituate
- Brittney Franklin, Assistant to the Town Administrator/Public Information Coordinator, Medfield
- Amy V. Hart, Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator, Fairhaven
- Sean Hogan, Environmental



The MMA-Suffolk leadership program's Barnstable class holds its graduation in Barnstable on May 17.

Sustainability Manager, Barnstable

- Elisabeth E. Horan, Interim Town Clerk, Fairhaven
- Jonathon Idman, Town Planner, Brewster
- Ross Lloyd, Police Dispatch Supervisor, Barnstable
- Erin Logan, Interim Deputy Director of Asset Management and Licensing Director, Barnstable
- Justin MacGregor, Assistant Superintendent of Recycling and Solid Waste Division, Needham
- Gislaine Morse, Assistant Collector, Barnstable
- James O'Neill, Assessing Administrative Assistant, Barnstable
- Kerri Pasquerella, Outreach/Support Services Coordinator, Council on Aging, Barnstable
- Alexandra Peterson, Assistant Assessor, Eastham
- Fidora Pop-Gonova, Telecommunications Specialist/Jail Assistant, Barnstable
- Martha Reed, Council on Aging Executive Director, Fairhaven
- Kim St. Aubin, DPW Administrative Coordinator, Eastham
- Lynnette Walker, Police Department Detail Coordinator, Barnstable
- Tammy Wise, Assistant IT Director, Sandwich

Barnstable Town Manager Mark Ells was the keynote speaker for the Barnstable graduation, and the faculty speaker was Wareham Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director Dorene M. Allen England. The student speakers were Cameron Durant and Jonathan Idman.

#### **Danvers class**

The 2023-2024 Danvers program



The MMA-Suffolk leadership program's Danvers class holds its graduation in Boston on June 27.

#### graduates are:

- Rony Camille, Director of Media Programing, Tyngsborough
- Anne-Marie Condon, Fire Business Manager, Needham
- Jayne Marie Davolio, Town Clerk, Millbury
- Brian Dorrington, Telemedia Director, Tewksbury
- Dawn Dunbar, Town Clerk, Groton
- Travis Farley, Recreation and Parks Director, Natick
- Mary Gallivan, Assistant Town Manager/HR Director, Ipswich
- Jennifer Gingras, Director of Planning, Westborough
- Michael Greene, Associate Director of Public Health, Burlington
- Lauren H. Grymek, Director of Economic Recovery and Business Development, Melrose
- Amy Haelsen, Director of Communications and Community Engagement, Needham
- Wendelyn Hansbury, Public Health Director, Manchester-by-the-Sea
- Stephen Hildreth, Senior Civil Engineer, Burlington
- Melinda Horrigan, Treasurer/Collector, Westminster
- Stephanie Jarosz, Assistant Town Clerk, Danvers
- Erika Jerram, Director of Planning and Community Development, Billerica
- John Kelley, Sergeant/Patrol Supervisor, Arlington
- Amanda U. Lewis, Benefits and Payroll Manager, Ayer
- Leah Niska, Executive Assistant, Ipswich
- Owen Page, Management Analyst/

**GRADUATES** continued on 26

## \$227M awarded to create, preserve housing

Gov. Maura Healey and Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus joined local officials and housing developers from across the state in Danvers on June 20 to announce the 2024 Affordable Housing Development Grants.

A total of \$227 million in state and federal tax credits and subsidies will support the creation or preservation of 1,874 rental units across Massachusetts, according to the administration.

The projects include 1,731 affordable rental units for residents making less than 60% of area median income, with 480 units set aside for residents making below 30% of the AMI and often experiencing homelessness.

The program is the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities' largest annual grant award that supports the development of affordable rental housing units statewide.



Danvers Town Manager Steve Bartha speaks during a June 20 event in Danvers to announce the 2024 awarding of Affordable Housing Development Grants. Standing behind him are Housing and Living Communities Secretary Ed Augustus, left, and Gov. Maura Healey. (*Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office*)

The total investment includes:

- \$27.1 million in 4% federal tax credits
- \$12.1 million in 9% federal tax credits
- \$44.5 million in state tax credits

• \$143.4 million in state subsidy funds

In addition to analyzing how these projects met the state's housing goals, the administration says it carefully evaluated the green, sustainable and climate resilient aspects of every application to ensure that all projects selected for awards will help further the state's climate objectives.

At the New England Homes for the Deaf in Danvers, the administration showcased the new construction Waterhouse project that will serve the disability community and will receive federal and state low-income housing tax credits and subsidy funds. The project will create 116 units, with 93 affordable, including 17 deeply affordable below 30% of AMI.

 See the full list of projects receiving awards

### Up-front payments made for balance of supplemental road aid

#### By John Ouellette

In early June, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation announced that it would be making up-front payments to municipalities for any unspent fiscal 2024 "Fair Share" supplemental funding for local transportation projects.

The \$100 million in supplemental funding was included in the <u>fiscal 2024</u> <u>state budget signed last summer</u>, and is funded by the Fair Share Amendment. MassDOT sent apportionment notifications to municipalities last December.

MassDOT said any unspent fiscal 2024 Fair Share funds would be directly paid to municipalities through up-front payments to their accounts by June 30. These funds were distributed through two distinct formulas:

- The initial \$50 million follows the traditional Chapter 90 formula, considering local road mileage (58.33%), population (20.83%), and employment (20.83%).
- The other \$50 million is allocated based on each municipality's share of road mileage.

Each community received a total amount determined by these two formulas. This apportionment was automatically incorporated into a municipality's existing Chapter 90 contract with MassDOT with no further action required by the municipality. Funds must be spent in accordance with the <u>Chapter 90 program</u>, but the funds are now provided up-front.

With the provision of funds up-front, MassDOT requires each municipality to submit a project report form each time funds are spent. The <u>Fair Share Funds</u> <u>Municipal Reporting Form is available</u> <u>online</u>, as well as on the <u>web page listing</u> <u>fiscal 2024 Fair Share amounts by</u> <u>municipality</u>.

In lieu of requesting reimbursement, municipalities are required to submit the report form detailing fund usage within 30 days of the expenditure of any Fair Share funding. Each project requires its own form. ●

### MMLA to hold housing seminar for municipal counsel and officials

The Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association will host a half-day seminar for municipal counsel and local officials, titled "Navigating State Mandates, Municipal Opportunities, and Local Impacts Related to Housing Production," on Aug. 1 in Sturbridge.

The seminar will cover what municipal counsel and local officials need to know about the state's housing policies and legislation impacting municipalities. Topics will include recent housing legislation, the attorney general's Housing Affordability Unit, the MBTA Communities Act, affordable housing trusts, local tax incentives for affordable housing, and the tension between environmental protections and proposed housing projects.

The event will begin with registration at 11:15 a.m. and a luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to 12:20 p.m.

The program agenda and speakers will run from 1 to 5:30 p.m.

The seminar will be held at the Publick House Historic Inn, 277 Main St. in Sturbridge.

For MMLA members and local officials, the cost is \$75 for the program only or \$90 for the program with luncheon.

Registration and the full agenda are available on the MMLA website.

## **MMA and Suffolk welcome Municipal Fellows**

The MMA and Suffolk University are welcoming the fourth class of MMA-Suffolk Municipal Fellows.

The program, a partnership of the MMA and Suffolk University that launched in 2021, offers significant financial support to municipal professionals to attend the master's in public administration program at Suffolk's Sawyer School of Business.

The 2024-2025 MMA-Suffolk Municipal Fellows are:

- Cameron Durant, Human Resources Director in Fairhaven
- Perry Rosenfield, Manager of Financial Planning and Analysis in Newton

The fellows are both graduates of the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program, and were accepted into Suffolk's MPA program. Each received the support of the chief municipal official in his respective municipality to continue working while attending the program part-time.

The fellowship was highly competitive, and the MMA and Suffolk congratulate the recipients.

#### Municipal Finance Management Seminar

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





Cameron Durant

Perry Rosenfield

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

Students learn about the structure and purpose of local government, municipal budgeting systems and sources of revenue, financial reporting and record keeping, financial management, principles of property assessment, the intersection of human resources and financial resources, and best practices in local government finance.

The <u>application is available online</u>, and the deadline is July 31.

This is a competitive application process. Applicants will be informed of their status by the end of August.

#### Municipal Human Resources Seminar

Due to overwhelming demand, the MMA and Suffolk University are planning two sessions of their Municipal Human Resources Seminar for 2025.

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

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

The fall seminar will be held via Zoom over the course of five Fridays. Dates and applications for the 2025 seminars will be available this fall.

#### Questions

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 <u>mma.org/suffolk</u> or contact Katie McCue at 617-426-7272, ext. 111, or kmccue@ mma.org, or Kate Evarts at 617-426-7272, ext. 172, or kevarts@mma.org.

## Next 'Climate Action' webinar will focus on funding, geothermal

On July 23, the fifth session of the MMA's "Inspiring Climate Action" webinar series will review funding and financial incentives available for geothermal projects through the federal Inflation Reduction Act.

Massachusetts Deputy Climate Chief Jonathan Schrag will discuss incentives and tax credits available to municipalities, including how <u>Elective Pay</u> and cash refunds from clean energy investments can be used to finance eligible projects. He will also discuss challenges identified throughout the process, opportunities to learn more, and how to access additional resources.

Easton Town Administrator Connor Read, along with Gregory Joynt, associate principal and architect at Kaestle Boos Associates, will discuss the public safety and public works facilities replacement project in Easton. They will



Connor Read



Gregory Joynt

share their plans to prioritize geothermal power in the building design and explain how they won support from stakeholders, leveraged financing tools, and evaluated the associated costs and benefits.

<u>Online registration is open</u> for the 75-minute webinar, which will begin at noon. Only MMA members may register. Members include appointed and



Jonathan Schrag

across the state. Media members are not permitted to attend. The "Inspiring Climate Action" webinar series

elected officials

from MMA mem-

ber communities

explores how climate change impacts municipalities and addresses questions about how appointed and elected officials and their staff can take action. The series will continue throughout 2024, with additional webinars to be announced this fall.

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

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## 6th 'Climate Action' webinar will cover funding for EVs

The sixth session in the MMA's "Inspiring Climate Action" webinar series, on Aug. 7, will explore state incentives and federal funding options for electric vehicle charging infrastructure and low-emission vehicles.

Anna Vanderspek, electric vehicle program director at the Green Energy Consumers Alliance, will discuss the types of EVs available today and the charging infrastructure needed. She will also review state and utility incentives for purchasing EVs and installing charging stations, both for municipal fleets and for public use on municipal property.

Two representatives from the National League of Cities — Legislative Director for Sustainability Carolyn Berndt and Kyle Funk, senior program specialist on infrastructure, transportation and solutions — will discuss federal funding resources for electric vehicles and charging infrastructure. They will also review policy considerations



Anna Vanderspek



Carolyn Berndt

for municipal leaders as they pursue electrification.

Danvers Energy Resource Manager Jeff Elie will discuss his community's approach to electrifying vehicles and fleets over time, the use of <u>MassEVIP</u> <u>public access charging incentives</u>, and the decision-makers involved in these conversations. Danvers is one of 50 communities served by a municipal light plant in Massachusetts, and Elie will discuss the role municipal light plants can have in electrification and decarbonization efforts.



Kyle Funk

Online registration is open for the 75-minute webinar, which will begin at noon. Only MMA members may register. Members include appointed and elected officials from MMA member communities

across the state. Media members are not permitted to attend.

The "Inspiring Climate Action" webinar series explores how climate change impacts municipalities and addresses questions about how appointed and elected officials and their staff can take action. The series will continue throughout 2024, with additional webinars to be announced this fall.

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

### \$5M in disaster aid distributed to communities impacted by floods

The Healey-Driscoll administration announced on June 14 that it has distributed nearly \$5 million in state disaster relief funding to 13 communities that were impacted by severe flooding last September.

The funding remained from the \$15 million in disaster relief provided by the <u>supplemental budget signed by Gov.</u> <u>Maura Healey</u> last December.

The \$5 million is being distributed after President Joe Biden approved an appeal to provide federal disaster aid for businesses and eligible homeowners and renters who incurred storm-related repair costs in September 2023, but the Federal Emergency Management Agency denied an appeal for Public Assistance for Hampden and Worcester counties. (See related coverage.) As a result, the administration is now distributing the remaining \$5 million in state aid that it had set aside while the appeal was pending.

The municipalities receiving funds are: Bridgewater, Chicopee, Leominster, Lunenburg, Middlefield, North Attleborough, Pepperell, Princeton, Scituate, Springfield, Sterling, Westford



The Healey-Driscoll administration announced that 13 communities had received nearly \$5 million in state disaster relief funding related to severe flooding in September 2023.

and Worcester.

Mayor Dean Mazzarella of Leominster, one of the hardest-hit communities, expressed his gratitude to the governor and lieutenant governor "for their constant support" of his city.

"On Sept. 11, Gov. Healey sent a full state team to help us respond," he said in a prepared statement. "She came the next day to survey the damage, and her advocacy never stopped through the FEMA application and appeal process." He said the city will use its \$3.6 million in state funds to start to repair damage to city roads and other public infrastructure.

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency created a web page (<u>mass.gov/recover</u>) to centralize information from FEMA on available federal assistance and to address frequently asked questions.

The site provides information on Individual Assistance available to residents and businesses in Bristol and

Worcester counties through FEMA. Those eligible should apply for assistance by July 15 at <u>disasterassistance</u>. <u>gov</u>.

The MEMA web page also provides information on low-interest personal and business loans available through the U.S. Small Business Administration.

## MSA hosts training for newly elected members

#### By Anneke Craig

The Massachusetts Select Board Association held its annual free training for newly elected members on June 7 in Devens.

The meeting covered key topics in municipal law and finance, as well as strategies for collaborating with colleagues in Town Hall and communicating with the public.

Attorney Janelle Austin, a shareholder at KP Law, led an introductory workshop on the open meeting and public records laws, offering an overview of how the laws affect select boards and best practices for compliance, including over social media and in remote meetings.

Jessica Sizer, a project manager at the Division of Local Services' Financial Management Bureau and a town councillor in Palmer, led a 101-level session on municipal finance, which covered the budgeting process and schedule, key terms and definitions, and the role of select board members in overseeing their community's finances.

"You have to think, 'We're in the driver's seat, so where do we want this car to go?" she said. "At the end of the day, it requires strong teamwork, and everybody buying into that team, in order to make the process go smoothly."

The meeting also featured a panel discussion with select board veterans Beth Casavant of Shrewsbury and Jennifer Glass of Lincoln, as well as Shrewsbury Town Manager Kevin Mizikar. The trio discussed strategies for select board members to develop strong working relationships with their chief municipal officers and other elected and appointed leaders.

Mizikar recommended that newly elected members start by developing a strong knowledge base about their town's governance structure and charter.

"Having a solid understanding of everyone's roles and responsibilities is a fundamental need," he said.

Casavant and Glass added that select board members should also get to know

their town manager/administrator and fellow board members, as well as their communication styles.

"In your first year, it's really all about those connections," Casavant said. "If you're patient with yourself, in your second and third years you'll really find you're able to start working on the goals that you originally ran on accomplishing."

Easton Select Board Member Dottie Fulginiti led a session on public speaking and civility in local government, reflecting on her experience attending town meetings as a resident and local housing advocate before she ran for office.

"If we understand the way that the meeting works from the perspective of attendees," she explained, "we're going to be a bit more patient."

Fulginiti shared best practices for hosting a successful public meeting,



Jessica Sizer, a project manager at the Division of Local Services' Financial Management Bureau and a town councillor in Palmer, discusses municipal finance during the Massachusetts Select Board Association's training for newly elected members on June 7 in Devens.

including selecting a space that accommodates the attendance, setting the tone for respectful dialogue, and involving the public in the problem-solving process.

The last session of the day featured Wellesley Public Information Officer Stephanie Hawkinson, who led an introductory workshop on public engagement. She used case studies to illustrate the three elements of a strong public engagement strategy: communication, education and action.

Williamstown Select Board Member Andy Hogeland, who's president of the MSA, and MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine adjourned the meeting with congratulations to attendees on their election and new positions.

"Local government doesn't work without people like you who are willing to step up and dedicate your time," Chapdelaine said. ●

### MMHR to hold Fall Conference Sept. 12-13 in Falmouth

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources will hold its annual Fall Conference on Sept. 12 and 13 at the Sea Crest Beach Hotel in Falmouth.

The conference will include an MMA legislative update, networking opportunities, and workshops on key topics in municipal HR.

Workshop topics include:

- Artificial intelligence in the public sector
- Diversity, equity and inclusion

- Mental wellness and work-life balance for HR professionals
- Building community and resilience in the workplace

Registration and a networking breakfast will begin at 8:30 a.m on Thursday, Sept. 12. The program will begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at 4:30 p.m., with an evening reception.

The conference will resume at 8 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 13, and conclude at noon.

The registration fee is \$200 for the full

conference, or \$125 for Thursday only. More information about registration and hotel accommodations will be shared with MMHR members in late July.

A detailed agenda will be posted on <u>www.mma.org</u> and shared with MMHR members in the coming weeks.

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

#### BUDGET

Continued from page 1

fund the state's commitment to the Special Education Circuit Breaker, which reimburses school districts for the high cost of educating students with learning disabilities.

**Charter schools:** Both the House and Senate budgets would fully fund the state's statutory obligation for charter school mitigation payments as outlined in the Student Opportunity Act.

**Rural schools:** The Senate bill would appropriate \$17.5 million for Rural School Aid to provide assistance to eligible towns and regional school districts facing the challenge of declining enrollments. Grants would help districts identify efficiencies in school services or opportunities for regional collaboration. The MMA has stated its support for this proposal.

#### **Regional school transportation:**

Both budget bills would appropriate \$99.4 million for Regional School District Transportation, which represents an 84% reimbursement rate according to the full funding estimate of fiscal 2025 claims from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

#### Vocational student transportation:

The Senate bill would fund out-of-district vocational transportation at \$1 million, which represents a 17% reimbursement rate according to DESE's full funding estimate of fiscal 2025 claims.

**McKinney-Vento:** The House and Senate both included \$28.6 million toward the state's mandate to fund school transportation for homeless students. This amount reflects approximately 70% of DESE's anticipated claims for fiscal 2025.

**PILOT:** The Senate bill would appropriate \$53 million for payments-in-lieu-of taxes to cities and towns with stateowned land. The MMA supports this \$1.5 million increase over the current

#### fiscal year.

#### Surtax revenue programs

Fiscal 2025 will be the second fiscal year to realize revenue from a voter-approved income surtax called the Fair Share Amendment, with funds dedicated to education and transportation-related programs.

The Senate bill would use \$125 million for supplemental funding for local roads and bridges. Municipalities are responsible for more than 30,000 miles of roadway, or nearly 90% of all road miles in Massachusetts. The Senate's proposed funding would help communities quickly address immediate safety needs. The House bill utilized \$25 million for supplemental road and bridge funding.

The Senate also included \$15 million to upgrade municipally owned small bridges and culverts in order to protect public safety, improve climate resiliency, and restore ecosystem connectivity.

The House included \$10 million for <u>Green School Works</u>, a new grant program to support public school districts with the installation or maintenance of clean energy infrastructure.

The House also included \$190 million for Universal School Meals, which allows all Massachusetts students to eat for free at school, regardless of household income.

#### **Outside Sections**

**Disaster relief fund:** The House budget bill would establish a permanent Disaster Relief and Resiliency Fund to provide relief to municipalities impacted by extreme weather events. This section would also direct the state's comptroller to transfer \$14 million from any consolidated net budget surplus for fiscal 2025 to the Disaster Relief and Resiliency Fund. The MMA strongly supports the creation of the fund and a dedicated revenue for this fund, which would support rapid-response efforts by cities and towns as they incur emergency response costs from extreme weather. **Chapter 70 Task Force:** In recognition of local school funding challenges, the Senate budget would create a Chapter 70 Task Force, including a designee from the MMA, to study and make recommendations on various aspects of the Chapter 70 formula, including issues related to required local contribution calculations, impacts on minimum aid districts, and issues of low and declining student enrollment.

**MSBA commission:** The Senate budget would establish a special commission, including a designee from the MMA, tasked with studying and making recommendations regarding the Massachusetts School Building Authority's capacity to meet the needs of current and future school facility projects.

**Tax title:** The Senate included an outside section related to the tax title foreclosure process, which would impact liens on properties due to nonpayment of property taxes. The MMA favors standalone legislation passed in the House on June 26 that adheres to the relevant recent <u>U.S. Supreme Court decision</u> while providing important protections for taxpayers and municipalities.

**Electronic Lottery:** An outside section in the House bill would authorize an online state Lottery (iLottery), with \$200 million of anticipated new revenue targeted to early education programs. The MMA continues to advocate for online Lottery proceeds to be used solely for the Lottery's intended purpose — supporting the Commonwealth's revenue sharing through Unrestricted General Government Aid. This is consistent with the Lottery's mission and is necessary to protect a vital revenue stream that accounts for the overwhelming amount of discretionary local aid that cities, towns and taxpayers rely on to fund essential municipal and school services and balance local budgets. The Senate budget bill did not include a provision to expand the Lottery platform.

### MunEnergy helps communities manage energy costs

#### The MMA's MunEnergy program,

designed exclusively for municipalities, offers a number of features to help communities manage their energy costs and energy-related sustainability projects during the heat of summer, the cold of

winter, and seasons in between.

The program offers MMA-eligible members a customized energy contract, assistance with installing of EV charging stations, an energy efficiency audit, access to webinars on current energy topics, and more.

For more information, visit the <u>MMA</u> website or contact MMA Deputy Executive Director Katie McCue at 617-426-7272, ext. 111, or kmccue@mma. org. ●

## **MMHR discusses municipal records retention**

#### By Anneke Craig

John Warner, archivist of the Commonwealth, led a records retention and digitization workshop during the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources Annual Meeting on June 13 in Salem.

Warner demonstrated how to find and navigate the resources available through the <u>Secretary of the Commonwealth's</u> <u>website</u>, including a guide to the public records law, a records retention schedule for municipalities, and information on "born-digital" and digitized records.

For HR professionals seeking to digitize their existing municipal records, Warner recommended starting with outreach to stakeholders in city or town hall, such as the IT department.

"At the end of the day ... you have to have buy-in from all of your municipality's government on why you want to do this," he said.

Warner was followed by a panel discussion featuring mental health and legal experts, titled "Beyond Discipline: Supporting Employee Mental Health in the Municipal Workplace."

Jon Mattleman, a mental health presenter and consultant with previous experience in Stoughton and Needham, reviewed common mental health issues faced by public servants, including anxiety and depression. He discussed how shame and stigma can exacerbate mental health issues, making it harder for those who are struggling to seek help from others.

Mattleman shared several strategies that municipal HR professionals can use to build trust with an employee in crisis. One example is taking a walk instead of talking in an office or formal meeting space, which can help to put an individual at ease and move the conversation forward.

Mattleman said a non-disciplinary approach to mental health can lead to positive outcomes that extend beyond the individual.

"Ultimately," he said, "how you treat your employee reverberates through town hall."

Mattleman was followed by Jennifer Tatten, a Jail Diversion Program clinical



John Warner, archivist of the Commonwealth, discusses records retention and digitization during the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources Annual Meeting on June 13 in Salem.

liaison serving Danvers, Salem and Topsfield, who discussed how to find resources to support municipal employees with mental health concerns and navigate the referral process.

When searching for mental health resources, Tatten recommends looking at it "almost like career networking."

"You want to connect with people and get personal recommendations," she said.

Attorney Kier Wachterhauser, a partner

at Murphy, Hesse, Toomey and Lehane, provided a legal context, including a summary of employee rights under Title 1 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as reasonable accommodation, and confidentiality and privacy protections. Not only do these rights protect employees struggling with mental health issues, he said, but they also enable employers to help.

"There's a lot of options out there," he said, "and we shouldn't be afraid to explore them."

The meeting agenda included MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman, who shared updates on the current legislative session and the status of key bills, including the Frances Perkins Workplace Equity Act and civil service reform.

Attendees also participated in the MMHR's annual business meeting, voting on the fiscal 2025 board slate and budget, as well as updates to the association's bylaws.



### **PFAS needs highlighted on Beacon Hill**

Easton Town Administrator Connor Read urges action on legislation to address contamination by per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances and the need for funding to support remediation during a June 25 legislative briefing at the State House. The event was organized by MASSPIRG Legislative Director Deirdre Cummings and hosted by Rep. Kate Hogan and Sen. Julian Cyr. Read, who was the MMA's designee to the PFAS Interagency Task Force, discussed how Easton has designed and constructed three PFAS water treatment plants at a cost of more than \$12 million to comply with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's drinking-water regulations. He said his town has an additional \$5 million planned for a fourth treatment plant to comply with new federal PFAS drinking-water standards. The proposed Massachusetts PFAS Act would provide resources for municipalities and others to remediate contamination across the Commonwealth through a PFAS Remediation Trust Fund. (*Photo courtesy Liam Louis/ElleVignette Photography and MASSPIRG*)

## **WEMO to hold annual Leadership Conference**

With the theme "Growing Trust in Local Government," Women Elected Municipal Officials will hold its sixth annual Leadership Conference on Sept. 27 in Devens.

A panel of local leaders — Newton Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, Sharon Select Board Member Kiana Pierre-Louise, and Franklin Councillor Melanie Hamblen — will discuss opportunities for building trust in local government and share their experiences as women leaders.

The half-day conference will include a keynote presentation and guided smallgroup discussions on the challenges facing women in local office.



Ruthanne Fuller



Kiana Pierre-Louise

Registration and networking will begin at 8:30 a.m. The program will start at 9 a.m. and conclude at noon, followed by a networking lunch.



Melanie Hamblen

The conference will be held at the Devens Common Center at 31 Andrews Parkway, Devens. The cost is \$40.

Additional information, including the registration link and agenda, will be

shared with WEMO members and will be available on <u>www.mma.org</u> in the coming weeks.

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

### Administration announces \$12M in grants for trail improvement

The Healey-Driscoll administration in June announced \$12 million in funding to support 65 trail improvement projects across Massachusetts.

The <u>MassTrails grant program</u> expands and links the state's networks of offroad, shared-use pathways and recreational trails through matching grants, technical assistance, and resources available to municipalities, nonprofits and other public entities.

Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper, Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Brian Arrigo, and local elected officials gathered in downtown Holliston on June 21 to announce the grants, which will bolster community and recreational trail networks — supporting the creation of new multi-use trails, enhancing accessibility, establishing connections between cities and towns, constructing boardwalks and bridges, implementing signage, and expanding trail corridors across the state.

"With increased access to outdoor recreation, we are enabling our residents to immerse themselves in nature and choose sustainable transportation options," said Gov. Maura Healey in a prepared statement.

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said the MassTrails program "enhances connectivity and invites exploration and appreciation of the diverse resources that define Massachusetts." Tepper said each mile of trail "represents a step toward



The MassTrails grant program awarded \$12 million to 65 trail improvement projects in June.

reducing our carbon footprint and preserving our natural resources."

"With increased access to outdoor recreation, we are enabling our residents to immerse themselves in nature and choose sustainable transportation options." - Gov. Maura Healey

Arrigo, a former mayor of Revere, said trails connect communities, "providing essential opportunities for outdoor recreation, tourism and economic growth." He said the MassTrails grant program "underscores our dedication to shared stewardship with our municipal partners."

MassTrails funds support recreational trails accommodating a wide range of activities, including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, paddling, snowmobiling, and recreational off-highway vehicle riding.

This year's MassTrails grant projects will impact the following communities: Amherst, Andover, Ashfield, Athol,

Barnstable, Belchertown, Berlin, Billerica, Blandford, Canton, Chester, Clinton, Concord, Dennis, Dover, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Edgartown, Erving, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Gardner, Great Barrington, Hancock, Hardwick, Harwich, Hawley, Holden, Holliston, Housatonic, Hubbardston, Lanesborough, Lawrence, Lenox, Lynnfield, Malden, Marblehead, Mattapoisett, Methuen, Monterey, North Adams, Northampton, Otis, Peabody, Pittsfield, Rutland, Salisbury, Sandisfield, Sandwich, Savoy, Somerville, Sturbridge, Sudbury, Taunton, Templeton, Tolland, Ware, Washington, Westport, West Springfield, Williamstown, Windsor, Winchendon, Worcester, and Yarmouth.

## **DOER conducting review of SMART solar program**

#### By Josie Ahlberg

In July, the Department of Energy Resources is hosting opportunities for feedback on the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target program, which supports the development of solar energy in Massachusetts.

The main areas of focus for this round of SMART program review are a <u>straw</u> <u>proposal</u> outlining possible changes, released on July 10, as well as current solar costs, revenue requirements across different program elements and added features.

The Department of Energy Resources hosted a two-hour webinar on July 10 to provide background information and review proposed policy changes. The recording of the webinar is available on the <u>SMART Programmatic Review website</u>, as well as the <u>responses</u> to a <u>series</u> <u>of questions</u> on the program received during a stakeholder feedback process this past winter.

The department will also be holding in-person technical sessions at the Connolly Center in the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston to gather more feedback on the program. The sessions will be separated into different topic areas to focus feedback on specific elements of the program.

The schedule is:

- July 22, 9:30 a.m.-noon: Program structure and process
- July 22, 1-4 p.m.: Equity, consumer protection and compliance
- July 23, 9:30 a.m.-noon: Compensation rate adders, eligibility
- July 23, 1-4 p.m.: Environmental protection and agrivoltaics

Attendees may <u>register online for indi-</u> vidual sessions.



The Department of Energy Resources is conducting a review of the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target program, which supports the development of solar energy in Massachusetts.

For those unable to attend an in-person session, a virtual technical session will be offered on July 29. (<u>Register online</u> by July 24.)

Visit the <u>SMART program website</u> for more information, or direct questions to doer.smart@mass.gov.

## DPH says CBD, THC prohibited in food manufactured or sold in Mass.

#### By John Ouellette

Addressing the recent influx of hempbased products like gummies and beverages that contain active ingredients also found in cannabis products, the Department of Public Health's Food Protection Program has issued an advisory clarifying that it is illegal to manufacture or sell food products with CBD or THC in Massachusetts.

The advisory, issued on May 31, covers a growing number of intoxicating hemp products, such as products marketed as Delta-9 and Delta-10, but it does not apply to marijuana products regulated by the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission.

The DPH is also asking local boards of health to help enforce the federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, which prohibits the addition of hemp-derived CBD (cannabidiol) and THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) to food products.

The DPH issued answers to some <u>fre-</u><u>quently asked questions</u> about CBD and THC, particularly regarding two related state regulations, <u>105 CMR 500</u> and <u>105</u> <u>CMR 590</u>.

In 2018, the federal Farm Bill removed hemp (as defined by the Farm Bill) from the federal Controlled Substances Act and deemed it an agricultural commodity that could be lawfully produced in the United States. The Farm Bill, however, did not remove the prohibition, under the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, against adding CBD or THC to food or beverages. This prohibition exists regardless of whether the CBD or THC is hemp-derived, according to the DPH, because CBD and TCH are active ingredients in U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved drugs.

The DPH regulates food manufacturing in the Commonwealth under state regulations (105 CMR 500) that require all food to be from approved sources that comply with federal, state and local laws and to not contain any prohibited ingredients.

Likewise, Regulations for Minimum Sanitation Standards for Food Establishments (105 CMR 590), enforced by local boards of health in partnership with the state, incorporate the FDA's Food Code, which requires that food be obtained from sources that comply with federal, state, and local laws and not contain any prohibited ingredients.

Local boards of health also have the authority to restrict and regulate the sale of vaporized hemp-derived products



The Department of Energy Resources is conducting a review of the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target program, which supports the development of solar energy in Massachusetts.

under the 2019 Tobacco Control Law and related state regulations (105 CMR 665). (Questions about local regulatory authority may be directed to MMA Tobacco Control Director Lisa Stevens-Goodnight at lstevensgoodnight@mma. org.)

Further, no cannabis product (hemp-derived or otherwise) may be marketed with claims of therapeutic benefit or any other disease claim without approval from the FDA. ●

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## Residents surveyed to help identify gaps in broadband

The state is conducting a new initiative seeking feedback from residents about high-speed internet availability across the state.

The initiative, called "How's Your Internet?," is part of a nationwide effort funded by the federal <u>Broadband</u> <u>Equity, Access and Deployment program</u> to expand high-speed internet access through funding, planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption programs across the United States.

The initiative, which will run from June 20 through July 20, is being conducted by the Executive Office of Economic Development, in partnership with the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's Massachusetts Broadband Institute. Residents can participate by visiting the portal at <u>HowsYourInternet.org</u>.

In a prepared statement, Economic Development Secretary Yvonne Hao said that the initiative "will help the state identify gaps in broadband service for residents and businesses and ensure we are putting crucial federal and state resources to work in the places that need it the most."

<u>MBI</u> Director Michael Baldino said, "Obtaining the most accurate broadband coverage data continues to drive our efforts to bridge the digital divide



The state is surveying residents about high-speed internet availability.

and ensure that everyone has access to affordable, high-speed internet across the state. That's why we are encouraging residents, businesses, and local and tribal governments to participate in the BEAD Challenge process, conduct speed tests, and submit information about their service.

"Once we gather this information," he continued, "we will be one step closer to deploying the funds needed to bring internet for all to Massachusetts."

The state will collect user data to identify homes and businesses that lack access to broadband or do not receive



#### AG discusses leadership, DEI work

Attorney General Andrea Campbell advises women to tell their stories, be courageous, infuse their work with compassion and empathy, and develop a sense of community during her keynote address to a meeting of Women Leading Government on June 26 in Boylston. Campbell also encouraged leaders to engage in diversity, equity and inclusion work.

broadband-level internet speeds from their existing service provider. The portal allows users to type in their home or business address and perform tests that check their internet speeds.

If users find their internet speeds are slow or inadequate, they will be given information about where and how to report their internet speed challenges to organizations that can investigate issues further, such as local and tribal governments, nonprofit

organizations, and internet service providers.

The data collected through the initiative will help to verify the accuracy of the Federal Communications Commission's National Broadband Map. The data will identify where gaps and inadequacies in broadband service exist across the state, and determine which locations are in need of investment from the state's existing broadband programs.

MBI will be holding webinars and office hours to provide information about participating in the initiative and submitting internet speed challenges. Technical support is available from MBI at mapfeedback@masstech.org and MBI's partner on this initiative, Connected Nation, at mabeadsupport@connectednation.org.

Massachusetts is set to receive a total of more than \$400 million in federal funding to close the digital divide. The How's Your Internet process is a required step related to the state's receipt of \$147 million in BEAD funding administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

In addition, the state is in the process of deploying \$75 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding and \$175 million from the Capital Projects Fund to close existing broadband gaps.

In March, the <u>NTIA announced</u> that Massachusetts will receive \$14 million in funding to address the digital divide through skills training, device access, and internet affordability. ●

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Continued from page 1

alcoholic drinks.

The <u>House bill</u> included an amendment to update and modernize civil service hiring practices, but a similar amendment was withdrawn in the Senate. The House's proposal reflects years of work among a comprehensive group of stakeholders.

The <u>MMA reported on several key</u> aspects of this proposal in March,

#### GRADUATES

Continued from page 16

- Communications Assistant, Westborough
- Kelli A. Robbins, Principal Assessor, Leicester
- Patrice Rotondo, Executive Assistant for Public Safety, Manchester-by-the-Sea
- Luke Tedstone, Lieutenant, Sherborn
- Carla Dawne Warren, Town Clerk, North Andover

including a new "hybrid" pathway that Civil Service departments could use to more easily identify and hire candidates for municipal police and fire positions outside of the traditional exam process. Other reforms include expanded flexibility for residency requirements, support and expansion for cadet programs, and more.

The House also adopted an amendment requested by the MMA regarding local consultation on "priority development sites," which are currently created

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Brian Arrigo, a former mayor of Revere, was the keynote speaker for the Danvers program graduation, which was held at Suffolk University in Boston. North Andover Deputy Town Manager Denise Casey was the faculty speaker. The student speaker was Rony Camille.

#### Looking ahead

MMA-Suffolk certificate programs are scheduled to begin this fall in Pittsfield and Sharon, and the application period through a lengthy, deliberate process by local officials. The amendment would ensure that the state's permit regulatory office continues to seek local insights from municipal officials and regional planning agencies.

A six-member conference committee is expected to be named to work on a compromise economic development bill for passage before the end of the formal legislative session on July 31.

ended on April 30. Information about the 2025-2026 programs, in Barnstable and Winchester, will be available in the fall, and applications will be available on Feb. 1 on the <u>MMA website</u>.

For more information about the MMA-Suffolk certificate program, visit <u>mma.</u> 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.

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

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

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





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

SIGN UP TODAY

#### Visit <u>mma.org/weekly</u> to get on the list today!

## **Rapid Response Team offers layoff assistance**

For municipal employers that face tough budget choices and make the difficult decision to lay off employees, a state program is ready to help them manage the difficult process for both employers and employees.

## The <u>Rapid Response Team</u> at the <u>MassHire Department of Career</u>

<u>Services</u> offers numerous free resources to Massachusetts employers, including municipalities and school districts, that are experiencing layoffs, and offers outplacement services to help provide an effective transition for the affected employees.

Engaging with the Rapid Response Team can benefit both employers and employees. According to the team, employers that start services before laying off employees have lower unemployment insurance costs, and are better able to maintain morale and productivity during the transition. And their employees will receive timely job placement assistance, which could include job referrals, customized job fairs, workshops and resume preparation, training options and enrollment for the <u>MassHire</u> <u>JobQuest website</u>.

The Rapid Response Team can help by:

• Meeting with organizations to establish a working relationship and planning for the services to be provided

• Conducting an employee information and orientation session to inform laid-off workers about their eligibility for services and benefits, as well as to answer questions about job searches and unemployment insurance, register and refer employees to MassHire Career Centers, conduct a survey of employee needs, and discuss the content and timetables of various Rapid Response services

- Conducting job readiness workshops on resume writing, job interview techniques, job search strategies and job fair preparation
- Developing job leads and providing job fair services
- Providing one-on-one meetings with employees to discuss individual needs, including resume critique, mock interviews, and customized action plans

For more information about the program, municipal employers can visit the team's <u>website</u>, contact Rapid Response/ Business Services Director Ken Messina at the statewide office at ken.messina@ mass.gov, or reach out to one of the team's <u>regional coordinators</u>.

<u>Rapid Response Employer Information</u> <u>Sheet</u>

## DPU hosting 'Road Show' meetings with public

The Department of Public Utilities is hosting four "Road Show" events during 2024, where the department's three commissioners will give a presentation outlining the department's work and take comments from the public.

The events are free and open to all. The schedule is as follows (all in-person):

• July 24, 6-7:30 p.m., Berkshire Innovation Center, 45 Woodlawn Ave., Pittsfield

### Let us know about your local news

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

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

• Sept. 25, 6-7:30 p.m., Quincy City Hall, 1305 Hancock St., Quincy

The first event, in a hybrid format, was held on March 27 in Boston. The second was held on May 29 in Salem.

Online registration is available. The registration form includes a field for questions that will be addressed by commissioners during the meeting.

Questions may be addressed to

Andrew Strumfels at andrew.w.strumfels@mass.gov.

The DPU is an adjudicatory agency that oversees investor-owned electric power, natural gas, and water companies in Massachusetts. The department is also charged with developing alternatives to traditional regulation, monitoring service quality, regulating safety in the transportation and gas pipeline areas, and overseeing the energy facilities siting process.



### Managers discuss goal setting

Retired town administrator and consultant Jeff Nutting, far right, discusses select board retreats and strategic goal setting during the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association meeting on July 18 in Danvers. Joining him, left to right, are retired Brookline Town Administrator Mel Kleckner, Hingham Town Administrator Tom Mayo, and Lexington Town Manager Jim Malloy.

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## Cities, towns can take steps to prepare for hurricanes

#### By Jennifer Ranz

ΜΙΙΑ

As we enter the busiest months of the annual hurricane season, meteorologists are forecasting a season with the <u>poten-</u> <u>tial to be more volatile than usual</u>. Even if the Northeast coastline does not see a direct hit, inland areas are not immune from the effects of more temperamental, damaging storms.

The combination of rising North Atlantic Ocean temperatures and an emerging La Niña climate pattern, which pushes the jet stream north and creates an ideal environment for hurricanes, is expected to create a record number of storms. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has predicted 17 to 25 named tropical storms for the season, with eight to 13 of them expected to become hurricanes, and four to seven of them expected to reach Category 3 or above. Hurricane Beryl, which formed relatively early this season, serves as an example of how these "perfect storm" conditions are making an impact.

The NOAA does not predict by region, but <u>Boston-area forecasters</u> expect that at least one tropical storm will make landfall in the area this season, and noted meteorology experts at Colorado State University say there is a 49% chance of a named storm impacting the



Satellite imagery captures Hurricane Idalia, left, approaching the western coast of Florida on Aug. 29, 2023, while Hurricane Franklin churns in the Atlantic Ocean. Meteorologists are forecasting a volatile hurricane season this year. (*Image courtesy National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration*)

#### Northeast this year.

First Street Foundation, a national nonprofit that focuses on assessing flood risk, forecasts that northward movement of hurricane activity will cause annual damages in the Northeast region to increase by 87% over the next 30 years, with buildings that have not been built to code for higher wind speeds at much higher risk.

Stronger storms that produce more sustained downpours and flash floods have <u>increased greatly</u> over the past several decades. These more dangerous storms bring increased chances of widespread water damage to inland areas that were previously considered safe from tropical storms. Last September, the city of Leominster faced a catastrophic 11 inches of rain over a two-day period that had adverse impacts on nearly every road, home and business.

#### **Preparation strategies**

Stephen Batchelder, MIIA's vice president of Claims Operations and Risk Management, urges municipalities to act now to prepare for storms that produce higher volumes of rain.

"The sheer volume of water frequently overwhelms existing infrastructure and exploits any age or maintenance-related weaknesses," he said. "It's particularly true for older municipal buildings with roofs and foundations nearing the end of their effective life expectancy."

The following are some key preparedness tasks to consider:

- Inspect roofs for damage and determine if additional fasteners or strapping is necessary.
- Clear drains and gutters to allow water to drain away from buildings.
- Ensure that rooftop and window ventilation and air conditioning units are secured.
- Trim tree limbs near buildings.

MIIA continued on 33

#### MIIA welcomes new medical, dental, vision members

This summer, MIIA is welcoming 14 communities and municipal organizations as new members to its Health Benefits Trust.

A number of new and existing MIIA members are also now participating in MIIA dental and vision plans.

The MIIA team looks forward to assisting new members in managing their health insurance needs and fostering workplace wellness, while offering access to a comprehensive network of hospitals, doctors and vital health care services.

The new members are:

**Medical:** Acton, Acton Boxborough Regional School District, Ayer, Bolton, Boxborough, Case Collaborative, Concord, Concord Carlisle Regional School District, Greater Lawrence Technical School, Groton, Pepperell, Phillipston, Stow, West Groton Water Supply District **Dental:** Ayer, Greater Lawrence Technical School, Hampden County Retirement Board, Harvard, Hudson, Medfield, Pepperell, Phillipston, Three Rivers Fire and Water, Winchester

Vision: Ayer, Blackstone, Blandford, Dartmouth, Hampden County Retirement Board, Harvard, Hudson, Medfield, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, Pepperell, West Brookfield, Winchester ●

# **Around the Commonwealth**

### Chicopee

#### City park honors post-Sept. 11 military service, dogs

After years of false starts, an aspirational napkin sketch has finally become a reality with a new park in Chicopee honoring post-Sept. 11 military service and the contributions of military dogs.

On June 1, public officials, military leaders, veterans, residents and dogs gathered to open a 7-acre space dedicated to those who served in the military after Sept. 11, 2001, and to military dogs. The Western Massachusetts Post 9/11 and Service Dog Memorial Park is the first to be opened in Chicopee's Ward 1, and has the city's first dog park.

The park joins dozens of military-themed locations in Chicopee, and reflects an ongoing tradition of military commitment in the community, according to Mayor John Vieau. As the host of Westover Air Reserve Base, the "veteran proud" city of 55,000 is also home to more than 4,000 veterans, he said.

"It took a lot of effort from some really special people who felt that turning this underutilized, potential park area into a unique celebration of those who serve, and also memorializing those canines that lost their lives, is something really special, and I'm excited that we host it," Vieau said. "We're hopeful that many have an opportunity to come visit."

Donated to Chicopee by the Westover base in the 1970s, the heavily wooded land sat unused for decades, and a committee's 2012 effort to create a park failed to materialize. When Stephanie Shaw became the veterans' services director in 2017, then-Mayor Richard Kos asked her to do something with the property — perhaps a dog park, given the demand for one. But she had a different epiphany when she visited the property.

"I went out there and I stood at the top of this hill in the middle of this wooded area going, 'Oh, we can do better," Shaw said. "It's 7 acres. I can't just put a turnaround with a stone. We have 66 monuments and dedicated spaces in the city. I didn't need another place that people were just going to drive by.



Veterans and a dog gather around the dog tag sculpture during the June 1 opening of the Western Massachusetts Post 9/11 and Service Dog Memorial Park in Chicopee. (Photo courtesy Stephanie Shaw/ Chicopee Department of Veterans Services)

I wanted to create a space people would want to drive to."

Shaw returned to her car, she said, and drew her vision on a napkin. She reconvened the earlier committee to pursue the new park concept, but kept her napkin private, for fear of influencing the process. When the design firm unveiled its plans for the park, the concept looked very familiar to Shaw.

"They saw what I saw," she said.

The new park, which broke ground in February 2023, contains walking trails, playground and fitness areas, granite pavers etched with a timeline of Massachusetts deployments since 2001, and 27 educational signs about the weapons and equipment used by Massachusetts units since 2001. It also includes a sculpture holding replica tags from veterans, sand features evoking areas where people deployed, and a mural reflecting Massachusetts service.

"We said, 'Let's build a space for everyone in the area that came home," Shaw said, "so that we can take our families and our children, and reflect and remember and share stories and educate the next generation on what our war was like."

The park has separate dog park enclosures for large and small dogs and honors military dogs, with signs about the breeds of working dogs in service and the value they have provided after service, Shaw said.

The park cost about \$2.5 million, officials said. The funding came from numerous sources, including a \$415,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant, a legislative earmark, funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, and city funding.

— Jennifer Kavanaugh

### Worcester

## Grants encourage certification of diverse businesses

Hoping to broaden opportunities for diverse local businesses, Worcester is offering \$5,000 to women- and minority-owned businesses that complete a business certification process through the state.

Since mid-April, the city's Diverse Business Certification Grant Program has been offering grants to businesses that get certified through the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office or through affiliated certifying organizations. Businesses can put the grants toward operating expenses, and the city will accept applications on a rolling basis through Nov. 1.

City officials are seeking to increase the number of certified women- and minority-owned businesses in Worcester, as well as helping business owners overcome certification obstacles and barriers to seeking contracts, and increasing their visibility to consumers.



"This is a great opportunity to empower small businesses owned by women, minorities, and other underrepresented groups," said City Manager Eric Batista. "Certification helps businesses be bet-

Eric Batista

ter positioned for contracting opportunities with government and private entities. It also helps the city meet its goals of contracting companies that are women-owned and minority-owned."

The grants are available to Worcesterbased businesses that get state certifications in these categories: Minority-Owned Businesses; Women-Owned Businesses; Veteran-Owned Businesses;

**COMMONWEALTH** continued on 30

# **Around the Commonwealth**

#### COMMONWEALTH

Continued from page 29

Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Owned Businesses; and Disability-Owned Businesses. To qualify for certification, a business must have at least 51% ownership in the particular category, and businesses that have achieved certification since September 2022 can apply for the grants.

The city has been working with the state to get business owners enrolled in the required pre-certification webinars, said Chief Development Officer Peter Dunn. By early July, the city had received 80 applications and has signed 11 grant agreements. Ultimately, the city hopes to award up to 210 grants, he said.

The program grew out of a city collaboration with the UMass Donahue Institute a few years ago examining the city's contracting with businesses owned by underrepresented groups, and updating its goals for government contracting. The city has also been strengthening its internal processes for tracking progress toward its goals, Dunn said. But the challenge has been accessing a robust and reliable list of diverse Worcesterbased businesses to do business with.

The city has had a Diverse Business Directory since 2019, Dunn said, but the listings were provided by businesses themselves and were not verified. However, that directory, which had 311 listings as of this month, highlights the information gap surrounding diverse business data — since the Supplier Diversity Office's online dashboard, by contrast, lists only 72 state-certified Worcester businesses. And given that Worcester has roughly 8,000 businesses overall, Dunn said, the city knows there are more diverse businesses operating within its boundaries, and sees the new program as a way to identify more diverse business partners, and to connect

### **Meeting space wanted**

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

With more than 60 member group meetings each year, the MMA uses

businesses with each other.

"I do think that there are those other benefits of business-to-business relationships and business to consumers, because I think we're seeing more intentionality now across the public and private sector, in the way that folks spend their dollars all the way down to the consumer level," Dunn said. "And so by just having them as a certified business, and part of the database, it'll potentially open doors and opportunities for those other kinds of relationships, other than just selling to government."

Worcester is using two sources to fund the grants: \$550,000 from the federal American Rescue Plan Act, and \$500,000 from the Attorney General's Office. Funds from the attorney general are part of a larger settlement related to the construction of the Polar Park baseball stadium in Worcester, reached with two construction companies that allegedly overstated the involvement of women- and minority-owned subcontractors in the project.

— Jennifer Kavanaugh

## New Bedford

#### City launches new property mapping tool

New Bedford has launched a new digital mapping and property information tool to provide an in-depth look at property details across the city.

The tool, which is open for use to the public, uses AxisGIS and CAI Technologies and features an integration with Google Maps. Residents can look up their own property as well as those of abutters.

"The new property lookup tool offers New Bedford residents an enormous amount of information," Mayor Jon Mitchell said in a statement. "We're always looking for opportunities to

several different types of function spaces around the state. The use of municipally owned meeting rooms greatly improves the organization's ability to sponsor affordable educational events in a variety of places.



New Bedford's new digital mapping and property information tool provides indepth details about properties located in the city.

provide better services and innovative tools to our residents, and this digital upgrade delivers that, right from their smartphones or home computers."

The tool includes basic information about zoning, property details (lot size, number of bedrooms and bathrooms, and sale information), and tax information. Users can also choose from more than 20 additional layering options to see information related to water resources, open space, drainage basins, dams, census data, trash pickup and more. These layers can easily be toggled on and off, and the coloring saturation can be manually adjusted.

The tool is available on the New Bedford website in a couple different places, and can be accessed directly at next.axisgis. com/New\_BedfordMA. The city has included a quick user guide, as well as a more in-depth help section, and the tool has a section for users to leave feedback.

#### – Meredith Gabrilska

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

To offer your town or city's municipal function space, contact Timmery Kuck, the MMA's conference and meeting manager, at tkuck@mma.org.

#### **SHELTER SPACE**

Continued from page 13

command deputy director, pre-shelter policy lead for Incident Command, executive director of the Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants, and the strategy manager at the Division of Housing Stabilization.

The Emergency Assistance shelter program is for families with children and pregnant women experiencing homelessness. Last October, Healey announced that the system had reached capacity at 7,500 families. Approximately half of the families in the system are newly arrived immigrants and half are long-time Massachusetts families, according to the administration.

The administration is implementing a



Emergency Assistance Director Lt. Gen. Scott Rice, who led an administration delegation to the U.S. southern border in June, speaks with municipal leaders during a virtual briefing in January.

new <u>nine-month length-of-stay policy</u> in Emergency Assistance shelters that was signed into law in late April. Families staying in safety-net sites are subject to <u>30-day</u> <u>engagement requirements</u>. The administration has also prioritized work authorizations, job training and placement, ESOL classes, and rehousing assistance to help families leave EA sites for more stable housing.

Since November 2023, the administration reported in late June that it had helped 3,785 immigrants apply for work authorizations, and it is expected that the vast majority have been approved. Additionally, 1,120 immigrants were enrolled in ESOL classes, and 1,120 EA residents have gotten jobs in the past few months. The number of families leaving the EA system has steadily increased each month, with more than 330 families leaving in May, the highest number in years.

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

Continued from page 2

has consistently performed at a high level, always pushing to improve and expand the MMA's reach with its communications efforts. I am very confident in John's ability to lead this new division, and I am very excited about working with him in this new capacity in the years to come.

I hope you'll join me in congratulating

John as he embarks on this new and exciting endeavor, and I hope that you'll also join me in thanking Candace for her excellent effort leading communications over the past several years.

## **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 E. 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 E. 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 MMA's Annual Meeting & Trade Show in January 2024.

Entries are due by Thursday, Oct. 31.

#### **HOW TO ENTER**

- Fill out the summary sheet found on the MMA website (at <u>www.mma.org/mmaannual-meeting/awards</u>), 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 (found at <u>www.mma.org/</u> <u>mma-annual-meeting/awards</u>).
- 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.

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

#### 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

Please send one electronic copy to dyi@mma.org.

**For more information, please contact** Daniel Yi at the MMA: 617-426-7272, ext. 125, or dyi@mma.org.

## People



Jeremy Stull

he served as director of budget and administration for the city of Attleboro from 2020 to 2023, and as budget analyst for the Brookline Public Schools from 2018 to 2020. He has also worked as an analyst and consultant in the private sector, and was a presidential public service fellow and mayor's office consultant for the town of Hamden, Connecticut. He has a bachelor's degree in history, Middle Eastern studies, from Quinnipiac University, and a master's degree in public administration from Cornell University.

Jeremy Stull be-

administrator in

Stull had been

the chief finan-

**Bristol** County

Sheriff's Office

since February

2023. Previously,

cial officer for the

came the new town

Mendon on July 8.

Former Mendon Town Administrator **Kimberly Newman** left in July 2023 to become the town manager in Orleans. **David DeManche** served as the interim town administrator from last July until March, when **Greg Balukonis** took over the interim role.



Rep. William Pignatelli

**Ketchen**. Having served in the role since 2014, Ketchen left at the end of June to become the director of finance and local payments at the Division of Local Services.

A Lenox native, Pignatelli was first elected to the House in 2002, representing the 3rd Berkshire District. He joined the Lenox Planning Board in 1987, was elected to the Board of Selectmen in 1992, serving until 2003. He also served as a Berkshire County commissioner from 1995 to 1999.

Two Springfield city councillors received recognition last month as part of MassLive.com's Juneteenth tribute to Black leaders around the state. The news outlet had asked readers to nominate Black leaders who are making a difference in their respective fields, and then published <u>profiles of the nominees in</u> <u>June</u>.



Councillor **Lavar Click-Bruce**, who served as an aide to Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno before winning a special election in September 2022, was recognized for his community work both inside and outside of City

Lavar Click-Bruce

Hall. He has focused on public safety as a councillor, and has coached basketball at the local YMCA and mentored youth.

Councillor **Malo Brown**, first elected in 2019, was recognized for his community advocacy and his efforts to bring funding and resources to his region. He has worked with at-risk youth in Springfield, and serves as chief of staff to Rep. Bud Williams.

The news outlet also recognized other leaders serving their communities, including **Tyrone Denison**, Springfield's emergency manager and district fire chief, and **Debora Bridges**, an Amherst resident dedicated to the preservation of Black and Indigenous history, who served on the town's American Heritage Reparation Assembly.

Longtime Easthampton City Clerk **Barbara LaBombard** was named the 2024 Clerk of the Year by the Massachusetts Town Clerks Association.

LaBombard received the award on June 6 at the joint summer conference of the Massachusetts Town Clerks and City Clerks associations in Plymouth. She started working as an assistant clerk for Easthampton in 1983, when

\_\_\_\_\_



Barbara LaBombard

Amanda

Brangwynne

the community was still a town, and became town clerk in 1994. She became city clerk when Easthampton changed to a city form of government in 1996. Before entering local government, she spent a year working as a

reporter for the now-defunct Holyoke Transcript Telegram newspaper.

LaBombard has served in numerous roles in the clerks association, including as conference registration administrator and as administrator of the clerk certification program.

#### Amanda

**Brangwynne**, who has served as the MMA's membership and project assistant for the past two years, is being promoted to database administrator on Aug. 19.

Since March 2022, Brangwynne has

been providing support to the MMA's membership team. Over time, her role expanded to include several editorial and communications duties, including helping to update the Massachusetts Municipal Data Hub. Previously, she spent more than three years working as the membership and communications coordinator for the Association for Commuter Transportation in Sharon. and had also worked as a forest and parks supervisor in South Boston for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, and as an ecological representatives coordinator for the Dickinson Center for Sustainability Education in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. She has a bachelor's degree in environmental studies and policy management from Dickinson College.

At the MMA, Brangwynne is taking the place of **Ruby Sadoques**, who is leaving

**PEOPLE** continued on 33

"Smitty" Pignatelli, who is not seeking reelection to the House this year, is serving as the interim town manager in Lenox, effective July 1, while the town searches for a permanent successor to Christopher rved in the role

Rep. William

# People

#### PEOPLE

Continued from page 32

at the end of the summer after having worked for the MMA for nine years. Sadoques started as an administrative assistant in the Communications and Membership Division in 2015, and took over the MMA's database duties in September 2016. Later this year, she expects to receive a master's degree in information science/school library from the University at Albany, State University of New York, and plans to work as a school librarian.

After working as a consultant to MIIA for a year, **Pranav George** joined the association on June  $\overline{3}$  as a staff accountant.

### New select board members elected

The following are new select board members elected in annual town elections from May 28 through June 18. This listing is meant to highlight firsttime select board members, but it's possible that some listed here are returning to their board after an absence. If we are missing a new member, let us know by emailing newselectboard@mma.org.

### New councillors elected

The following are new councillors elected in annual elections in June.

This listing is meant to highlight firsttime councillors, but it's possible that

MIIA

Continued from page 28

- Test generators to ensure they are operational.
- Review backup communication plans, including how residents and employees can be notified if phone lines and computer networks are down.
- Inspect, prepare and maintain all equipment that may be needed during post-storm cleanup, such as chainsaws, sump pumps, and temperature and water sensors.

George previously worked as a database intern for the MMA, in 2022, and as a finance intern for Boston Financial, and a resident assistant at the University of Connecticut. He has a bachelor's degree in business from UConn.

J. Warren

12 at age 93.

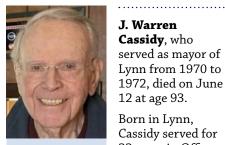
Born in Lynn,

Cassidy served for

22 years in Officers

served as mayor of

Lvnn from 1970 to



J. Warren Cassidy

Training School for the U.S. Marine Corps, retiring in 1975 as a reserve lieutenant colonel. He was

Bellingham: Jennifer Altomante Brewster: Amanda Bebrin Brimfield: Crystal McGuire **Charlemont:** Kim Blakeslee **Cohasset:** David Farrag **Conway:** Elaine Campbell **Dudley:** Jana Deschenes **Egremont:** Laura Allen **Goshen:** Timothy Lamere Lanesborough: Deborah Maynard

some listed here are returning to their council after an absence. If we are missing a new member, let us know by emailing database@mma.org.

MIIA partners with Agility Recovery, which provides business continuity and disaster recovery services, to offer preparedness training and testing to its members. Rob Sarno, a senior account manager at Agility, recommends having both an emergency operations plan and a business continuity plan — and ensuring both are tested with redundancy.

"Test your emergency plans thoroughly using tabletop exercises," he said. "Ask questions, and identify any gaps that your plan may not be addressing."

Sarno also recommends having a crisis

the commanding officer of the Marine Engineering Unit in Lynn.

From 1986 to 1991, Cassidy served as the executive vice president of the National Rifle Association. He was also involved with several community organizations throughout his life, including the Kiwanis Club and the Lynn YMCA.

A college baseball player while at Dartmouth College, Cassidy once got to pitch to Red Sox legend **Ted Williams** during baseball practice at Fenway Park.

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.

Leicester: Peter Cusolito **Leyden:** Jeffrey Baker Longmeadow: Andrew Lam **Marblehead:** Daniel Fox **Peru:** Samuel Haupt **Truro:** Susan Girard-Irwin, Nancy Medoff West Boylston: Vanessa Kuzmanovski Westhampton: Jennifer Milikowsky 🔵

East Longmeadow: James Leydon **Palmer:** Christopher Pelletier Southbridge: Stephen Kelly

team set up ahead of time, with a designated leader and community volunteers who are vested in the preparedness mission. Also, ensure adequate insurance coverage and share emergency plans with your insurance provider.

"Use insurance providers as trusted consultants," Sarno said, "as they can help identify gaps in coverage as well as outline expected out-of-pocket costs you could incur if a damaging event occurs."

#### CAREERS AT MMA/MIIA

### Chief Equity Officer

The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) is seeking a full-time Chief Equity Officer to oversee all activities related to diversity, equity and inclusion. This position reports directly to the Executive Director & CEO, and is part of the senior management team. The Chief Equity Officer works collaboratively with the Human Resources Manager and the Senior Executive & Director of Membership. About MMA: The nonpartisan Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) provides an array of services to its member cities and towns statewide, including advocacy, education and training, research and analysis, and publications and information programs. As the voice of local government in Massachusetts, the MMA works to advance the interests of all cities and towns. About the position: The Chief Equity Officer will lead the Massachusetts Municipal Association in formulating and executing the organization's diversity, equity and inclusion strategies, operational practices and policies, employee training, and other initiatives that honor and value diverse backgrounds, perspectives and cultural differences. The Chief Equity Officer will also support city and town governments in their efforts to become more diverse and inclusive workplaces and champion DEI within their communities. The Chief Equity Officer will develop and prepare longterm strategic objectives to operationalize equity, racial equity, and culturally responsive values and practices throughout MMA operations, conduct DEI trainings to offer a deeper understanding of and commitment to DEI best practices, and work collaboratively with staff to advance DEI initiatives through member education and advocacy. The Chief Equity Officer will lead DEI Advisory Committee in its work to advance DEI initiatives across 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts, develop strategic partnerships with external organizations committed to DEI to help advance and enhance MMA's DEI efforts, gather municipal feedback and finalize development of the DEI Toolkit, act as a resource and provide guidance to community leaders advancing DEI work. Qualifications: The candidate must have a bachelor's degree plus a minimum of five to seven years of professional experience in a related field. A master's degree in a relevant field is preferred. DEI experience in local or state government strongly preferred. Experience working with diverse groups of people. The ability to handle sensitive, confidential information. Strong ability to work with a team as well as work independently. Superior communication, organizational, project management, strategic planning and leadership skills. Work environment: Our offices are located in Boston's Government Center neighborhood. The position offers a highly competitive salary, terrific benefits, and a great collaborative work culture. Our office utilizes a hybrid-work schedule. If you are ready to devote yourself to work on behalf of our member cities and towns, then this position may be for you. How to Apply: Please send a PDF of your cover letter and resume to: hr@mma.org.

## Communications Coordinator MMA

The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) is seeking a full-time Communications Coordinator

to support the Communications team. This is an excellent opportunity for someone who is interested in performing a range of deadline-driven editorial and administrative tasks in support of the MMA's communications functions. About MMA: The nonpartisan Massachusetts Municipal Association provides an array of services to its member cities and towns statewide, including advocacy, education and training, research and analysis, and publications and information programs. As the voice of local government in Massachusetts, the MMA works to advance the interests of all cities and towns. About the position: Under the direction of the Senior Executive & Director of Communications, the Communications Coordinator participates in the production of the MMA's monthly news publication, administers the MMA's classified ads primarily Municipal Career Opportunities, participates in content development by researching and writing news updates, processes press releases and information from organizations outside of the MMA, helps to coordinate photos and captions and maintain photo archives, participates in maintenance and expansion of the Mass Municipal Data Hub, and participates in the marketing of the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show. The Communications Coordinator will maintain the Communications Division's digital archives, and assist the Digital Communications Specialist with regular content updates on MMA websites and photos and videos on MMA social media. Qualifications: A bachelor's degree and some relevant experience in communications. Strong written and verbal communication skills. Strong organizational skills and customer service skills. Excellent reliability and follow through and an interest in strengthening local government in Massachusetts. Technology experience in Google Suite, social media, Adobe Acrobat, Hootsuite, and WordPress. Work environment: Our offices are located in Boston's Government Center neighborhood. The position offers a highly competitive salary, terrific benefits, and a great collaborative work culture. Our office utilizes a hybrid-work schedule. If

you are ready to devote yourself to work on behalf of our member cities and towns, then this position may be for you. How to Apply: Please send a PDF of your cover letter and resume to: hr@mma.org.

#### Membership & Project Assistant MMA

The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) is seeking a full-time Membership & Project Assistant to support the Membership team. This is an excellent opportunity for someone who excels at member services and has an interest in local government. About MMA: The nonpartisan Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) provides an array of services to its member cities and towns statewide. including advocacy, education and training, research and analysis, and publications and information programs. As the voice of local government in Massachusetts, the MMA works to advance the interests of all cities and towns. About the position: Under the direction of the Senior Executive & Director of Membership, the Membership & Project Assistant assists the membership team in preparing for in-person and virtual meetings, addresses member inquiries via telephone and email, maintains and updates member information for member groups and activities, and manages the logistics of dues collection from three member groups. The Membership & Project Assistant supports mayors' and their programs, tracks newly elected select board members, city councilors and mayors, updates the database, and assists with the preparation of MMA's Annual Meeting. Qualifications: Candidates should be highly motivated with a commitment to meet member needs and provide excellent service. A college degree is required and three to five years of experience working in a non-profit or government office and knowledge of local government is preferred. Work environment: Our offices are located in Boston's Government Center neighborhood. The position offers a highly competitive salary, terrific benefits, and a great collaborative work

**CLASSIFIEDS** continued on 35

#### **Classified advertising rates and information**

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

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

#### **Classified advertising rates** Classified ad rates include publication in The

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

#### Member rates

- \$100 for first 100 words; \$100 for each additional block of up to 100 words
- Rate for one format only (Beacon or website): \$75 for first 100 words, \$75 for each additional block of up to 100 words

#### Nonmember rates

- \$150 for first 100 words; \$150 for each additional block of up to 100 words
- Rate for one format only (Beacon or website): \$125 for first 100 words, \$125 for each additional block of up to 100 words

#### Beacon deadlines and publication dates

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

#### September Beacon

Deadline: August 27 Publication: September 3

#### October Beacon

Deadline: September 25 Publication: October 1

#### Placing an ad

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

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

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

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

#### CLASSIFIEDS

Continued from page 34

culture. Our office utilizes a hybrid-work schedule. If you are ready to devote yourself to work on behalf of our member cities and towns, then this position may be for you. How to Apply: Please send a PDF of your cover letter and resume to: hr@mma.org.

#### Part-Time Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC) & Simulator Instructor MMA/MIIA

The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) and the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA) are seeking a part-time certified Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC) & Simulator Instructor to join the MIIA Risk Management Driving Training Team. This is an excellent opportunity for someone who is interested in training Police Officers in Emergency Driving across Massachusetts and assists with driver simulator training. About MMA: The nonpartisan Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) provides an array of services to its member cities and towns statewide, including advocacy, education and training, research and analysis, and publications and information programs. As the voice of local government in Massachusetts, the MMA works to advance the interests of all cities and towns. About MIIA: The Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA) provides property, liability, workers compensation, and group health insurance to cities and towns in Massachusetts. MIIIA is a non-profit organization and a subsidiary of Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA). About the position: This is a part-time, hourly, non-benefit eligible position. Under the direction of the Driving Instructor, the EVOC & Simulator Instructor facilitates instruction to students on emergency driving and vehicle limitations, incorporates vehicle preinspection into training, identifies and demonstrates components and the importance of defensive driving such as attitude, skill, vehicle capability, and driving conditions. Possess knowledge of EVOC courses and objectives, set up and break down of courses. Utilizes the Doran simulator computer system including Police, Fire, DPW and general municipal driving scenarios, course development on a regular basis with updates, and interacts between dispatch and officers. The Instructor is responsible for maintenance on the truck, trailer and simulator, and responsible for confirming specific simulator scheduling. Collaborates with Doran to ensure 24 hour customer support onsite visit and follow up when necessary, tracks and communicates participant performance to participants and Police Chief/Training Officer, and submits monthly expense reports. Qualifications: The candidate must be certified as an EVOC Instructor and possess knowledge of EVOC training and vehicle dynamics. Must possess a DOT Medical Card. Possess knowledge of Commercial Vehicle, Federal Highway Safety Regulations and CDL licensing. Knowledge of Doran simulator computer system (including Police, Fire, DPW and general municipal driving scenarios). Knowledge and fluency of Police/Fire response policies, a valid driver's license, and the ability to drive the truck and towing simulator trailer. How to Apply: Please send a PDF of your cover letter and resume to: hr@mma.org.

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

#### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

#### Assistant City Solicitor City of Waltham

The city of Waltham is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Assistant City Solicitor to join its Law Department to provide legal counsel, representation, and litigation services. Under the general supervision of the City Solicitor, this position will require defending the city in state and federal courts and advocating on behalf of the city in civil litigation, criminal, and administrative matters, as well as performing analysis of cases for appropriate and fair dispositions, including claims against the city. Full job description available through Human Resources. Essential functions: the essential functions of this position will require the following: Litigating civil, administrative, code enforcement, and appellate cases on behalf of the city, its employees, departments, administrative bodies and boards. Conducting legal research and communicating the results in legal memoranda to both courts and city boards, committees, council and department heads. Drafting, serving and filing legal documents, such as discovery request and responses, pleadings, legal memoranda, and appellate briefs. Delivering oral arguments before courts, mediators, arbitrators and other administrative bodies. Performing review and analysis of cases for appropriate and fair dispositions. Working with witnesses, conducting internal investigations, and interviewing clients, employees, claimants, and others as necessary for trial preparation and other city legal matters. Processing and responding to claims against the city for monetary damages. Representing the city's interests in collective bargaining and labor relations adjudications. Adhering to established standards of performance within a broad framework of policies and objectives as set forth by city officials, city ordinances, and Massachusetts general laws. Maintaining current knowledge of all legal aspects affecting municipal government operations through attendance at conferences, seminars and through literature review. Performing similar or related work as required, directed, or as the situation dictates. Required skills: this position requires the following: Strong advocacy and courtroom experience. The ability to draft, serve, and file legal documents, such as discovery request and responses, pleadings, memoranda, orders, findings of fact and rulings of law, trial documents, witness preparation questions, and mediation and arbitration memoranda, Strong interpersonal, verbal, and written communication skills. Knowledge of the Waltham city ordinances, civil law, Massachusetts and federal constitutional and statutory provisions relating to municipalities. Knowledge of the rules of evidence, civil procedure, and appellate procedure. The ability to speak and communicate in a clear and concise manner. The ability to understand complex information and render legal advice with respect to litigation strategy. The ability to conduct internal investigations. Strong organizational skills and the ability to work independently. The ability to exercise discretion and

diplomacy in dealing with sensitive, complex and confidential issues. Minimum requirements: minimum requirements for this position are as follows: Four-year undergraduate degree and juris doctorate from an ABA accredited law school. Member of the Massachusetts bar in good standing. Member of the federal bar in good standing. Five years of experience in civil litigation. Must successfully pass a criminal offenders record information (CORI) and a pre-employment physical with drug screening. Preference will be given to applicants demonstrating a prior municipal law experience. Salary: \$118,017 annually with six annual step increases and longevity bonuses. Excellent benefits package, including city paying 89% for HMO and 87.5% for PPO with no deductibles. Deadline: open until filled. Qualified applicants should submit a city of Waltham application, resume, cover letter to: City of Waltham, Human Resources Department, Req. 2024-54, jobs@city.waltham.ma.us.

#### Planning Director Town of Duxbury

The Planning Director performs professional and administrative duties in planning, organizing, and coordinating the town of Duxbury's planning, land use, and community development functions and activities. Bachelor's degree in planning or related field; five to seven years of municipal planning experience or equivalent combination of education, training and experience, which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform essential job functions. Certification as planner by the AICP or the ability to obtain within 12 months of hire. Posting will remain open. Pay range is \$80,732-\$113,026. Actual salary depends upon qualifications. For the full job description and to apply, visit: <u>townofduxburyjobs.</u> <u>easyapply.co</u>.

#### Town Manager Town of Sandisfield

Sandisfield, Massachusetts, is seeking applicants for the position of Town Manager. Sandisfield is a small, rural community in western Massachusetts with a full and part-time population of approximately 1,000, and an annual operating budget of approximately \$3.7 million. As the chief administrative officer of the town, the Town Manager is appointed and reports to a three-member Select Board, and supervises 15+ full and part-time employees. Working independently, the Town Manager performs administrative and supervisory duties; coordinates the activities of departments/boards/committees and town offices; carries out the policies of the Select Board; acts as liaison between Select Board and departments/ boards/committees of the town. A bachelor's (master's preferred) in public administration, business, or a related field required. Minimum of five years of supervisory experience required. Candidates with comparable work and management experience are encouraged to apply. Familiarity with Massachusetts municipal law is a plus. Excellent communication skills and interacting with the public is required. Applicants should be well versed in municipal operations and management, municipal finance, grant writing, and conflict resolution. Position is full-time (non-remote) with a minimum of four evenings per month. Must be available in emergency situations. Residency is encouraged but not required. Salary commensurate with experience. A full job description and application are available on the town website,

www.sandisfieldma.gov. Please send resume, cover

#### **CLASSIFIEDS**

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letter, and completed employment application to msjbye@outlook.com no later than Aug. 16. Position will remain open until filled.

#### **Project Engineer** MassDevelopment

The Project Engineer manages planning, design, and construction; overseeing scope, schedule, budget, design review, and compliance. Reporting to the Director of Engineering, the role involves demolition, redevelopment, utilities, roadways and more. Fieldwork may involve travel across the state and attending public meetings outside regular hours. Join MassDevelopment and be part of meaningful projects. Enjoy great benefits, professional growth, and a supportive culture. Apply now to help build better communities! Application link below: <u>massdevelopment.bamboohr.com/careers/76</u>

#### Procurement/Grants Administrator Town of Stow

The town of Stow (population appx. 7,000) is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Procurement/ Grants Administrator. This full-time (37.5 hr/wk), benefit eligible position is perfect for someone looking for flexibility while making a big impact on a small town in terms of procurement and grant work. Position participates in all areas of procurement from writing the bid specifications to closing out a project. Assists the Town Accountant with bills payables and works with departments to research and identify grant funding sources then prepares and submits grant applications. Bachelor's degree and three to five years of related experience preferably in a municipal or regional setting; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience. Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official (MCPPO) designation strongly preferred. Salary: Grade 6 of the town's Compensation and Wage Schedule, with an FY25 hourly range of \$33.58 to \$37.99/hr. Benefit eligible. Position open until filled with resumes reviewed on a rolling basis. Send a letter of interest and resume, in a single PDF to careers@stow-ma.gov. For the full job description, please visit our website at www.stow-ma.gov.

#### Director of Human Resources Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is looking for a Director of Human Resources to start immediately. Interested candidates should look on <u>SchoolSpring.com</u> for full job posting or email Sami Barrett at s.barrett@hwschools.net for more information.

#### Election Coordinator Town of Saugus

The town of Saugus is seeking an Election Coordinator to join the Town Clerk's office. This individual will assist the Town Clerk in the responsibilities of the administration of fair and accurate elections and census. Performs responsible functions, following procedures, which are generally defined by precedent or established guidelines and state law, but which require the exercise of judgment and initiative in certain situations. Coordinate and administer federal, state and local elections with the Town Clerk; collaborate with Town Clerk to oversee, direct and manage all election functions; establish methods and best practices for the maintenance and safeguarding of election records. Please email gchristina@saugus-ma. gov to submit your cover letter and resume.

#### Town Engineer

#### **Town of Saugus**

The town of Saugus seeks qualified applicants for the permanent, full-time position of Town Engineer. This position performs various types of labor related to the study, analysis, and engineering of the town's infrastructure and equipment; undertakes a variety of activities pertaining to public works. Maintains the town GIS as well as other equipment, records and information for the department. Requirements are a bachelor's degree in a related field, at least seven to 10 years of experience in study, permitting, design, construction and operations of municipal highway, roadway, water, sewer, drainage sidewalk and other public works related areas. Strong management experience of public works projects. Must have the ability to deal with multiple tasks simultaneously. Please submit cover letter and resume by email to gchristina@saugus-ma.gov. Applications will be kept on file for a period of one year. Federal law forbids discrimination based on race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status or disability.

### Town Planner

#### Town of Saugus

The town of Saugus is seeking a full-time Town Planner. Zoning experience is a plus! This position serves as the town's point of contact and manager for all: shorter term, intermediate and longer-range master planning. Responsibilities include: land use planning; energy, housing and open space projects and initiatives; infrastructure needs assessments; and coordination of efforts to attract desired economic development. Duties also include developing sound approaches to development; assessing proposals for growth; making recommendations for land-use development zoning bylaw changes. The position will be required to oversee, supervise and direct the staff planner. This highly visible position assists and advises various elected and appointed groups, boards and commissions. This position reports directly to the Town Manager. Qualifications: Minimum of five years of planning and community development or related economic experience. Bachelor's degree required, master's degree preferred, in planning, community development or related field. Hours: (M) 8:30-7, (T,W,TH) 8:15-5 (F) 8:15-12:30. Plus, attendance at various night meetings. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Please email applications/ resumes to: gchristina@saugus-ma.gov.

#### CDL Operators/Laborers Town of Saugus

The town of Saugus is seeking CDL Operators/ Laborers! The incumbent will perform various types of manual labor related to the maintenance and operations of the various cemeteries in the town of Saugus. Operates a variety of motor equipment ranging from passenger cars and light pick-up trucks to heavy trucks and truck-trailer combinations consistent with a commercial driver's license Class B. Perform excavation and subsequent backfill, seeding and all other efforts for burials. Maintain all buildings, headstones, walls, fences, roadways, sidewalks and other infrastructure and assist with record keeping. Operate a variety of electric, hydraulic, pneumatic and gas power tools to conduct a variety of maintenance and construction operations. Secondary duties will include those duties associated with the

Highway Division Operator position. <u>Other duties</u> and responsibilities are listed on the linked job description. Qualifications: two years of experience as a motor equipment operator with a municipal public works operation of general maintenance or construction experience, or an equivalent and relevant combination of education and experience in a related field. Must possess valid Class B commercial driver's license (CDL), with airbrakes, tanker, and appropriate endorsements to operate Highway and Forestry equipment. Also, must possess or be able to obtain a Class 2B hoisting license within the first 90 days of employment. Application: please email all cover letters/resumes to Human Resources Manager, Gabriela Christina at gchristina@saugus-ma.gov.

#### **Conservation and Planning Agent** City of Gardner

The city of Gardner Department of Community Development and Planning is seeking a full-time Conservation Agent. This position will provide skilled administrative and professional services in the execution of Conservation Commission decisions and policies for the city of Gardner, with specific attention paid to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Gardner wetlands protection ordinance. For a full job description, list of qualifications and to apply, please refer to job opportunities at <u>www.gardner-ma.</u> gov. Requirements: bachelor's degree or equivalent in a relevant field of study. Three years or more experience in conservation and/or enforcement of municipal ordinances on a professional level.

#### Director of Facilities, Maintenance and Operations

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is seeking a full-time Director of Facilities, Maintenance and Operations. The Director is responsible for the overall appearance, cleanliness, maintenance and upkeep of all district buildings and grounds, as well as all custodial and maintenance staff. The Director is also responsible for managing student transportation and cafeteria operations, as well as playing a major role in all capital projects, including the athletic complex upgrade project and new elementary school projects. Interested candidates should reach out to Allie Cataldo, Director of HR, at a.cataldo@hwschools.net.

#### **Cemetery Operator** Town of Saugus

This position will perform various types of manual labor related to the maintenance and operations of the various cemeteries. Operates a variety of motor equipment ranging from passenger cars and light pick-up trucks to heavy trucks and truck-trailer combinations consistent with a commercial driver's license Class B. Perform excavation and subsequent backfill, seeding and all other efforts for burials. Maintain all buildings, headstones, walls, fences, roadways, sidewalks and other infrastructure and assist with record keeping. Operate a variety of electric hydraulic, pneumatic and gas power tools to conduct a variety of maintenance and construction operations. Secondary duties will include those duties associated with the Highway Division Operator position. Qualifications: two years of experience as a Motor Equipment Operator with a municipal public works operation of general maintenance or construction experience, or an equivalent and relevant combination of education and experience in a related field. Must

#### **CLASSIFIEDS**

Continued from page 36

possess valid Class B commercial driver's license (CDL), with airbrakes, tanker, and appropriate endorsements to operate highway and forestry equipment. Also, must possess or be able to obtain a Class 2b hoisting license within the first 90 days of employment. Application: please email all cover letters/resumes to Human Resources Manager, Gabriela Christina, at gchristina@saugus-ma.gov.

#### Associate Executive Director Concord Retirement System

Looking for a career position and the opportunity for growth? Our Executive Director is looking for a motivated person to learn and perform all aspects of directing a retirement system. Apply your technical skills and experience to a rewarding position in the highly desirable town of Concord, Massachusetts. Experience preferred with a public retirement system and related governing regulations: Mass. General Law Chapter 32, PERAC and related administrative systems. Strong mathematical, analytical and information technology skills required. To apply for this position (or for a job description), please send a resume to Louise at lvillani@concordretirement.org. Job opening will remain open until July 13.

#### Full-Time Assistant Treasurer/Collector Town of Douglas

The town of Douglas is seeking applicants for a fulltime Assistant Treasurer/Collector position. Working under the direction of the Treasurer/Collector, employee is the primary point of contact for residents and collects town revenue. The position is responsible for assisting the Treasurer/Collector with the duties of the office including, but not limited to, tax and utility billing collections and administration, reporting of local revenue collections, cash and treasury management and disbursement of funds. Associate degree in related field, three years of experience in a municipal finance/banking setting, knowledge of MUNIS and certification as a Massachusetts municipal collector preferred. Salary is \$59,594-\$62,730 +/-DOQ. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and resume to the Town of Douglas Treasurer's Office, 29 Depot St., Douglas, MA 01516. The position will remain open until filled. A full job description is available at www.douglas-ma.gov. The town of Douglas is an equal opportunity employer.

#### **Primary Water Operator** Byfield Water District

The Byfield Water District is seeking applicants for the position of Primary Drinking Water Operator. Details of the position and the water system can be found here www.byfieldwaterdistrict.org. This is a permanent, full-time position with flexible working hours, and a mandatory rotating on call schedule. The BWD is a participant in the Essex Regional Retirement System and offers health insurance benefits at 75-25% employer, employee premium contributions respectively. Salary range is \$80,000 to \$90,000 based on experience and qualifications. Annual vacation leave is negotiable up to four weeks. Sick time and vacation time are accrued monthly; 12 paid holidays per year. The ideal candidate should have a minimum of three to five years of water operations experience and be self motivated. Minimum qualifications include a HS diploma or equivalent, D2 drinking water license and a valid class D drivers license. Must

be within a one-hour response time to the water system. Preferred qualifications, T1 drinking water license, and cross connection certification. Good communication skills, both verbal and written, are key character traits for interacting with staff and customers. Resumes and inquiries can be emailed to tcusick@byfieldwaterdisctrict.org. All applicants will be considered until the position is filled.

#### Sewer Superintendent Town of Rockland

The town of Rockland is seeking experienced and motivated applicants for the Sewer Superintendent position, which is under the direction of the town-elected Board of Sewer Commissioners. The Superintendent is responsible for the planning, budgets, organization, direction, and management of the operations and activities for the town's 2.5 MGD, Grade 7 treatment plant, collection and storage system. This position will ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state mandates and regulations, as well as exercise direct authority over all plant staff, including outside contractors, in accordance with all town policies and procedures. Salary range: \$100,000-\$115,000 annually, full-time, with an excellent benefits package. Please visit rockland-ma. gov/184/Employment-Opportunities for complete job advertisement.

#### Part-Time Animal Control Officer Town of Saugus

The town of Saugus is seeking qualified applicants for Part-Time Animal Control Officer. The Animal Control Officer is responsible for enforcing ordinances relating to the control, impoundment and disposition of animals. This includes responding to and investigating calls and complaints from residents relating to animal issues, such as unleashed dogs, stray animals, animal cruelty and working with the animal owner to ensure they comply with all animal ordinances and policies. The Animal Control Officer attends Board of Selectmen and Board of Health hearings regarding animals; attends court hearings. Qualifications: associate degree preferred; completion of the Animal Control Officers Association of Mass. Academy preferred, required within two years of hire; and completion of the Massachusetts Animal Fund ACO Core Competency Training required within one year.

#### Director of Planning and Community Development City of Easthampton

Easthampton is a small, vibrant city with increasing economic growth, expanding housing production, and focus on enhancing all forms of infrastructure. The city seeks a Director of Planning and Community Development to help fulfill established goals and create vision for the future. The ideal candidate has experience overseeing staff, applying for and managing grants, and fostering a sense of community. The Director manages planning and land use controls and coordinates and shapes the city's short-range and long-range physical, social, and economic development needs. They work with stakeholders in the predevelopmental and developmental process. Salary: \$79,000-\$95,000. To see full posting, visit: <u>www. easthamptonma.gov</u>.

#### **Building Commissioner** City of Easthampton

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Easthampton is a small city with a vibrant community, increasing economic growth and expanding housing production. The city is seeking a Building Commissioner who will oversee the city's regulatory and compliance aspects of building and construction activities. This role ensures all construction projects adhere to city and state building codes, zoning laws, and safety regulations. The Commissioner enforces standards, reviews construction plans, issues permits, and conducts inspections. This position requires strong leadership skills, in-depth knowledge of building regulations, and a commitment to public safety, customer service, and community development. Salary: \$70,000-\$90,000 annually. To see full position posting and apply, visit: www.easthamptonma.gov.

#### Fire Chief

#### **Town of Amherst**

Join the town of Amherst as its next Fire Chief! The job: as the lead of the Amherst Fire Department, the Fire Chief is responsible for planning, directing, and administering all Amherst Fire Department activities, including the planning and implementation of fire prevention, fire suppression, and emergency medical services; and supervising and training permanent, call, and student forces. The successful candidate will provide collaborative, strategic, and forward-thinking leadership to the Amherst Fire Department. The skills: if you have a bachelor's degree in fire science, public administration, or a closely related field, plus seven years of experience in fire and emergency medical services work (or any equivalent combination of education and experience), and three to five years in a position equivalent to a Chief Officer, apply today! The deal: the Fire Chief will work under an employment contract with a competitive salary and excellent employee benefits in a progressive and cutting-edge department and municipality. <u>Click here for a</u> complete position description and to apply. The town enjoys a long tradition of active, participatory, and professional government, and seeks a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community.

#### Local Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer Town of Amberst

Join the Amherst team as Local Building Inspector/ Code Enforcement Officer! The job: the town of Amherst is looking for a Local Building Inspector/ Code Enforcement Officer. This position performs a variety of routine and complex technical duties in inspection of buildings to ensure compliance with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts state building code, sanitary code, fire safety codes, and the Amherst zoning bylaws. The skills: if you have an associate's in building construction or design and at least five years of experience in the supervision of building construction or design or, a combination of education and experience which would confer equivalent knowledge and ability. Apply today! The deal: this is a non-union position with a pay range of \$56,830-\$75,029, and excellent employee benefits. Click here for a complete position description and to apply. The town enjoys a long tradition of active, participatory, and professional government, and seeks a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community.

#### SERVICES

#### **Municipal Energy Services**

Through the MMA's MunEnergy program, MMA members have access to an energy contract designed

#### CLASSIFIEDS

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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 <u>www.mma.org/munenergy</u>. 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.

#### 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 over 40 cities, towns, school districts and water and sewer districts in public construction litigation. For further information, please visit <u>www.petrinilaw.com</u> or contact Christopher Petrini at cpetrini@petrinilaw.com or 508-665-4310.

## Municipal Accounting and Consulting Services

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

#### **Public Management Consultants**

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

#### 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;

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#### www.communityparadigm.com

#### Executive Recruitment and Municipal Management

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

#### **Municipal Accounting Services**

Marcum LLP (formerly Melanson) is a national Certified Public Accounting firm and has been a leader in the accounting and auditing profession for more than 60 years. Our assurance professionals, most of whom have been focused in the governmental arena throughout their entire careers, have an in-depth understanding of the complex economic and political environment in which these entities operate. Their knowledge and experience allow us to provide the highest level of professional service to our governmental clients. We provide both long- and short-term services as well as flexible access, either remotely or on-site, without adding to your long-term employee benefit costs. Contact us today! info@ marcumllp.com

## General Consultant, Recruiting and Special Studies

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

#### **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, costeffective 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.

#### Mass Notification System for Municipalities

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

#### **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.

#### **Town Counsel Services**

KP | Law is a municipal law firm. With offices in Boston, Hyannis, Lenox, Northampton and Worcester, we serve as town counsel to more than 125 towns throughout Massachusetts, from Provincetown to Williamstown, and as special counsel to another 90. For more than 30 years, we have devoted ourselves to municipal law and have become experts in the defense of all areas of municipal trial matters. We have specialists in all areas of municipal law and maintain an environmental and land use law department that is on the cutting edge of planning, zoning and conservation. KP | Law is highly sensitive to the limited legal services budgets of Massachusetts communities and thus has highly competitive billing rates to give your town the best quality legal counsel in the most cost-efficient manner. There is never a need for special counsel. Our breadth and depth of experience helps keep our cost per opinion to a minimum and enables us to service our clients quickly and efficiently, and is consistent with our commitment to excellence. For additional information on the legal services that KP | Law provides, please visit www.k-plaw.com or contact Lauren Goldberg, Esq., at 617-556-0007, or toll-free at 800-548-3522, or at lgoldberg@k-plaw.com.

#### **Municipal Support Services**

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

#### **Human Resources Consulting**

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

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services, web-based HR services, and special projects. Please contact Sandy Stapczynski, President, Human Resources Services Inc., 9 Bartlet St., Suite 186, Andover, MA 01810; 978-474-0200; hrsconsulting@ comcast.net; or visit <u>www.hrsconsultinginc.com</u>. WBE certified.

#### Organizational Development and Conflict Resolution

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

#### **Town Counsel Services**

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

## DPH offers mosquito season safety tips

With mosquito season upon us, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health is reminding residents and municipal officials that mosquitoes can spread illness-causing viruses such as <u>West Nile</u> and <u>eastern equine</u> <u>encephalitis</u>.

The DPH works with established Mosquito Control Districts to trap and test samples of mosquitoes to help measure and track risk throughout the season. Updates are posted online at <u>Massachusetts arbovirus update</u>.

Once West Nile or EEE viruses are found in mosquitoes in Massachusetts, it's time to start taking steps to avoid mosquito bites.

EEE infections in people don't happen every year in Massachusetts; there were 12 cases in 2019 and five cases in 2020 but no infections since then.

West Nile is more common, and the DPH expects human infections every year. There were eight people with West Nile in 2022, and six in 2023.

The identification of EEE-infected mosquitoes in four counties in 2023

options that will work for you. We are committed to the values of democracy, to preservation and enhancement of natural resources and the built environment, and to excellence and care in support of municipal objectives. We offer competitive rates, personal service, diligent attention to our clients' needs, and good humor. Please contact us at contact@ harringtonheep.com or 617-489-1600.

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

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

#### 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

suggests that there could be increased EEE activity during 2024, according to the DPH.

Only a small number of mosquitoes are infected at any given time, so being bitten by a mosquito does not mean you will get sick. The best way to avoid these illnesses, however, is to prevent mosquito bites by doing the following:

- Use insect repellents any time you are outdoors
- Wear long-sleeved clothing
- Schedule outdoor activities to avoid the hours from dusk to dawn during peak mosquito season
- Repair damaged window and door screens
- Remove standing water from the areas around your home

For more information, visit the DPH's <u>Mosquito-borne Diseases page</u>, which is updated with new results, or call the DPH Division of Epidemiology at 617-983-6800.

• Frequently asked questions about mosquitoes in Massachusetts

users. The VADAR Cloud maximizes efficiency with 24/7 secure, remote access to all your applications from any device. Our user support offers unparalleled expertise. Proudly serving Massachusetts for 20-plus years. For a free on-site demonstration, please contact us at 877-823-2700 or sales@vadarsystems.com. Learn more at <u>www.VADARsystems.com</u>. Locally owned and operated at 20 Main St., Suite G1, Acton, MA 01701.

#### 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 longterm 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.



### WLG discusses aging and caregiving

Erin Koebler, executive director of East Longmeadow's Council on Aging, discusses aging and caregiving during a meeting of Women Leading Government on June 26 in Boylston. Koebler presented resources on caring for aging parents, and provided helpful information for every state of caregiving. Also during the session, Belmont Assistant Town Administrator Jennifer Hewitt shared her personal experience with caregiving.

# Calendar

#### JULY



**MMA webinar**, Inspiring Climate Action series: Geothermal projects, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact MMA

Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

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#### **Massachusetts Mayors'** Association, monthly meet-

ing, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Membership Director Candace Pierce

#### AUGUST

**MMA webinar**, Inspiring Climate Action series: Electric vehicles, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

#### **SEPTEMBER**

- **Massachusetts Municipal** 10 **Councillors' Association**, board meeting, 8:45-9:45 a.m., The Boylston Rooms, Easthampton. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker
- MMA Board of Directors, 10-10 11:45 a.m., The Boylston Rooms, Easthampton. Contact: MMA Executive Assistant Courtney Butler
- Local Government Advisory 10 Commission, 1-2 p.m., The Boylston Rooms, Easthampton. Contact: MMA Executive Assistant Courtney Butler
- MMA webinar, capital planning, 11 12-1:15 p.m. Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore
- 12-13 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, Fall Conference, Sea Crest Beach Hotel. Falmouth. Contact: MMA Member
- **Massachusetts Municipal** Management Association,

Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

boot camp, Sharon Community Center, Sharon. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker



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

Massachusetts Select Board 19 **Association**, webinar, 12-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

**Massachusetts Mayors'** 25 Association, monthly meeting, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Contact: MMA Membership Director Candace Pierce

MMA webinar, opioid set-25 tlement funds, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

**Women Elected Municipal** 27 Officials, leadership conference, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Devens Common Center, Devens. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

#### OCTOBER

MMA Board of Directors, board 8 retreat, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., the Conference Center at Waltham Woods, Waltham. Contact: MMA Executive Assistant Courtney Butler

**MMA Virtual Municipal** 9 Leadership Academy webinar, situational supervision, 12-1:30 p.m. Contact MMA Education and Training Coordinator Lily Rancatore

Massachusetts Select Board 10 Association, leadership conference, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Lake Pearl, Wrentham. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

Massachusetts Municipal 17 Management Association, meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Cyprian Keyes Golf Club, Boylston. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

**Massachusetts Mayors'** Association, monthly meeting, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Membership Director Candace Pierce 25

#### **Massachusetts Municipal**

Human Resources, labor relations seminar, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Devens Common Center, Devens. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

#### **NOVEMBER**

**Association of Town Finance** 2 **Committees**, Annual Meeting, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Sharon Community Center, Sharon. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

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

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

*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.

For more information, visit www.mma.org

#### **MMA contacts**

Denise Baker can be reached at dbaker@mma.org

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Timmery Kuck can be reached at tkuck@mma.org

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

Anneke Craig can be reached at acraig@mma.org

Lily Rancatore can be reached at Irancatore@mma.org