

The Beacon

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November 2024

Connect 351 plans taking shape

By Owen Page

In addition to having a new location and a new name — Connect 351 — the MMA’s annual conference in January is also expanding by offering programming on Thursday afternoon, in addition to full days on Friday and Saturday.

Thursday will feature an interactive speed-coaching session for and with municipal officials, and a Women Leading Government session with Needham Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick in a conversation with Opal Mauldin-Jones, the city manager of Lancaster, Texas. All Connect 351 attendees are invited to these insightful and informative events.

The lively annual [Trade Show](#), which showcases the latest in technology, innovation and services for Massachusetts municipalities, will open on Thursday afternoon, providing another opportunity to meet with exhibitors at a time when the Trade Show floor will be less crowded than at peak times. A welcome



Fitchburg Mayor Samantha Squailia, left, Franklin Town Councillor Melanie Hamblen, center, and Marlborough City Council President Michael Ossing chat during last year’s MMA annual conference.

reception will be held on the Trade Show floor from 4 to 5:30 p.m. The Trade Show will also be open on Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Highlights

[Connect 351](#) will be held Jan. 23-25 at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center and Omni Hotel in Boston’s

Seaport District.

Connect 351 features include:

- [Engaging workshops](#) covering the spectrum of timely municipal issues
- [Insightful and inspiring speakers](#)
- Member group meetings and important policy discussions

“This conference enables professionals to network with fellow colleagues, attend relevant classes, and learn about time- and money-saving technology and services available through vendor visits,” said West Stockbridge Town Manager Marie Ryan, the first official registrant for the 2025 conference.

The new name reflects the event’s emphasis on connection among attendees, in addition to MMA’s mission to connect the Commonwealth’s 351 municipalities.

Visit Connect351.org for the latest information on this lively, informative conference.

■ **CONNECT 351** *continued on 21*

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Treasury offers resources as ARPA obligation deadline nears

By Jackie Lavender Bird

With the Dec. 31 deadline for obligating American Rescue Plan Act funds quickly approaching, the U.S. Department of the Treasury offers updated resources to provide guidance for municipal officials.

ARPA, passed in March 2021, provided critical financial assistance to state and local governments, among other entities, as the country was emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. ARPA’s State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds must be obligated by Dec. 31, 2024, and expended by Dec. 31, 2026.

The Treasury established a specific definition for “obligation,” as follows:

- An order placed for property and services and entry into contracts, subawards, and similar transactions

that require payment, which may include, an order placed for property or services, a contract, a subaward, similar transactions that require payment

- A requirement under federal law or regulation or a provision of the SLFRF award terms and conditions to which the recipient becomes subject as a result of receiving or expending SLFRF funds

The Treasury has also clarified that the following are not considered an obligation of funds:

- An adopted budget or budget amendment
- An appropriation of SLFRF funds

■ **ARPA** *continued on 20*

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, MMA First Vice President
Mayor, Newton

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Adam Chapdelaine (non-voting)
MMA Executive Director

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Stephen Cavey, Select Board Member, Stoughton

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Moises Rodrigues, Councillor, Brockton

Robert Sullivan, Mayor, Brockton

Kevin Sweet, Town Administrator, Wrentham

Michelle Wu, Mayor, Boston

Executive Director's Report

MMA welcomes first chief equity officer

This month, the MMA is very excited to welcome its first Chief Equity Officer: Jillian Harvey.

The creation and filling of this role is the result of a thoughtful and deliberative process and signifies the MMA's ongoing commitment to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion efforts both internally and with communities across the Commonwealth. This same deliberative process, stewarded by the MMA's DEI Advisory Committee, has resulted in the development of a DEI Strategic Plan for the MMA, which will be released shortly following Jillian entering her new role. (You can learn more about Jillian, her experience and her vision for her new role in this issue.)

For my part, I can tell you that I am delighted to have Jillian joining the team here at the MMA. I had the privilege of working with her during my time in Arlington, and I can attest firsthand to her unsurpassed commitment to equity work, her deep understanding of local government policies and process, and her excellent approach to people of all different backgrounds and perspectives as she approaches this important and challenging work. I witnessed her work with elected and appointed officials and her work with residents, and I have always been impressed with her ability to maintain productive dialogues even in the face of tense discourse.



By Adam
Chapdelaine

As for the work here at the MMA, we envision that Jillian, as Chief Equity Officer, will support city and town governments in their efforts to become more diverse and inclusive workplaces and to champion DEI within their communities. We also envision that Jillian will work with us internally to formulate and execute diversity, equity and

inclusion strategies, operational practices and policies, employee training, and other initiatives that honor and value diverse backgrounds, perspectives and cultural differences.

Regarding the work with you, our members, and the communities that you serve, we look forward to assisting cities and towns that are actively seeking tools and strategies to advance equity within their communities. We are also interested in engaging in dialogue with communities that are unsure about exploring this work as part of their city or town government. Our desire is to have a hallmark of the MMA's equity work be "meeting people and communities where they are at."

In that spirit, we look forward to introducing Jillian to all of you over the course of the next year, as she works to guide the next steps of the MMA's DEI journey. I hope that you will all join me in welcoming her, and I look forward to the work ahead. ●



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

MMA holds fall Legislative Breakfast Meetings

By Daniel Yi

On three Fridays in October, legislators and local officials from across Massachusetts gathered for six MMA Legislative Breakfast Meetings.

The MMA holds the meetings around the state each spring and fall to provide an opportunity for local officials to engage in informal discussions with legislators, fellow local officials, and MMA staff.

The fall meetings kicked off with an update from MMA Legislative Division staff covering state revenue, the fiscal 2025 state budget, and key bills from the legislative session, among other topics.

The update was followed by an open-ended opportunity for legislators and local officials to discuss the many challenges facing communities.

Discussions centered on an economic development bond bill, a fiscal 2024



Bolton Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro, left, and Maynard Select Board Chair Jeffrey Swanberg chat during an MMA Legislative Breakfast Meeting on Oct. 18 in Maynard.

closeout supplemental budget, the Affordable Housing Act, a clean energy siting and permitting bill, and the Municipal Empowerment Act.

The hosts of the meetings were Ludlow and Peabody on Oct. 4, Franklin and Leyden on Oct. 11, and Maynard and Yarmouth on Oct. 18.

More than 250 municipal officials, legislators, and legislative staff attended the meetings.

The MMA has hosted 240 breakfast meetings in more than 200 communities since 2007, with a goal of hosting a meeting in each of the state's 351 cities and towns. Communities that have not hosted a Legislative Breakfast but would be interested in doing so are

asked to contact Daniel Yi at dyi@mma.org or 617-426-7272, ext. 125. ●

Nov. 4 webinar will cover new accessory dwelling unit law

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities and the Attorney General's Office are inviting all municipal officials and interested stakeholders to a webinar on Nov. 4 that will provide an overview of the new accessory dwelling unit law that is due to take effect on Feb. 2, 2025.

Representatives from Housing and Livable Communities will discuss frequently asked questions and will take questions and feedback, which will inform future guidance. The webinar will also provide an overview of the office's next steps.

This webinar is not intended for property owners who want to understand how

they might finance and construct ADUs, as Housing and Livable Communities will address those issues in the future.

The [\\$5.16 billion housing bond bill](#) signed by Gov. Maura Healey in August allows ADUs as-of-right in single-family zones statewide. Municipal bylaws will need to comply with the new ADU rules by Feb. 2, 2025.

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities has published an [online information portal on ADUs](#).

The Nov. 4 webinar will be held from 10 to 11 a.m. [Click here to register](#).

- Ali DiMatteo



A Nov. 4 webinar will cover the new accessory dwelling unit law.

Legislature mulls closeout budget with tax title delay

Looking to close the books on fiscal 2024, both the House and Senate have passed fiscal 2024 closeout supplemental budgets that include several provisions of note to municipalities.

While differences remain on the bottom line of the two bills, as well as the funding sources to be used, there is agreement on an appropriation to address municipal tax abatement

reimbursements for veterans, widows, blind persons and the elderly. Both bills include \$11.1 million fiscal 2025 payments to municipalities. If the funding is approved, the Division of Local Services will issue accounting guidance.

The Senate bill proposes a new effective date for [changes to the tax title foreclosure process](#) that were included in the fiscal 2025 state budget law. The

effective date would be pushed from Nov. 1 of this year to July 1, 2025, to coincide with the beginning of the next fiscal year.

The earliest a compromise bill could reach the governor for consideration is Monday, Nov. 4, when both chambers will gavel in for informal sessions.

- Jackie Lavender Bird

Clean energy bill passes in Senate, awaits House vote

By Josie Ahlberg and Adrienne Núñez

The Senate on Oct. 24 approved a compromise bill to reform the process for siting and permitting clean energy infrastructure at the local and state level.

Following the Senate vote, the bill was initially delayed in the House due to a lack of a quorum. House leaders said they intend to enact the legislation in a special formal session later in November, likely when the chamber also takes up an economic development bond bill.

The compromise bill passed by the Senate had been released by a House-Senate conference committee, which reconciled differences between [two similar bills passed earlier this year in the House and Senate](#).

The bill includes recommendations from the [Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting](#) intended to help expedite the development of clean energy infrastructure across Massachusetts.

The bill would require all cities and towns to approve small clean energy infrastructure project applications through a mandated consolidated permitting process within 12 months. Should a municipality not act within that time frame, the permit would be automatically approved, allowing the project to operate under standard conditions. Small clean energy infrastructure is defined as generation projects under 25 megawatts and clean energy infrastructure storage projects under 100 megawatt hours.

Permitting for large clean energy projects would also follow a consolidated process overseen by a reformed Energy Facilities Siting Board, with approvals due within 15 months of receipt of a complete application.

As the Commonwealth strives 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 clean energy bill is intended to advance these goals by expediting upgrades to the electric grid and speeding up review and approval of clean energy generation

The compromise bill passed by the Senate had been released by a House-Senate conference committee, which reconciled differences between two similar bills passed earlier this year in the House and Senate.

and storage projects at the state and local level.

The bill also proposes the following related to clean energy siting and permitting:

- Establishment of a public participation office, with support for intervenors and community engagement
- Guidance on community benefit agreements to support municipalities as they consider proposed project impacts and community needs and as they navigate the community benefit agreement processes
- Creation of a new clean energy infrastructure dashboard
- Changes to the Energy Facilities Siting Board membership to include a representative of the MMA and a representative of the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies
- Establishment of a “site suitability methodology” to minimize or mitigate the social and environmental impacts of clean energy infrastructure projects

Additional provisions include the following:

- Electric distribution companies would be required to provide discounted rates for low-income and eligible moderate-income customers.
- The Department of Public Utilities would be able to consider alternatives to natural gas service and the state’s compliance with statewide emissions limits when reviewing requests to expand gas service.
- A special legislative commission would be established to make



Approved by the Senate on Oct. 24, a compromise bill to reform the process for siting and permitting clean energy infrastructure is expected to be taken up by the House later this month.

recommendations on extended producer responsibility policies.

- An embodied carbon intergovernmental coordinating council would be created to make recommendations on how building and transportation projects can reduce emissions from construction materials such as cement, concrete, steel, glass, asphalt, and wood.
- A new special commission would study workforce impacts on fossil fuel workers and increase access to training and workforce opportunities in clean energy industries.
- Technical guidance would be provided to municipalities on how aggregation programs may enter long-term contracts to purchase electricity from offshore wind developers.
- Guidance would be provided on the public health, safety and environmental impacts of electric battery storage and electric vehicle chargers.
- A new initiative would monitor electric vehicle chargers and charging stations.
- A feasibility study would be conducted on the electric-vehicle-only sales mandate that becomes effective in 2035.

Once the bill is finalized, the state is expected to initiate several regulatory processes to outline the details and rules of the bill’s proposed processes and initiatives. ●

Community One Stop awards \$161M for development

The Healey-Driscoll administration has announced the award of \$161 million in grant funding to 313 projects that will support economic development in 171 communities across the state.

The awards are being made through the [Community One Stop for Growth](#), an application portal that provides a streamlined process for municipalities and organizations to apply for 12 state grant programs that fund economic development projects related to planning and zoning, site preparation, building construction, infrastructure, and housing development.

The grants were announced on Oct. 24 in Worcester at the site of the Greendale Revitalization project, which is a recipient of an award through the MassWorks grant program, one of the largest programs in the Community One Stop. Gov. Maura Healey, Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, Economic Development Secretary Yvonne Hao, and Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus attended the event.

“We are proud to be a state of strong cities and towns, made stronger by programs like the Community One Stop for Growth, which deliver the resources our communities need to grow their local economies and meet the needs of their residents,” Healey said. “Communities will use these grants to build more housing and lower costs, improve road safety, revitalize their downtowns, create new jobs and more. We can’t wait to see the results of these investments all across the state.”

Driscoll said One Stop empowers communities “to pursue their vision for economic growth.”

Through this round of the One Stop, the Executive Office of Economic Development received 756 applications from 510 organizations with projects in 229 Massachusetts communities. Of the 313 applications awarded, 33% are located in a rural or small town, 32% are located in a Gateway City, 48% are located in a [Housing Choice Community](#), and 50% are located in an [MBTA Community](#). Forty communities are receiving a grant through the One Stop for the first time.

The Executive Office of Economic Development estimates the One Stop



Gov. Maura Healey announces \$161 million in Community One Stop for Growth grants during an Oct. 24 event in Worcester. (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor’s Press Office)

awards will help create more than 18,000 new units of housing, including 4,000 new affordable units, 31,000 new permanent jobs, and more than 14 million square feet of new commercial development.

The fiscal 2025 One Stop program awards include:

- **MassWorks Infrastructure Program:** \$95 million to 62 projects
- **HousingWorks Infrastructure Program:** \$19.3 million to 12 projects
- **Underutilized Properties Program:** \$18.7 million to 37 projects
- **Rural Development Fund:** \$10 million to 49 projects
- **Site Readiness Program:** \$5.24 million to 18 projects
- **Housing Choice Grant Program:** \$4.9 million to 21 projects
- **Community Planning Grant Program:** \$2.8 million to 34 projects
- **Urban Agenda Grant Program:** \$2.5 million to 26 projects
- **Brownfields Redevelopment Fund:** \$1.4 million to seven projects
- **Collaborative Workspace Program:** \$1.1 million to 19 projects

- **Massachusetts Downtown Initiative:** \$600,000 to 24 projects
- **Real Estate Services Technical Assistance:** \$250,000 to six projects

The full list of grant recipients and project descriptions is available on the [EOED website](#).

MassWorks, one of the state’s largest competitive grant programs, offers cities and towns flexible capital funding to support and accelerate economic development and job growth. This year, the administration is awarding MassWorks grants to 56 communities, with 28 supporting mixed-use, housing, or commercial developments and 12 improving road safety in small towns. The projects will create 5,158 units of housing, 7,163 permanent jobs, and 22,710 construction jobs.

HousingWorks provides municipal grants for a variety of infrastructure improvements that spur housing development and preservation. This year’s grants to 12 communities will create more than 1,550 new housing units and preserve 690 units of housing.

For more information about Community One Stop for Growth, visit www.mass.gov/onestop. ●

Jillian Harvey to become the MMA's 1st equity officer

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Jillian Harvey, who has spent years building more equitable communities and creating a more welcoming Commonwealth, will bring her experience and passion for social justice to the MMA on Nov. 12, when she becomes the organization's first chief equity officer.

The MMA created the position to advance the organization's diversity, equity and inclusion goals. Harvey will work internally with the MMA staff and provide external support to municipalities around the state.

Harvey has led DEI efforts in Arlington for the past five years, while cofounding and chairing the Massachusetts Municipal DEI Coalition, and serving as president of the Mystic Valley NAACP Branch. Harvey was selected from dozens of applicants for her experience addressing DEI needs both locally and statewide.

"I'm really excited to see that this is an opportunity for the MMA to help really lead this work and advise towns and cities and help them move forward, because we want the whole Commonwealth to be successful, to be a welcoming and inclusive place, not just certain towns and cities," Harvey said.

Though she has enjoyed her work in Arlington, Harvey had an epiphany when she saw the MMA job posting.

"This is what I want," she said. "I enjoy facilitating. I really love working with people and helping them learn and understand, and take what they're learning and actually put it into practice. So I'm excited to do all of that."

A Framingham native, Harvey earned an anthropology degree from UMass Amherst, and worked for several years as a youth leader and art specialist for the Brookline Teen Center, and as a senior patient experience representative for the Autism Spectrum Center at Boston Children's Hospital.

Her master's degree studies in public affairs at Brown University inspired her current career. While in graduate school, she helped the program integrate DEI best practices, starting with student orientation.

In Arlington, Harvey started as the



Jillian Harvey

DEI coordinator in 2019, and later became the DEI director, building a team that includes an Americans With Disabilities Act coordinator and a community outreach and engagement coordinator.

Under Harvey's leadership, Arlington completed a community equity audit, implemented its first staff DEI trainings, increased cultural programming and held a community conversations series.

At the MMA, Harvey said she plans to begin by working with staff and board members to ensure that everyone is on the same page about DEI goals and why DEI is an organizational priority. She also wants to delve into the MMA's existing DEI efforts, including its work with the consulting firm Racial Equity Group, which has developed a draft strategic plan and a toolkit that will be finalized for communities. She hopes to be a resource for questions and concerns, and plans to undertake a "listening tour" to build relationships with staff members, member groups, board members, and the MMA's DEI Advisory Committee.

"I really want to get the full scope of how the organization works, and just getting to know people, understanding what their fears are about this work, what they're excited about, what the culture is there," Harvey said. "Because you can't just come in wanting to change things. You need to understand and really actively listen."

Harvey said local governments should engage in DEI work because of the broad impact they have on everybody's lives, and the need to provide their services equitably. At the same time, different municipalities have different needs, and Harvey said that she wants to meet cities and towns where they are, asking them about their needs, and about the goals and visions they hold for their communities.

She said the MMA "really has the power to guide so many communities in the work."

"It's going to look different for everyone," she said, due to differences in resources, staffing and demographics.

Harvey acknowledged that not everyone is receptive to the mission. She said she tries to get people to examine how things have been done traditionally, and to rethink how some things might need to be done differently in order to address the needs of more people.

"There are folks who are never going to welcome this work, and that's fine," she said, "but just recognizing that we're going to keep it moving, and just having grace for folks, because you never really know what someone's dealing with."

When not engaged in DEI and social justice work, Harvey enjoys the outdoors, swimming and roller skating. She also enjoys a good pun, along with music, dancing and good food, and, "I love plants, I have so many plants." ●



Mayors, managers discuss civil unrest

Eric Atstuppenas, general counsel for the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, leads a training on navigating and managing civil unrest during a meeting of the Massachusetts Mayors' Association on Oct. 23 in Gardner. Presented by the Municipal Policing Institute, the training provided best practices and guided municipal officials through the relevant legal and liability considerations. Given the timeliness of the discussion and the topic's salience to every community, the mayors also invited town managers, town administrators and assistants to participate in the training.

EPA announces lead pipe removal deadline, new funds

By John Ouellette

President Joe Biden has announced a 10-year deadline for public water systems across the country to replace lead service lines, a requirement aimed at ensuring safe drinking water for all Americans.

The Oct. 8 announcement of the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Final Lead and Copper Rule Improvements](#) was paired with an announcement that the EPA will invest an additional \$2.6 billion nationwide for drinking water upgrades and lead pipe replacements, funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

The Healey-Driscoll administration said the EPA was awarding \$53.5 million to Massachusetts cities and towns to help identify and address water contaminants like lead, PFAS and others.

The governor's office said the funding is a part of the General Supplemental Drinking Water State Revolving Fund allotment from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The funding will flow through the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust and is available to support drinking water infrastructure projects. Additionally,

49% of the funding must be provided to low-income communities as grant funding or principal forgiveness that does not have to be repaid.

"Massachusetts will put these funds to good use to protect the health and well-being of our communities and ensure everyone has clean drinking water," Gov. Maura Healey said in a prepared statement.

Decades after the adverse health impacts of lead became clear, an estimated 9 million American households are still connected to drinking water through lead pipes and service lines, according to the EPA.

Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper pointed out that "communities of color and low-income neighborhoods disproportionately get their water from lead pipes or experience contamination from PFAS." She said the new EPA rule and additional funding mark "a significant step forward."

The EPA's revised Lead and Copper Rule requires local public water systems to investigate the number of lead service lines in their water distribution system and

report those findings to the state agency that oversees drinking water — in this case, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. All community public water systems and non-transient, non-community public water systems in Massachusetts were required to submit a [service line inventory](#) to the MassDEP by Oct. 16.

The EPA said its new rule requires more rigorous testing of drinking water and a lower threshold for communities to take action on lead in drinking water. It also seeks to improve communication within communities so that families are better informed about the risk of lead in drinking water, the location of lead pipes, and the plans for replacing them.

The EPA also announced the availability of \$35 million in competitive grant funding for reducing lead in drinking water. Communities are invited to [apply directly for this grant funding](#). Additional federal funding is available to support lead pipe replacement projects, and the EPA has developed a [website identifying available funding sources](#).

The EPA said the new Lead and Copper Rule establishes "achievable, common-sense practices" that have been implemented by several states and communities. The agency said the 10-year timeframe won't start for three years, giving water utilities time to prepare.

While Massachusetts cities and towns share the EPA's concerns about the public health impacts of lead in drinking water, the MMA seeks adequate funding to address the financial burden of new regulatory standards for public water systems. Investments through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law are welcome, but may not be sufficient to cover projected needs.

Lead is a potent neurotoxin, and there is no safe level of lead exposure. In children, lead can severely harm mental and physical development, slow down learning, and irreversibly damage the brain. In adults, lead can cause increased blood pressure, heart disease, decreased kidney function, and cancer.

- Visit the MassDEP's [Lead Service Line Replacement Program website](#)
- View the [Biden administration briefing on the final rule](#) to replace lead pipes within a decade and the new funding to deliver clean drinking water ●



Local leaders meet up at MMA breakfasts

Barnstable Town Manager Mark Ells, left, Nantucket Select Board Chair Brooke Mohr, center, and Yarmouth Select Board member Mark Forest, who also serves as a Barnstable County Commissioner, talk during an MMA Legislative Breakfast Meeting in Yarmouth on Oct. 18. The meeting was one of six that the MMA held around the state; the others took place in Franklin, Leyden, Ludlow, Maynard and Peabody. For more, see story on page 3.

MMA offers range of conflict management webinars

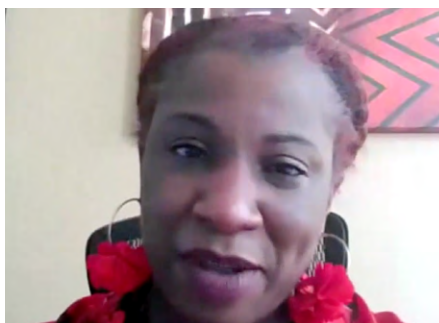
By Kristianna Lapierre

At a time when effective conflict management has become increasingly important, the MMA offers a number of webinars that are available on www.mma.org and MMA On-Demand.

The sessions are designed to help local leaders navigate challenging conversations to better support their communities.

In a two-part series, Sharon Select Board Chair Kiana Pierre-Louis, who's also assistant dean of diversity, equity and inclusion at Northeastern University, shares how to have productive difficult conversations. Part 1, [Empathetic Dialogue in Volatile Times](#), explores the foundations of having conversations amid tension, and how a trauma response can affect communication. Part 2, [Practical Tips for Productive Dialogue](#), provides additional tips for engaging in difficult dialogue.

[Coping with Conflict: Internal Resolution Strategies](#), led by AllOne Health Executive Director Michael Stuart and Clinician Katie Gilfeather, highlights strategies for effective internal conflict management, including



Sharon Select Board Chair Kiana Pierre-Louis, who is also assistant dean of diversity, equity and inclusion at Northeastern University, shares how to have productive difficult conversations during "Practical Tips for Productive Dialogue," the second part of a two-part MMA webinar series.

in the municipal workplace and within volunteer committees and councils, and for negating its negative effects and maintaining a positive and healthy work culture.

In [Regulating Comments at Public Meetings: De-Escalation Strategies for Uncivilized Discourse](#), Gilfeather shares practical tips for de-escalating public anger. Topics include how to maintain

composure and use constructive language, how to respond rather than react, and how the timing of communication makes a difference.

The MMA's Virtual Municipal Leadership Academy offers a professional development series on topics of emotional intelligence led by Cally Ritter, principal of Positive Ripple Training and Consulting.

The first session, [Emotional Intelligence 101](#), explores the five components of EI (self-awareness, self-management, motivation, social skills, and empathy). [Empathy and Emotional Intelligence: The Customer Connectors](#), discusses how to leverage emotional intelligence to meet customer needs, defuse public anger, and disarm demeaning behavior. [Tackling Tough Conversations with Emotional Intelligence](#) shares strategies for delivering difficult feedback, setting boundaries by saying "no," and handling instances where you may disappoint others.

The Virtual Municipal Leadership Academy webinars are available on MMA On-Demand for a small fee. ●

DPU approves electric sector modernization plans

By Adrienne Núñez and Josie Ahlberg

After several months of review, the Department of Public Utilities has approved electric sector modernization plans developed by Eversource, National Grid and Unitil.

A [climate and clean energy law enacted in 2022](#) required the investor-owned electric distribution companies to file these plans, known as ESMPs, to articulate how they will contribute to meeting the goal of net zero emissions by 2050.

The comprehensive, five-year plans are meant to ensure that the state's electric infrastructure will be able to handle increased demand due to further electrification of vehicles, heating systems and other technologies.

The plans include an overview of:

- All approved, reviewed or under-consideration distribution system investments and alternatives
- Distribution system improvements



The Department of Public Utilities has approved electric sector modernization plans developed by Eversource, National Grid and Unitil.

to increase system reliability and resiliency in the face of weather- and disaster-related risks

- Distribution system improvements to facilitate transportation and building electrification
- Forecasts considering five- and 10-year horizons
- An assessment of demand through 2050

Details on planned investments and upgrades for each utility can be found in the [DPU's order](#) approving the plans for Eversource, National Grid and Unitil.

The ESMP process repeats in five-year planning cycles, with each utility expected to provide the DPU with plans by Sept. 11, 2029, to forecast needs from 2030 to 2035. This ongoing work is intended to help shift key sectors away from fossil fuels with properly supported electricity generated through renewable energy.

- View the [DPU's press release](#) on the order approving the Electric Sector Modernization Plans
- See the MMA's [reporting from January on the utilities' draft plans](#), which provides additional details ●

MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund launched

At an event in Somerville on Oct. 1, the Healey-Driscoll administration announced that the application period is open for a new [MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund](#), which will provide grants for housing and infrastructure projects to communities that are certified as complying with the MBTA Communities Act.

The administration said the grant program, administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities and funded at \$15 million over three years, recognizes that promoting housing growth in communities requires additional resources. The grants will be used to support activities related to housing creation, infrastructure projects associated with housing, and the acquisition of property to promote housing.

The [Notice of Funding Availability can be found online](#), and applications will be accepted on a rolling basis.

According to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, the following 33 communities are currently eligible to apply: Abington, Andover, Arlington, Braintree, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Dedham, Easton, Grafton, Harvard, Hull, Lexington, Lincoln, Lowell, Medfield, Medford, Northbridge, Quincy, Randolph, Revere, Rockland, Salem, Sharon, Somerville, Stoneham, Swampscott, Taunton, Tyngsborough, Walpole, Wayland, Westford and Worcester. Three

additional communities — Everett, Malden and Newton — are considered to be in conditional compliance.

Funding for the Catalyst Fund is available for fiscal 2025, 2026 and 2027. The administration said awards will typically fund projects with grant requests between \$250,000 and \$1 million.

Eligible MBTA Communities are those that have received a determination of compliance letter from the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities at the time of the funding request.

The MBTA Communities Act, signed into law in January 2021, requires 177 cities and towns to establish at least one district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right. The districts must allow multi-family developments without discretionary review processes. Zoning must also be located near transit stations, when applicable, and the districts cannot impose age restrictions.

Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus said more than 1,600 units of housing are in the pipeline to be built in MBTA Community



Gov. Maura Healey, left, launches the \$15 million MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund at an event in Somerville on Oct. 1. Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, center, and Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus, were among the state and local officials who attended. (Photo courtesy Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

zoning districts, “with several communities going above and beyond the guidelines.”

Thus far, 75 cities and towns have passed zoning intended to comply with the law, and many others are expected to adopt multifamily zoning at town meetings and city council meetings this fall. The compliance application deadline for Commuter Rail and Adjacent communities is Dec. 31.

Over the last three years, the state and its partners have provided more than \$7 million in technical assistance to 156 of the 177 MBTA communities to help them develop districts to comply with the law. ●

Psychedelics ballot question would preempt local control

By Ali DiMatteo

The Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth has published a summary of a statewide ballot initiative that would legalize natural psychedelic substances, without an avenue for individual cities and towns to opt out.

[Question 4](#) would legalize the possession and sale of natural psychedelic substances, including psilocybin, psilocin and mescaline, for people 21 and older, and would allow these substances to be grown by those 21 and older in a 12-foot-by-12-foot area of secured personal property.

The proposed law would also license and regulate facilities for the sale and use of these products, creating a statewide



Question 4 on the statewide ballot seeks to legalize natural psychedelic substances in every Massachusetts community.

commission and advisory board to assist in their regulation. Municipalities would only be allowed to regulate the time, place and manner of these operations.

Unlike the 2016 law that legalized

marijuana in Massachusetts, which allowed municipalities to opt out of recreational cannabis sales, the psychedelics ballot initiative would require all municipalities to allow natural psychedelic substance licenses within their borders, as well as the cultivation of these substances on personal property.

In April, the MMA expressed concerns about the proposed law in [testimony to the Legislature](#).

The Secretary of the Commonwealth's [voter information booklet](#) covers all five statewide ballot questions, with summaries and arguments for and against each question. The question summaries were written by the Attorney General's Office. ●

MassDEP adjusts truck emissions rules

By Adrienne Núñez

In an Oct. 18 letter to stakeholders, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection announced changes to emissions regulations affecting medium- and heavy-duty trucks — the Heavy-duty Omnibus and Advanced Clean Truck rules.

MassDEP said it plans to file emergency regulations to delay the start of the Heavy-duty Omnibus rule until model year 2026, effective upon filing.

The department also indicated that it will exercise enforcement discretion under the Advanced Clean Truck regulation exempting state and local government vehicles used for snow plowing and removal and street sweepers for model years 2025 and 2026.

The MMA has been working with MassDEP to help ensure a full understanding of the requirements and implications of the Heavy-duty Omnibus and Advanced Clean Truck rules. The MMA and many stakeholders have requested a two-year delay to the effective date of both regulations.

Background

The state of California has special authority to set its own vehicle emission standards, as long as the standards are at least as protective as federal emissions standards. Other states are allowed to adopt the California standards as long as the standards are identical to California's.

MassDEP adopted California's Low Emission Vehicle program more than 30 years ago, in 1991, and the ongoing adoption of California's vehicle emissions standards were codified through the Massachusetts Clean Air Act (Ch. 111, Sec. 142K).

In December 2021, MassDEP adopted California's Heavy-duty Omnibus and Advanced Clean Truck regulations in 310 CMR 7.40.

Heavy-duty rules

The Heavy-duty Omnibus regulation requires emissions standards for nitrogen oxides from conventional heavy-duty vehicles that are more stringent than the national standard.

California required compliance with the HDO starting with model year 2024.

The regulations have spurred the development of new engine technology for heavy-duty vehicles, but there have been reported shortages of new engines meeting the standards.

Massachusetts was set to require compliance with these standards starting with model year 2025, but MassDEP plans to delay implementation by a year.

MassDEP also plans to adopt California's 2024 amendments to HDO legacy engine provisions and exemptions from emissions standards for transit buses, emergency vehicles, and military tactical vehicles.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has not yet provided an enforcement waiver, which is required to allow enforcement in states where the HDO has been adopted, but it is anticipated.

Advanced Clean Truck

The Massachusetts Advanced Clean Truck rule requires graduated zero emission vehicle sales percentages for new medium- and heavy-duty on-road vehicles starting with model year 2025 and increasing until model year 2035. Vehicles driven for 7,500 miles or less are classified as new vehicles.

California required compliance with ACT rules starting with model year 2024, with the intent of promoting growth in medium- and heavy-duty zero-emissions technology and the market, while reducing transportation-related emissions.

The ACT rule applies to on-road vehicles weighing 8,500 pounds or more (classes 2b-8). Enforcement is through manufacturer sales reporting, with fines to manufacturers for noncompliance.

In Massachusetts, for model year 2025, the rule requires 7% ZEV sales in classes 2b-3, 11% in classes 4-8; and 7% for tractors classes 7-8.

Emergency vehicles, including fire, police, corrections, and emergency medical service vehicles, both publicly and privately owned but licensed to operate in response to emergency calls, are exempt from ACT requirements. Publicly owned vehicles for forestry departments are



The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection says it plans to delay changes to emissions regulations affecting medium- and heavy-duty trucks.

also exempt.

Manufacturers are not required to use a particular process to achieve the sales requirements outlined in the ACT rules, but many manufacturers are requiring dealers to prioritize the sale of ZEV vehicles in the affected categories before allowing sales for vehicles equipped with internal combustion engines. This practice would make internal combustion engine vehicles in the affected classes difficult to access in Massachusetts.

For both the HDO and ACT rules, manufacturers may leverage averaging, banking and trading options that allow credits for allowable prior year sales of ZEV and hybrid vehicles, as well as the purchase of ZEV credits to help meet the associated emissions standards and ZEV sales percentage requirements.

Special exemption process

MassDEP announced that it will [exercise enforcement discretion](#) to exempt vehicles purchased by state and local agencies for snow plowing, snow removal, and street sweeping purposes from ACT manufacturer compliance requirements for model years 2025 and 2026.

All internal combustion engine truck sales completed as the result of this enforcement discretion will be excluded from a manufacturer's total Massachusetts sales when determining ACT compliance.

State and local government agencies must submit written requests to MassDEP and manufacturers or their authorized dealerships detailing the make, model, model year, and number

■ EMISSIONS *continued on 20*

MassDOT awards \$50M for Municipal Pavement

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation on Oct. 18 announced the award of \$50 million in funding to 45 municipalities as part of the Municipal Pavement Program.

The program seeks to improve the condition of municipally owned state-numbered routes, with an emphasis on National Highway System roadways, and to find opportunities to improve safety and accessibility for all modes.

MassDOT said the awarded funding will pave approximately 260 miles of roads, and will serve 27 Environmental Justice communities and 22 rural communities. Since the [Municipal Pavement Program](#)'s inception in 2021, MassDOT has funded \$75 million in paving improvements for more than 325 miles of road across the Commonwealth.

Projects are selected by MassDOT each fiscal year based on pavement condition



Forty-five municipalities will share \$50 million in Municipal Pavement Program grants announced in October.

The following cities and towns will receive funding in fiscal 2025: Ashfield, Belmont, Beverly, Chesterfield, Granville, Great Barrington, Groveland, Hamilton, Harvard, Millis, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Palmer, Pittsfield, Plympton, Princeton, Savoy, Southbridge, Southwick, Spencer, Taunton, Templeton, Warren, Westwood, and Windsor.

data, the proportion of state-numbered routes in poor condition in a municipality, and geographic equity. MassDOT said it works closely with selected communities to develop a scope of work for each roadway segment. All work is conducted by MassDOT contractors in coordination with the municipality.

The following cities and towns will receive funding in fiscal 2026: Athol, Brimfield, Charlton, Chicopee, Danvers, Douglas, East Longmeadow, Gloucester, Hudson, North Adams, North Reading, Peabody, Rockport, Shrewsbury, South Hadley, Stockbridge, Sutton, Townsend, Winchendon, and Winthrop. ●

\$12.4M in federal funds awarded to improve road safety

At an event on Sept. 25 in Braintree, the Healey-Driscoll administration announced the award of \$12.4 million in federal traffic safety funding to promote safer roads across Massachusetts.

The funds came through three grant programs: Municipal Road Safety, State Agency Traffic Safety, and Underserved Communities Traffic Safety, which was introduced this year. The programs use funding awarded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and managed and administered in Massachusetts by the Office of Grants and Research.

“As individual communities work to address their unique traffic safety concerns, these programs provide resources and support that will ensure they have the tools they need to protect road users,” Gov. Maura Healey said in a prepared statement.

Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said, “No one agency or approach can resolve these issues, but the combination of prevention, enforcement, education and outreach initiatives funded through these grants will ensure safer roads for all in Massachusetts.”

Funds awarded to municipal police departments through the Municipal



Funds from three federal traffic programs will inject \$12.4 million into road safety efforts across Massachusetts.

The Underserved Communities Traffic Safety Grant Program will deliver \$282,379 to support outreach and educational programs directed toward low-income communities, and specifically Environmental Justice populations. This marks the first time that the Office of Grants and Research has offered a traffic safety grant program strictly for nonprofit organizations, which will provide programs focused on improving pedestrian safety, programming for teen drivers, impaired driving prevention, distracted

driving awareness, and other areas of need.

Six state agencies will receive grants totaling \$6.5 million through the State Agency Traffic Safety Grant Program. Funding will support projects including training, educational and outreach programs, enforcement and crash prevention efforts.

• [See the complete list of grant awards](#)

Road Safety Grant Program will help departments afford initiatives such as conducting traffic safety enforcement, bicyclist and pedestrian safety enforcement, non-enforcement activities such as trainings or community events, and purchasing traffic safety equipment or safety items to distribute in the community, such as bike helmets. This year, OGR awarded \$5.64 million to 191 departments, a record number of recipients for the program.

MMA Webinars

First Amendment audits

An MMA webinar on Oct. 22 addressed the challenge of so-called “First Amendment audits” and strategies for dealing with them. The webinar was led by attorneys Lauren Goldberg and Janelle Austin from KP Law.

Municipalities are increasingly faced with “auditors” who record their interactions with public officials and employees and post these videos online. Goldberg said the auditors hope to “provoke the employees into unlawfully detaining, refusing entry, or otherwise violating their First Amendment rights.”

Austin shared that public offices can prepare by safeguarding all private and confidential documents from the public eye and physically marking private and public spaces. She added that departments should determine in advance who will provide service during a First Amendment audit, as some employees may be more comfortable with confrontational situations.

Austin also provided guidance for how to react when faced with an auditor, emphasizing de-escalation and remaining calm.

“There’s nothing interesting when someone is sitting at their desk doing their work and politely answering questions,” Goldberg said.

The webinar built upon content explored in a [previous MMA webinar on First Amendment Audits](#), held in January 2023.

Basics of public communications

Massachusetts Municipal Communicators, a new MMA member group dedicated to enhancing municipal communications, held its first webinar on Oct. 15, covering the basic concepts of public communications and offering insights on how to reach the identified audience.

Easton Assistant Town Administrator Sean Dugan began by reiterating the increasing importance of effective municipal communications.

“Our job is to guide our leadership towards good engagement practices,” he said.

The public, he added, “demands accessibility and transparency in local government,” just as they get with private businesses.

Brianna Sunryd, public services manager at the Collins Center for Public Management at UMass Boston, shared how effective communication has a positive impact on the civic experience. Effective communication builds the public’s trust and involvement in their communities, while reducing the spread of misinformation.

Sunryd explained the concept of community mapping, which “helps reveal or highlight new allies and partners who can help share messages or provide access to tools and resources.”

Dugan and Sunryd concluded with three recommendations for effective engagement: map your community to know your audience and allies; create a checklist for staff to use to standardize outreach practices; and create templates for frequently used media types, such as press releases, grant



Lincoln Town Administrator Tim Higgins, top left, and KP Law attorneys Lauren Goldberg, top right, and Janelle Austin address the challenges of so-called “First Amendment audits” and strategies for dealing with them during an MMA webinar.

Date: Oct. 22

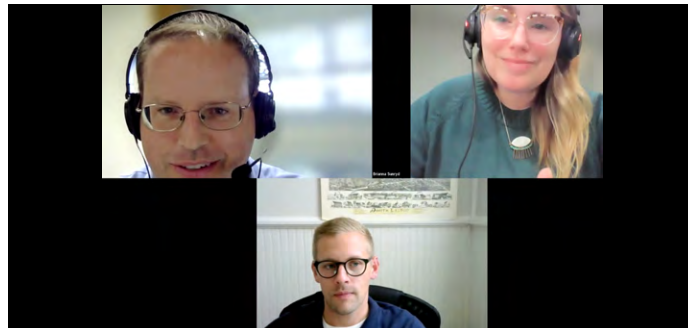
Length: 75 minutes

[VIEW WEBINAR ↗](#)

Goldberg and Austin also discussed recent significant case law related to public comment policies, in [Barron v. Kolenda](#), and flag policies, in [Shurtleff v. City of Boston](#).

Lincoln Town Administrator Tim Higgins moderated 30 minutes of questions and answers, addressing inquiries about public versus private spaces, what personal information employees are required to disclose to “auditors,” and instances involving minors.

– *Kristianna Lapierre*



Panelists cover the basic concepts of public communications and offer insights on how municipal officials can best reach their audiences during a webinar held by the Massachusetts Municipal Communicators. Speakers included, clockwise from top left, Jeremy Warnick, director of media relations and content strategy for the city of Cambridge; Brianna Sunryd, public services manager at the Collins Center for Public Management at UMass Boston; and Easton Assistant Town Administrator Sean Dugan.

Date: Oct. 15

Length: 75 minutes

[VIEW WEBINAR ↗](#)

announcements, and other documents.

Jeremy Warnick, director of media relations and content strategy for the city of Cambridge, moderated questions and answers, including inquiries about the effectiveness of various forms of media, including print newspapers, social media, and robocalls.

– *Kristianna Lapierre*

Climate conference discusses opportunities for action

By Josie Ahlberg

Over three days in October, the Climate Beacon Conference convened municipal officials and staff, environmental advocates, clean energy professionals, and business partners to celebrate climate progress and discuss further opportunities for climate action.

U.S. Sen. Ed Markey delivered the keynote at the opening reception on Oct. 16, discussing the impact and importance of the [Inflation Reduction Act](#), which enables non-taxable entities (including municipal governments) to receive cash refunds for certain clean energy investments. (Markey's [Inflation Reduction Act Implementation Guide](#) offers more information on the law and how to take advantage of the tax credit opportunities.)

Referencing the valuable conversations taking place at the conference and the opportunities unlocked by the IRA, Markey said Massachusetts is “turning its promises into projects.”

On Oct. 17, MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine kicked off a Municipal Movers breakfast reception, which featured Cambridge Energy Alliance Outreach Director Meghan Shaw and NRG Consumer Vice President and General Manager Mike Rombach discussing [Cambridge's](#)



MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine kicks off a Municipal Movers breakfast reception on Oct. 17, during the three-day Climate Beacon Conference in Boston.

[municipal aggregation program](#) and efforts to make the city's electricity “greener,” including through a community solar program on the roof of a local school.

Also on Oct. 17, Boston Mayor Michelle Wu joined GBH President Susan Goldberg for a “Harborside Chat” focused on the role of municipalities in charting the course to a more sustainable, livable future, and how local leaders balance the decisions they have to make every day.

Wu said “there's a climate connection to everything we're doing” in city government, adding that “progress is possible if we keep everyone at the table.”

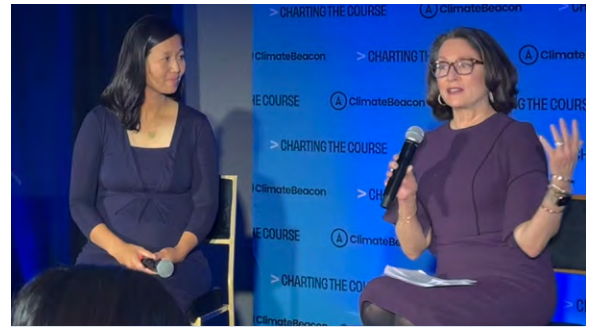
Wu said many of the most easily attainable actions on energy efficiency are well underway or completed, so the majority of areas left for improvement are those requiring systemic change that will take significant effort and coordination at the local government level.

The programming of Climate Beacon, the [Climate Beacon Project's](#) second annual conference, was broken into four tracks:

- **Building Better:** Focused on designing and building the infrastructure and neighborhoods of the future and how to retrofit and modernize the current building stock
- **Powering Better:** Focused on how



Neil Duffy, Salem's sustainability and resiliency director, speaks during the Climate Beacon Conference in Boston.



Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, left, speaks with GBH President Susan Goldberg during a “Harborside Chat” on Oct. 17 during the Climate Beacon Conference in Boston.

everyone benefits from scaling the clean, renewable energy the region needs, how that energy is used, and how these developments positively impact their surrounding environments

- **Moving Better:** Focused on how people get from place to place in cleaner, healthier, more modern ways
- **Adapting Better:** Focused on how communities better adapt to the impacts of climate change through natural solutions, smart community and economic choices, and environmental restoration

“Systems Ready for the Future,” a panel discussion in the “Powering Better” track, featured an interactive walk-through of [En-ROADS](#), a global climate simulator. En-ROADS allows users to manipulate certain policy levers relative to energy supply, the transportation system, buildings and industry assets, carbon dioxide removal, and greenhouse gas sources to create global temperature predictions.

Bethany Patten, executive director of MIT's Climate Policy Center, stressed that a holistic approach, employing any and all available levers, will make the most beneficial impact on reducing global warming in the least amount of time.

Climate Beacon was held at the Boston Society of Architects under the theme “Charting the Course.” See the [event website](#) for more information. ●

MMHR seminar covers timely human resource topics

By Anneke Craig

Key topics in labor law and labor relations were the focus of the annual Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources Labor Relations Seminar on Oct. 25 in Devens.

The program opened with a labor law update from attorney Melissa Murray of Norris, Murray & Peloquin. Her update covered a bill called the Francis Perkins Pay Equity Act, which would establish measures to close racial and gender wage gaps. She said the proposal is part of a larger “move toward salary transparency across the United States” that Massachusetts is helping to lead.

“We’re part of a growing trend across the country that is requiring this,” she said.

Murray also discussed the U.S. Department of Justice’s recent updates to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which require state and local government websites and mobile apps to adopt new accessibility standards, such as captions for videos and images.

“Because we do so much more online than we used to,” Murray said, “there’s a lot more we need to do to make sure our websites are accessible.”

MMA Legislative Director David Koffman provided an update on recent and notable legislation affecting municipal human resources management. Topics he covered included the new [Francis Perkins Workplace Equity Act](#) and its enforcement timeline, and updates to disability pensions for first responders who suffered violent injuries on the job. Koffman also discussed legislative topics expected in the year ahead.

The morning included a keynote presentation with Bill Keefe, executive director of the [Public Employee Retirement](#)



Melissa Murray, an attorney from Norris, Murray & Peloquin, provides a labor law update during the annual Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources Labor Relations Seminar on Oct. 25 in Devens.

[Administration Commission](#), and Needham Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, a PERAC member.

Keefe covered key public retirement system information for human resources professionals, as well as relevant legislation, including a [violent assault disability law](#) and changes to the [HERO Act](#), which advances retirement benefits for Massachusetts veterans working in public service.

Fitzpatrick shared strategies for discussing retirement benefits and options with municipal employees. She said pensions can be a useful tool for recruitment and retention, particularly among younger employees.

“Research on Generation Z indicates that they think they will never be able to retire,” she said. “Try to encourage your Gen Z’s to stay in the system. Write job descriptions that say something like, ‘We have a pension so you won’t have to work until you’re 80!’”

The afternoon featured three concurrent workshops.

An interactive roundtable on developing and updating a strong employee handbook was led by attorney Katherine Feodoroff of Mead, Talerman & Costa, MMHR Chair and Southborough Assistant Town Administrator Vanessa Hale, and Natick Human Resources Director Dorothy Blondiet.

Feodoroff discussed how to update and use a digital employee handbook.

“This is a one-stop shop,” she said. “When you’re onboarding, when you’re hiring, you can get your employee a single document that’s accessible, that they can keep on their computer desktop.”

Digital handbooks have the benefit of adaptability and flexibility, she said, “because we deal with regular changes in the law.”

Hale discussed how she updated Southborough’s digital employee handbook after the passage in 2022 of the CROWN Act, which prohibits discrimination against natural and “protective” hairstyles.

“Those kinds of things, you have to be current on, because if you’re not current, you’re not compliant with the law,” Feodoroff added.

Other workshops included an introduction to management rights with attorneys Michael Maccaro and Madison Harris-Parks of Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Lehane and Weston Assistant Town Manager Lisa Yanakakis; and an overview of the Fair Labor Standards Act with attorney Sean O’Connor of Morgan, Brown, & Joy. ●

National League of Cities to mark 100 years at City Summit in Nov.

The National League of Cities will continue its celebration of its 100th anniversary during its annual City Summit on Nov. 13-16 in Tampa, Florida.

The conference offers municipal leaders an opportunity to connect with peers from all over the country, learn from experts in workshops focused on trending local government topics, and stay up-to-date on federal programs and funding opportunities.

Attendees can also attend “mobile workshops,” where city staff lead tours that highlight Tampa’s development projects in relation to current municipal trends and concerns.

Guest speakers will include broadcast journalist Soledad O’Brien and Olympic gold medal alpine skier Lindsey Vonn.

The City Summit will feature two days of pre-conference activities on Nov. 11

and 12, including executive education sessions on Nov. 12 aimed at enhancing leadership and management skills for municipal officials.

The conference will conclude on Nov. 16 with a centennial celebration for the league.

For more information, including registration rates and a full schedule, visit citysummit.nlc.org. ●

Federal funding opportunities available

By Adrienne Núñez

The state Office of Federal Funds and Infrastructure is highlighting the following competitive [federal funding opportunities open to municipalities](#), with applications due in November, December and January:

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [Brownfields Program](#) provides funds to prevent, inventory, assess, clean up, and reuse brownfield sites through assessment grants. (Applications due Nov. 14.)
- The Inflation Reduction Act's [Community Change Grants Program](#) benefits disadvantaged communities through collaborative projects between government entities and community-based organizations that will reduce pollution, increase community climate resilience, and build community capacity to address environmental and climate justice challenges. (Applications due Nov. 21.)
- [Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling](#) funds a range of projects that enable improvements to and transformation of recycling and materials management infrastructure. (Applications due Dec. 20.)
- The [Consumer Recycling Education and Outreach grant program](#) funds projects that aim to decrease food waste from households; expand markets for and sales of compost; or inform the public about new or existing residential food waste composting programs. (Applications due Dec. 20.)
- The EPA is soliciting applications for [Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Grant Program](#) projects in disadvantaged communities that strive to either reduce child exposure to lead in drinking water in schools and child care facilities or reduce lead exposure in a drinking water system through full lead service line replacements and treatment improvements. (Applications due Dec. 30.)
- The 2024 [Clean School Bus](#) program offers rebates to replace existing school buses with clean and zero-emission models. (Applications due Jan. 9.)

In addition, the U.S. Department of Transportation has released two new



The Consumer Recycling Education and Outreach grant program, which funds projects related to composting and the reduction of household food waste, is one of several current federal funding opportunities now available.

Notices of Funding Opportunities:

- [Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation](#) supports projects that improve the resilience of transportation infrastructure to withstand natural disasters and the impacts of climate change, such as flooding, sea level rise, and extreme weather. Improvements could include upgrading infrastructure, new construction, and using innovative technologies. Eligible projects must align with state and local climate adaptation plans and show a significant reduction in disaster-related disruptions. (Applications due Feb. 24.)
- The [Regional Infrastructure Accelerator program](#) is intended to establish regional infrastructure accelerators to assist entities in increasing their capacity to deliver Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act-eligible projects through innovative financing strategies. Eligible projects include preliminary engineering and design work; studies and analysis; assessment of opportunities for private financing, project bundling and/or phasing; and

enhancement of rural project sponsors' capacity to use the TIFIA credit program. (Applications due Jan. 9.)

Resources for municipalities

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the [Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office](#) offer [support to municipalities](#) in pursuit of federal grants. At MassDOT, municipal officials are encouraged to contact Derek Krevat, manager of municipal grants engagement, at Derek.Krevat@state.ma.us.

The Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office posts grant announcements, leads a monthly [Massachusetts Federal Funds Partnership](#) virtual meeting, and is available for direct support

at FedFundsInfra@mass.gov.

A [federal funding law](#) signed by Gov. Maura Healey in September leverages \$250 million in interest generated annually by the state's stabilization fund to capitalize a Commonwealth Federal Matching and Debt Reduction Fund. The law also authorizes up to \$50 million to support municipal and regional project matching requirements in federal grant applications, and includes \$12 million for technical assistance to help municipalities with grant tracking, grant writing and implementation.

The Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office has announced a statewide tour to meet with municipal officials to introduce the office and hear about the support municipalities need to pursue federal funding.

The tour will begin in Pittsfield on Nov. 18 at 1 p.m. at the Berkshire Innovation Center. Attendees will include Director of Rural Affairs Anne Gobi, Undersecretary of Environmental Justice and Equity María Belén Power, Deputy Climate Chief Jonathan Schrag, and representatives from MassDOT.

[Click here to register.](#) ●

Green Communities Summit is Nov. 22 in Devens

The Green Communities Division will hold the first Green Communities Summit on Nov. 22 to discuss innovative energy solutions and share best practices.

The summit will feature presentations on local energy initiatives, policy updates, and opportunities for collaboration. Participants will engage in discussions about strategies to enhance energy efficiency in their communities and help the Commonwealth achieve its 2050 emission reduction goals. Attendees will also celebrate the successes in the 15-year history of Green Communities.

Attendees will include municipal staff and officials, clean energy and climate practitioners, school staff, committee members, and other stakeholders.

The summit will be held at the Devens



Conference Center, 31 Andrews Parkway in Devens, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

[Click here to register for the summit](#), which is free of charge.

The Green Communities Division, which administers the Green Communities Grant and Designation Program, sent a survey in September to gather input to help plan the summit.

Upcoming deadlines

Annual reports for fiscal 2024 Green Communities are due on Nov. 15.

Applications from cities and towns seeking the Green Communities designation are due on Dec. 31.

Dec. 31 is also the application deadline for municipalities that are seeking to be certified as Climate Leader Communities.

For more information, visit the [Green Communities Division website](#) or contact [Green Communities Program regional coordinators](#). ●

Study identifies visibility limitations for truck drivers

By **Adrienne Núñez**

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has published a study that measures the “direct vision” available to drivers of state trucks, as well as those of 10 municipalities.

The [Commonwealth of Massachusetts Direct Vision Study](#) found that drivers of heavy-duty vehicles cannot easily see people around them. Drivers in 50% of the heavy-duty vehicles in the study could not see a child directly in front of the vehicle. Side visibility was also obstructed; drivers in 90% of heavy-duty trucks studied could not see a child in an adjacent bike lane, and 80% could not see an adult in a bike lane.

The study included vehicles from MassDOT contractor fleets and fleet samples from 10 municipalities that have had a serious injury or fatality resulting from an accident involving a large truck in the past 10 years. Municipalities that participated in the study were Cambridge, Everett, Falmouth, Gardner, Lynn, Medford,

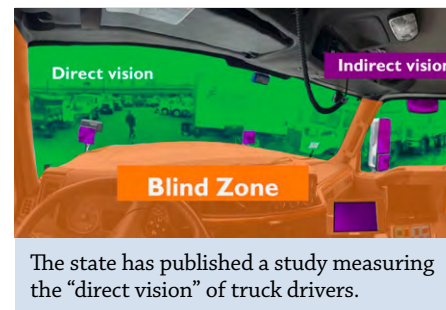
Needham, Somerville, Waltham and Westfield.

Direct vision is the ability of drivers to see firsthand outside their vehicle without the aid of an indirect vision device (such as mirrors and cameras), enabling eye contact between the driver and a vulnerable road user near the vehicle. MassDOT reports that drivers’ perception and reaction are 50% better with direct vision than with indirect vision.

The study sought to learn the range of direct vision performance in the MassDOT fleet, vehicles of contractors, and vehicles of partnering municipalities, and what countermeasures would be most appropriate to increase direct vision in various vehicles.

Sixty vehicles were studied, and comparisons among different years, makes and models within vehicle classes were also considered. Of the heavy-duty vehicles measured, the cab-forward style tended to have higher forward visibility.

On average, light-duty vehicles had the



The state has published a study measuring the “direct vision” of truck drivers.

highest visibility in the fleets studied. Medium-duty vehicles had lower visibility, and heavy-duty vehicles had the lowest visibility.

The report recommends downsizing vehicles whenever possible.

The study was called for by a 2022 traffic safety law and was conducted in collaboration with the [Volpe National Transportation Systems Center](#). Additional information is available on the [study website](#). ●

Meeting space wanted

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

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

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

of places.

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

MMA and Suffolk plan 2025 finance and HR seminars

By Kate Evarts

The MMA and Suffolk University will offer three Municipal Finance Management Seminar programs in 2025.

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

The seminar is for municipal officials interested in furthering their careers in municipal finance or employees who are new to municipal finance. Participants must be currently employed by a city or town, and must have the approval of their municipal manager, administrator or mayor to apply.

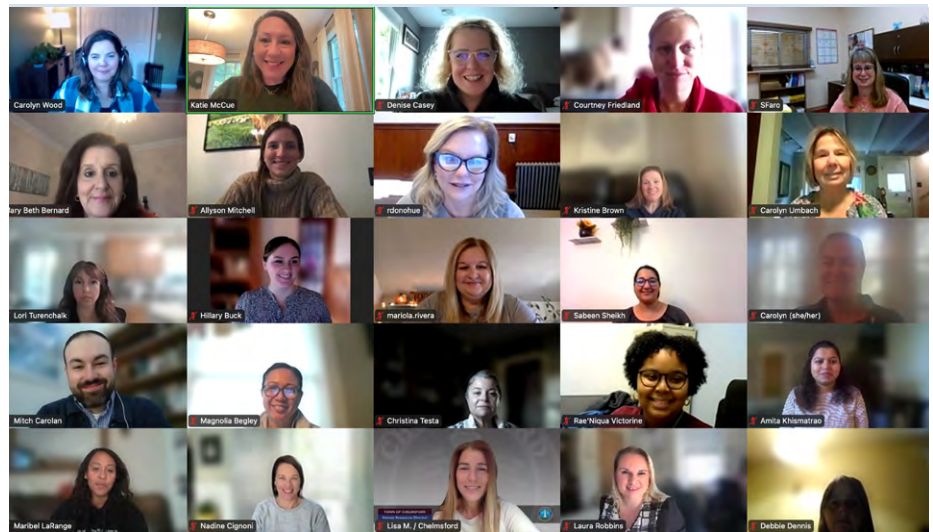
Seminars will be held via Zoom over the course of five Fridays, with start dates as follows:

- Winter 2025: Jan. 3
- Spring 2025: March 7
- Fall 2025: Expected mid-October

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

Bernie Lynch, a senior instructor in the program, said it’s a great example of the MMA and Suffolk’s partnership on efforts to address timely issues affecting Massachusetts cities and towns.

“One of the most significant issues facing communities is the loss of so many municipal finance officials through retirements, and the gap in finding new people to step into these crucial positions that manage and control municipal resources,” he said. “The municipal finance seminar has far exceeded expectations in its popularity and in helping to build up the bench of long-term municipal employees and introducing new employees transitioning from the private



Twenty-six students graduate from the MMA-Suffolk Municipal Human Resources Seminar on Oct. 18.



The MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar kicks off its newest session with 26 students on Oct. 18.

sector to understand the big picture of municipal finance.”

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

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

Registration details for the winter session were emailed to chief municipal

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

Human Resources Seminar

The second session of the MMA and Suffolk University’s Municipal Human Resources Seminar wrapped up in October, with 27 students completing the fall seminar.

The HR seminar covers human resources management, policies and practices specific to Massachusetts cities and towns.

■ SUFFOLK *continued on 20*

MunEnergy helps with managing winter energy needs

By Katie McCue

As cities and towns prepare for winter and a high-demand heating season, the [MMA's MunEnergy program](#) can help municipal leaders manage these costs. As we turn up thermostats, municipalities may have opportunities to seize or risks to avoid.

The energy experts at [Constellation](#), the MMA's MunEnergy partner, offer the following things to consider:

- Another warm winter is expected. The 2024-2025 winter weather forecast includes wide swaths of above-average seasonal temperatures, without expectations for long-lasting cold shots.
- Escalating conflict in the Middle East doesn't shock the market like it used to, thanks to more domestic energy production, but disruptions to global supplies of natural gas could push international prices higher. Many power grids switch to fuel oil during peak winter days to balance high demand, and increased fuel costs for



Nancy Goulart

those generators could push power prices higher.

The MMA's MunEnergy Program is designed to help municipalities manage energy costs in all kinds of weather. More than 60 cities, towns, and

other governmental entities are currently using the MMA's energy contract, including the town of Dighton, which just renewed its contract with Constellation through the MMA Municipal Energy Program for the third time.

"The cost of energy continues to rise, but by continuing our relationship with Constellation, we have been able to lock in rates for electricity that have provided substantial savings over the years," said Nancy Goulart of Dighton's Board of Assessors.

"It's important to point out to

communities that the program through Constellation provides additional savings to the municipality because the rate for municipal properties is lower than the (residential) aggregation rate," Goulart continued. "This means that town buildings, playgrounds, parks, and sports facilities recognize additional savings per kilowatt hour.

In addition to the town, two districts that provide water and streetlights in Dighton also benefit from this program.

"The new contract is for five years," Goulart said. "The program provides additional time to process payments, and it has the full backing of the MMA. I encourage any community that is serviced by a major supplier of electricity to contact the MMA/Constellation program."

For more about the MunEnergy program, visit www.mma.org/munenergy or contact Katie McCue at kmccue@mma.org or 617-426-7272, ext. 111. ●

WEMO seeks nominations for its 2024 Steering Committee

Women Elected Municipal Officials, a group within the MMA's membership, is seeking nominations for its 2025 steering committee.

Any woman mayor, select board member, or city or town councillor in Massachusetts may complete the [online nomination form](#) by Nov. 8 to submit their name for consideration.

The WEMO steering committee consists of one mayor, three select board members and two councillors. Nominations are open for two officer positions: chair and vice chair. Nominations are also open for four director positions. WEMO officers and directors serve one-year terms, and there is no restriction on which elected position serves in these seats.

WEMO steering committee responsibilities include attendance at WEMO committee meetings and planning content and recommending speakers for WEMO virtual and in-person events. The WEMO committee meets virtually on a monthly basis. Previous participation in WEMO and MMA events is strongly preferred.

After interviewing all nominees, the WEMO Nominating Committee will prepare a slate of nominations for election during the WEMO Leadership Luncheon on Jan. 24, 2025, at [Connect 351](#) in Boston.

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



Managers discuss engagement strategies

Maura Buckley, Foxborough's communications specialist, speaks to municipal managers during a Massachusetts Municipal Management Association meeting on Oct. 17 in Boylston. Buckley joined Foxborough Town Manager Paige Duncan to discuss Foxborough's recent community education and engagement campaign, which succeeded in winning three debt exclusion votes.

'Climate tech' event to focus on municipal continuity

The Alliance for Climate Transition is holding an event on Nov. 19 to discuss how climate technology can help municipalities maintain operations during severe weather events and power grid outages.

Municipalities need to keep services running smoothly regardless of weather, and provide shelter and respond during extreme weather and emergencies. The ways municipalities do this will need to change as they electrify their buildings and fleets. Climate technology is already building solutions to these challenges.

["Keeping Services Running: Climate tech Solutions for Continuity of Operations"](#) will convene municipal leaders with



Joseph Curtatone

Transition President Joe Curtatone, a former mayor of Somerville; keynote presentations by Wilson Rickerson of Converge Strategies and Ryan Dings of InnoEnergy; and closing remarks by

climate tech start-ups to talk about how they can work together to meet the needs of municipalities to keep communities safe and resilient.

The event will feature welcoming remarks from Alliance for Climate

Transition President Joe Curtatone, a former mayor of Somerville; keynote presentations by Wilson Rickerson of Converge Strategies and Ryan Dings of InnoEnergy; and closing remarks by

Julia Travaglini of Greentown Labs. There will also be a panel discussion and question-and-answer session, as well as tables on key topics of interest, as determined by the survey included with registration (on subjects such as buildings, transportation and resiliency hubs).

Event partners include Amalgamated Bank, Beacon Climate, Greentown Labs and PowerOptions.

The event will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Greentown Labs in Somerville. Lunch will be provided, and there will be time for networking.

[Registration](#) is free for municipal staff, while general admission is \$25. ●

Just City Mayoral Fellowship seeks 2025 fellows

The Mayors' Institute on City Design is accepting expressions of interest through Nov. 15 from mayors who want to participate in the fifth year of the institute's [Just City Mayoral Fellowship program](#) in spring 2025.

In partnership with the [Just City Lab](#) at the [Harvard Graduate School of Design](#), the Just City Mayoral Fellowship is an interactive, semester-long program for a small group of mayors and their staffs to tackle injustices in their cities through planning and design interventions. Working with experts in architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, art activism, housing and public policy, mayors and their staff identify how injustices manifest in their cities' social, economic, and physical infrastructures, and advance their justice-centered goals to address systemic challenges.

For each cohort, the fellowship tailors the program and curriculum to meet the current needs of mayors. This year's curriculum will explore the meaning of housing communities in the face of a nationwide housing crisis. The curriculum will introduce mayors and their staff to planning and design frameworks — beyond housing supply and demand — that maximize all city resources to support housing needs faced by a broad range of city populations. Each mayor will also explore conditions of injustice in their own community, culminating in a manifesto of action.

The selected fellows will be expected to



commit a significant amount of their time between February and April 2025, and there will be assigned readings and homework during the semester.

All U.S. mayors are eligible, and the selected mayors can identify two key staff members to participate in the weekly classes and all of the fellowship's virtual components. To be considered, mayors must fill out a form and answer three open-ended questions about the opportunities, challenges, and potential projects in their cities.

The institute held an informational webinar for mayors and their staff about the fellowship on Oct. 16, and a recording is available online. ●



Legislators take part in MMA meetings

Rep. Natalie Blais discusses legislative priorities during an MMA Legislative Breakfast Meeting on Oct. 11 in Leyden. Blais, along with Sen. Joanne Comerford, met with municipal officials from the western part of the state. For more about the MMA's six breakfast meetings around the state, see story on page 3.

Training program seeks local DPW participants

A statewide training program is seeking municipal public works departments interested in hosting high school workers for co-ops and internships.

Funded by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the one-week [Massachusetts Pre-Apprenticeship and Vocational School Training Program](#) teaches high school students about careers in the highway construction industry, offering hands-on learning

opportunities and the opportunity to earn associated certifications.

Program graduates are encouraged to expand their work experience through co-op work programs that run during the school year, as well as summer internships. The program helps to match students with work experiences near their school or home.

All students that would be matched to municipal DPWs are graduates of

the program. Students are available to work either during the school year for a specific period or over the summer. Reimbursement of student wages of up to \$15 per hour for at least 160 hours may be available.

Municipal DPWs interested in employing student workers may contact Tory Perrotta at ToryP2327@gmail.com or visit the [program employment webpage](#).

– **Adrienne Núñez**

EMISSIONS

Continued from page 10

of vehicles to be purchased. MassDEP will make a determination as to whether enforcement discretion is allowable for the proposed purchase, and will communicate its decision to the requesting agency and the manufacturer.

Enforcement discretion requests should be sent to Ngoc.Hoang@mass.gov with

the subject line “Enforcement Discretion Purchases.”

Questions about the enforcement discretion and the ACT and HDO rules can be directed to Sharon Weber at Sharon.Weber@mass.gov.

Related resources

- [MassDEP presentation on ACT and HDO from 2022](#)

- [MassDEP background document and analysis of HDO and ACT impacts from December 2021](#)

- [Massachusetts Low Emission Vehicle Program](#)

- [ACT and HDO FAQs from MassDEP](#)

ARPA

Continued from page 1

- An executive order
- A resolution
- A written or oral intention to enter into a contract
- A grant of legal authority to enter into a contract
- Claiming funds under the revenue loss category
- Moving SLFRF funds to a general

fund as revenue loss but not further establishing an obligation with those funds by Dec. 31, 2024

The Treasury has posted a [webinar](#) covering these topics in greater depth, and has updated the [frequently asked questions](#) found on the [SLFRF website](#).

The webinar discusses specific examples related to employee expenses using SLFRF funds after Dec. 31, 2024, interagency agreements, and questions regarding modifying contracts. ●



SUFFOLK

Continued from page 17

There has been overwhelming interest in the seminar since it began in April.

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.

Planning is underway for future Municipal Human Resources seminars, and waitlisted applicants will receive emails when sessions are confirmed.

More information

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

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

Managers focus on connecting with residents

Shrewsbury Town Manager Kevin Mizikar speaks during a community engagement panel held at the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association meeting on Oct. 17 in Boylston. Mizikar discussed the multiple platforms he uses to connect with residents, including his biweekly podcast, “Town Manager Download.”

CONNECT 351

Continued from page 1

Speakers

- **Friday Keynote Suneel Gupta**, bestselling author and entrepreneur, who studies how leaders succeed and fail, will explore the connection between well-being and performance. Gupta will discuss the “human energy crisis” and how an emphasis on well-being can create a roadmap for success.
- **Saturday Keynote Matt Lehrman**, co-founder of Social Prosperity Partners, will help local leaders move “from conflict to conversation.” His consulting firm works with municipal, civic and nonprofit organizations to facilitate public engagement and consolidate consensus.

Both speakers preview their talks in video messages created especially for the MMA, which can be found on Connect351.org.

In addition, in the WLG session on Thursday, Mauldin-Jones will reflect on overcoming challenges, balancing personal and professional life, and the value of mentorship.

Workshops

Connect 351 will feature 18 [workshops](#) over two days, covering topics such as federal funds, building trust with communications, artificial intelligence, public education, balance in the workplace, resiliency planning, labor law, housing, diversity and inclusion, cybersecurity, succession planning, and inter-generational connection.

Workshop topics are posted on the Connect 351 website, and titles, descriptions and panelists will be published later in November, as will descriptions of the six Learning Lab sessions that will be held on Friday on the Trade Show floor.

Networking

The MMA conference also features receptions, awards presentations, and many opportunities to network with other municipal leaders. Networking opportunities will include lunch-time meetings of Massachusetts Municipal Communicators, Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts, and mayoral chiefs of staff, and an [MMA-Suffolk programs](#) reception. On Friday, the Healey-Driscoll administration will



Kate Fitzpatrick



Opal Mauldin-Jones

lead a session about opportunities to engage with the state in Massachusetts’ 250th anniversary celebration activities.

Event app

Attendees will be able to use the event’s free mobile app to make the most of their conference experience. The app, available for all smartphones and tablet devices, is the primary resource for planning and navigating Connect 351. Users will find schedule details, workshop listings, speaker profiles, exhibitor information, helpful maps, and much more. A guide to accessing the app will be emailed to registrants in the weeks leading up to Connect 351.

Registration

[Online registration](#) for Connect 351 opened on Oct. 1 and will be available through Jan. 20.

The early registration rate is \$265 for MMA members and Partner Program members. Partners must be in good standing as of Dec. 30, 2024, to be eligible for registration and attendance. New MMA Partner Program applications will not be accepted after Nov. 30, and renewal applications will not be accepted during Connect 351.

Registration is also open for the Women Elected Municipal Officials Leadership Luncheon on Friday, Jan. 24, at a cost of \$55, and the Friday evening dinner, at a cost of \$65.

Connect 351 registration is not available by mail or over the phone. The MMA accepts credit cards for all Connect 351 transactions and is able to invoice your municipality after the meeting as well.

Online registration requires a member’s unique username and password. Those who either do not have a username and password or may have forgotten their credentials can email connect351@mma.org for assistance.

Nonmember governmental entities are welcome to attend Connect 351 as well, at a cost of \$330.

Registration will be available on-site during the conference at a rate of \$300 for MMA and Partner Program members, and \$365 for nonmember government entities.

Hotel information

The Omni Boston Hotel at the Seaport, conveniently located across the street from Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, has a room block available for Connect 351 attendees. The MMA negotiated a reduced room rate of \$219 per night in the Artist Tower or \$249 per night in the Patron Tower. The reduced-rate rooms are expected to sell out quickly and must be booked by Dec. 23.

The Westin Seaport, located next to the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, has a small room block available for the nights of Thursday, Jan. 23, and Friday, Jan. 24. The MMA negotiated a reduced room rate of \$229 per night. The reduced-rate rooms are expected to sell out quickly and must be booked by Dec. 27.

All hotel reservations must be made directly with the hotel. To make or cancel a reservation, use the [Omni online form](#) and [Westin online form](#) specifically for our event. Members may also call the Omni Boston Hotel at 1-800-THE-OMNI or the Westin Seaport at 617-532-4600 and mention Massachusetts Municipal Association.

Both hotels have a cancellation policy of noon three days before check-in.

For more information on Connect 351, visit Connect351.org or contact Timmery Kuck at 617-426-7272, ext. 106. For Trade Show and Partnership Program information, contact Karen LaPointe at 800-882-1498, ext. 154, or 2025TS@mma.org.

Companies, agencies and nonprofits interested in exhibiting at the Trade Show can [learn more on the Connect 351 website](#). ●

Reducing risk when transitioning buildings

By Jennifer Ranz

When planning for a new municipal building, the focus is typically on the design, function and completion of the new structure. But the disposition of the existing building — whether through sale, demolition or re-commissioning for alternative use — is also important.

Failing to address the future of the old structure early on can lead to costly and time-consuming issues down the line. From a risk management perspective, ongoing maintenance of the building being replaced must be considered during its final years in service, as well as the critical disposition following construction of the new building.

Planning phase

When planning the construction of a replacement building, it is important from the outset to conduct comprehensive feasibility studies, including funding sources and cost allocations, to address what will happen to the existing structure.

“In recent years, we’ve seen many municipalities delay decisions about an old building, or sometimes change plans mid-construction,” said Stephen Batchelder, vice president of Claims Operations and Risk Management



When planning for new municipal buildings, cities and towns should also focus their attention on the old buildings being left behind, whether they’re destined for reuse, sale or, in some cases, demolition.

at MIIA. “This can cause an array of logistical challenges as well as financial burdens on the town.”

Batchelder recommends initiating meaningful discussions and transition planning well before construction begins, and maintaining open communication throughout the process.

A lack of plans for an old, existing building can also present local political challenges, said Thomas DePaulo, vice president of Operations at MIIA. Sometimes residents or elected officials have an emotional attachment to a particular building — particularly schools.

“This can cause unneeded controversy and lead to stressful town hall politics that can often be lessened or avoided with proper advance planning,” he said.

During construction

A common issue during the construction of new buildings is the neglect of the building that is being replaced. While attention shifts to the new facility, the old structure typically is vacant and requires a modification of coverage from replacement cost to actual cash value — meaning municipalities could be exposed to significant financial risks if something goes wrong.

Aging and vulnerable infrastructure, if not properly maintained, can suffer from issues like water damage, structural failure or other costly losses.

“Municipalities should ensure that facilities management practices remain a priority for the old building throughout the construction process to avoid large losses and, in turn, negatively impacted loss ratios,” Batchelder said.

Project completion

Once the new building is nearing completion, it’s important to consult with the municipal property insurance provider to ensure a smooth transition

■ MIIA continued on 25

Group Medicare premium increases coming for 2025

By Jennifer Ranz

Health care costs are **rising** in Massachusetts and across the U.S., and all health plans face affordability challenges. For retiree benefits, significant changes are coming that will impact Group Medicare plans, particularly Medicare Advantage and Part D prescription drug plans.

The changes, driven in large part by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, will result in notable increases in premiums for retirees.

One key change is the cap for out-of-pocket expenses for Part D drugs, which will be \$2,000 starting in 2025. While this offers significant relief for retirees, the financial burden shifts to insurance providers, leading to an increase in premiums.

Additionally, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has introduced new payment formulas and adjusted Medicare Part A and B deductibles, enhancing cost savings for retirees and increasing overall plan liabilities.

Costs are also rising across all aspects

of health care in general, from pharmacy to medical services and increased hospitalizations.

Municipalities should prepare for these adjustments to ensure that local budgets can accommodate coming cost increases.

For more information on how these changes may impact a municipality’s insurance plan coverage and costs, local officials should contact their municipal health insurance provider. Members of MIIA’s Health Benefits Trust can reach out to their account executive with any questions. ●

Around the Commonwealth

Devens

New guidelines seek to reduce 'embodied carbon'

Devens, a regional enterprise zone and former military base, has spent the past two decades redeveloping with sustainability in mind, while undergoing extensive remediation work to deal with soil and groundwater contamination due to military operations.

To promote environmental responsibility and sustainability, the [Devens Enterprise Commission](#) late last year adopted new [embodied carbon reduction guidelines](#) as part of its unified permitting process. (Embodied carbon refers to the carbon dioxide emissions associated with building materials throughout their lifecycle, from extraction to demolition and disposal.)

The Fort Devens Army Installation closed in 1996, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency named it a Superfund Site. Following the base's closure, the surrounding communities of Ayer, Shirley, Lancaster and Harvard considered what they wanted the site to become. Devens now has more than 120 businesses with more than 10,000 employees.

"People wanted to see it redeveloped in a more responsible manner," said Devens Enterprise Commission Director Neil Angus. "The whole sustainable redevelopment mission for Devens came from its history of contamination."

The mission had been incorporated into regulations surrounding Devens' redevelopment as an eco-industrial park, with businesses working together as a system. Angus compared the redevelopment of the site to a natural ecosystem, where one element feeds off another.

"We take that natural, ecological element and bring it into the industrial park and have businesses working together as a system of industries, where they can maximize efficiencies, minimize waste," Angus said. "One firm's waste is another firm's raw material resource."

The commission created the [Devens Eco-Efficiency Center](#), which provides educational forums, technical assistance, networking venues, and partnership

opportunities to help firms protect resources.

"It's a very unique program to Devens," Angus said. "It helps connect all these businesses together."

Devens had developed a number of regulations, policies and guidelines over the years to address sustainability issues like noise and light pollution, resource management and conservation.

The new guidelines intend to reduce Devens' embodied carbon footprint and will help the state meet its decarbonization goals. The Enterprise Commission gives an embodied carbon reduction checklist to each permit applicant early in the process, and applicants respond to each item, indicating their ability to incorporate them into their project.

"The earlier we get them, the easier it is to integrate these measures into their design," Angus said.

The commission worked in consultation with the Sustainable Performance Institute to identify incentives for green approaches to development, and the Carbon Leadership Forum provided a number of resources.

Angus said the guidelines have received mostly positive reviews, and Devens now has the potential to have its first all-electric commercial building.

"The first project we had, I was pleasantly surprised when they submitted the checklist and saw that yes, they are considering embodied carbon in all of their building products and materials," Angus said.

He said the owner was initially considering extending a natural gas line to the building, at significant cost, but was able to use the green building checklist to reduce energy consumption and avoid the need for gas.

Angus said the focus of the sustainability initiatives is to inform, educate, incentivize and then regulate. The new carbon guidelines might become regulations at some point in time.

A key part of the process is helping applicants see the significant savings potential, as well as the environmental components. One of the biggest challenges,

Angus said, is getting applicants to think beyond their "first costs" to long-term or operational costs.

Angus noted Cambridge and Boston as cities doing work related to embodied carbon, in part to meet climate action plan goals.

"All these measures that are incorporated to reduce carbon end up producing more resilient buildings that are stronger, able to withstand longer power outages and more frequent and intense storms that are coming with climate change," Angus said.

"Our mindset is to show [developers] how this is going to benefit them as well — not just our goals, but how it's going to meet their goals."

— *Meredith Gabrilka*

New Bedford

City and region have new roadmap to address homelessness

In late September, New Bedford Mayor John Mitchell released a report about a city-commissioned study that analyzed New Bedford's response to homelessness, recognizing the city's achievements while providing recommendations for improvement and the development of best practices.

Consulting firm Technical Assistance Collaborative, which conducted the study, grouped its recommendations into four areas: Diversify Housing and Services, Use Policy Levers to Maximize Housing Resources, Invest in the Service Provider Network, and Strengthen Continuum of Care Governance.

"Homelessness is a complex and ever-evolving challenge," the mayor said in a [prepared statement](#), "and we need to constantly strive to update and improve our approach to helping those who experience it."

Mitchell said the report "validates many of our current practices, but also offers valuable new strategies that will enable us to raise our game, so that our fellow residents can have a better chance to get their lives back on track."

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Around the Commonwealth

COMMONWEALTH

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The report was published a few months after the Greater Bristol County/Attleboro/Taunton Coalition to End Homelessness was consolidated with the New Bedford Continuum of Care to create the Bristol County Continuum of Care. The new agency provides services to all of Bristol County with the exception of Fall River, which has its own Continuum of Care.

Joshua Amaral, New Bedford's housing and community development director, said city officials identified the need for longer-term solutions following dialogue with local homelessness care providers. By merging into one Continuum of Care, area officials are able to address regional homelessness and develop solutions that have an impact on a much larger population.

New Bedford officials and local care providers needed "to start looking down the road and planning for the future so we don't have this immediate urgent need, and we don't have to find the money each year," Amaral said.

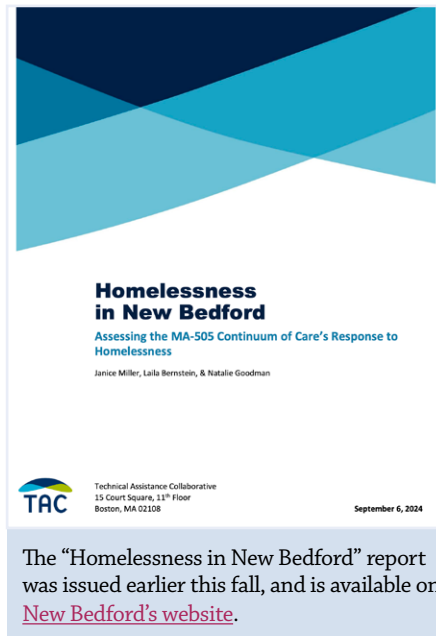
"We wanted to get out of the short-term, Band-Aid type fixes," he said, adding that the winter months are when the city was "always trying to come up with a plan for overflow shelter."

"It's good to have a system that meets our needs, that's strategic and thoughtful," he said, "but that requires building capacity and understanding the right levers to pull."

Amaral said Mayor Mitchell was involved in the process at the outset, and favored bringing in outside expertise for the study and identified the American Rescue Plan Act as a funding source.

"He's committed to making the interventions that need to happen, happen," Amaral said. "He believes that we need to be working collaboratively throughout the region and help people have the quality of life that they deserve."

The report's Diversify Housing and Services category lists action items such as expanding permanent housing supply and rehousing/transitional care models, leveraging existing partnerships, and



shifting shelter and emergency service models to "non-congregate, service-rich programming."

Amaral said "one obvious takeaway" from the study is that the shelter system and housing systems for those who are homeless "are overwhelmed by demand throughout the region."

Easing the strain will mean building additional shelter space and permanent housing capacity in Bristol County, while also aiding service providers in developing capacity to meet local needs.

Angela Clarke, program director for Community Counseling of Bristol County, also identified the shelter system as a critical component of the next planning phase.

"We're just shuffling people around cities without really giving them an opportunity to even go into shelter if they wanted to," said Clarke, who has extensive experience working in social services in the region.

The report recommends that New Bedford enforce landlord requirements and implement incentives, and leverage the Violence Against Women Act for housing retention among survivors. In addition, the city is encouraged to partner with the region's housing authorities to set homeless preferences and target affordable housing development at all

income levels, with set-asides for people exiting homelessness and a pipeline of targeted permanent supportive housing.

The report recommends strengthening the community within the Continuum of Care through both communication and partnering with local providers and those who have been homeless, a partnership that Amaral and Clarke said would be critical in developing a successful strategy.

New Bedford and Bristol County now have a roadmap for going forward. Continuum leaders will meet in November to begin the planning process.

"It's helpful for a community to think through what can happen in the event of an emergency for residents," Amaral said. "A lot of people are two bad days away from housing insecurity or homelessness."

- [View the report](#), "Homelessness in New Bedford: Assessing the MA-505 Continuum of Care's Response to Homelessness"

- Owen Page

Boston

City tests 'green' roofs on MBTA bus shelters

Boston has added "green" roofs to 30 bus shelters along a popular route, shielding bus riders from increasingly hot weather, and better equipping neighborhoods to manage stormwater runoff and flooding risks.

As part of a three-year [demonstration program](#), Boston installed the green roofs with drought-resistant plantings in August along the MBTA's 28 bus route. By adding the greenery, Boston is hoping the roofs will provide a cooler and shadier alternative to the traditional clear roofs, serve as stormwater containers, improve air quality, and add much-needed vegetation and biodiversity to a key corridor of the city. The city believes its installation is the largest nationwide.

The city selected the 28 bus route because of its high ridership and status as one of Boston's free-fare bus routes serving more vulnerable residents, a majority of

■ COMMONWEALTH continued on 25

Around the Commonwealth

COMMONWEALTH

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whom are classified as living in low-income households. The route also traverses several inner-city neighborhoods that disproportionately experience extreme climate impacts, including heat.

“These green roofs on bus shelters are not just a representation of Boston’s progress on sustainability — they are a practical, scalable solution to some of the most pressing challenges we face as a city,” Mayor Michelle Wu said in a prepared statement.

The project involves numerous city departments and offices, including the Mayor’s Office, climate resilience, environment, green infrastructure, property management and transportation. In addition, the city has been working with the MBTA; JCDcaux, the city’s street furniture contractor and owner of the bus shelters; Social Impact Collective, a minority-owned architecture and design firm; Weston Nurseries; and the nonprofit YouthBuild Boston.

The current demonstration program has been about a year in the making, but the concept stretches back about a decade, said Zoe Davis, senior climate resilience project manager for the Office of Climate Resilience. While researching ways to provide shade and cooling at bus shelters, she said, her team discovered that Social Impact Collective had undertaken a brief



The city of Boston has installed green, vegetation-covered roofs on 30 bus shelters along a popular route to provide cooling and help manage stormwater. (Photo courtesy city of Boston/Trevor Smith at Weston Nurseries)

demonstration of green bus shelter roofs about 10 years ago.

“The original pilot only lasted for a summer,” Davis said. “We wanted to know if this type of green infrastructure on bus shelters is something that we wanted to expand, and potentially integrate, into a standard design of our bus shelters, as a part of our longer term climate resilience goals.”

The project aligns with [Heat Resilience Solutions for Boston](#), the city’s 2022 plan to protect residents and neighborhoods from the effects of extreme temperatures, and advances the city’s environmental justice goals.

Sitting atop a waterproof layer, the green roofs contain numerous types of drought-resistant sedum plant ground cover. The succulents are fairly resilient,

good at storing water and have shallow root systems, Davis said. This fall and next spring, she said, the city will add native plants to enhance the roofs’ ecological value and attractiveness to pollinators. The city is hoping the roofs attract bees, butterflies, birds and insects, she said.

Working with Social Impact Collective, the city will collect data to determine the benefits of the green roofs, examining the effects on plant growth, heat reduction and air quality; the amount of stormwater retained by the roofs; the presence of pollinators and biodiversity; and the water quality of the vegetation-filtered runoff. Davis said they are especially interested to learn what happens to the roofs over the winter months and during heavy rainfalls.

If the demonstration program goes well, the city may look to expand it to other locations. The city’s current contract for street furniture will be up in a few years, Davis said, providing an opportunity for the city to embed climate resilience needs into future contracts, and integrate climate solutions into standard design.

— Jennifer Kavanaugh

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

MIIA

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to the new insurance policy. Typically, the insurer will need time to thoroughly inspect the new facility before it can be added to the policy, so this step should occur well before completion, Batchelder said.

The end of the project is also the stage when municipalities often face their biggest challenges.

“If no plans have been made for its future, vacant and decommissioned properties can become an insurance challenge,” Batchelder said. “Because of the nature of the risk, we must often look to a specialty market to provide

coverage in order to protect the pool, and this is exponentially more expensive, with fewer coverage options.”

Vacant properties are also more vulnerable to theft, vandalism and other hazards, further complicating the municipality’s insurance risk profile and increasing costs.

DePaulo mentioned a recent case where town meeting resistance to decommissioning a local school building led to the town being forced to maintain it, including erecting a fence around the property, implementing building winterization, and paying for maintenance several times per week. Because the building was aging, vacant and near the coastline, no carrier would cover it, and the town

was forced to self-insure.

“The longer a building sits vacant, the more the condition worsens, and it becomes more likely that it will have to eventually be torn down,” he said.

Proactive measures

The decommissioning of municipal buildings requires careful planning and risk management from the beginning of the process, and planning for the old building should run concurrently with construction of the new one. By addressing the future of the old structure early on, maintaining facilities management during construction, and ensuring timely inspections and transitions, municipalities can avoid unnecessary financial and logistical burdens. ●

People



Ralph Vitacco

Ralph Vitacco became the new town administrator in Dighton on Oct. 21.

Since 2017, Vitacco had been director of planning and economic development in Sandwich, where he also served on

the Select Board from 2010 to 2016 and on the Planning Board from 2007 to 2010. Earlier in his career, he was a New York City police officer from 1986 to 1995.

Vitacco has extensive experience in the private sector, including as assistant vice president and business development sales manager for the Cooperative Bank of Cape Cod from 2003 to 2017, and as a newsprint purchasing manager for Parade Publications from 1996 to 2003. He has a bachelor's degree in political science and government from Hunter College, and a master's degree in public administration from Suffolk University. He's also a graduate of the MMA-Suffolk Municipal Finance Management Seminar.

In Dighton, Vitacco replaces **Michael Mullen**, who left in June, after three years in the role, to become the director of planning and economic development in Plainville. **James Purcell** served as the interim town administrator.



Stephanie Bacon

Stephanie Bacon will become the new town administrator in Northborough on Nov. 4, returning to a town where she had served previously.

Bacon has been the assistant town manager and human resources director in Holden since January 2018. She was the health director in Northborough from 2015 through 2017, and has also served as the health director in Medway and Barre, and has done environmental and civil engineering work in the private

sector. She served on the Rutland Board of Selectmen from 2015 to 2018, was a member of the Massachusetts Health Officers Association, and has served on numerous local, regional and statewide committees and commissions. She has a bachelor's degree in regional planning from Westfield State University, and a master's degree in public administration from Anna Maria College.

In Northborough, Bacon replaces **Tim McInerney**, who left the position last month. Assistant Town Administrator **Diane Wackell** has been serving as the interim town administrator.



Andrew Levine

Andrew Levine, who has been serving as the chief of staff in Newburyport since January 2002, will become the new town administrator in Hatfield on Nov. 12.

Levine has also served as director of administrative services in Billerica, and spent four years at MassDevelopment, as a program and project manager and as an operations officer. He served for a year as the government relations coordinator for the Edward Kennedy Institute for the U.S. Senate, and was an outreach director and site director for Match Education. He has a bachelor's degree in government from Georgetown University, and a master's degree in public policy from the Harvard Kennedy School.

In Hatfield, Levine is taking the place of longtime Town Administrator **Marlene Michonski**, who is retiring after having served in the role from 2002 until 2010, and then from 2015 until this year.

On Oct. 1, Needham Town Manager **Kate Fitzpatrick** was named to the 2024 class of National Academy of Public Administration fellows.

Fitzpatrick was named one of 42 fellows by the academy, a nonprofit established in 1967 to help government leaders build "more effective, efficient,



Kate Fitzpatrick

accountable, and transparent organizations." Choosing from among public managers, political leaders, scholars, labor leaders, business executives and others, the academy selects fellows for their contributions to the field of public

administration and policy, and for their ability to address current and emerging issues and contribute to the discourse on government.

The 2024 fellows will be inducted during the annual **Academy Fall Meeting**, to be held Nov. 13-15 in Washington, D.C. They will join more than 1,000 existing fellows.

Fitzpatrick has been serving in Needham for almost 35 years. She has been town manager since 2005, and before that served as town administrator, assistant town administrator and personnel director.



Claire Freda

Claire Freda, a longtime Leominster city councillor and former MMA president, has been appointed chair of the Mount Wachusett Community College Board of Trustees.

Gov. **Maura Healey** made the appointment in July, following the retirement of Robert Antonioni from the board. Freda has served on the MWCC board since 2017, and presided over her first board meeting in August.

Now in her 16th term on the Leominster City Council, Freda had served on the Leominster School Committee from 1987 to 1994. She has long been involved in the leadership of the MMA and the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association. She was the MMA's president in 2000, and currently serves on the MMA Board of Directors.

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Thomas McGee

Former Lynn Mayor **Thomas McGee** is the new chair of the MBTA Board of Directors, following **Thomas Glynn's** departure from the board on Nov. 1.

Last month, Gov. **Maura Healey** announced the

appointment of McGee, who has served on the board since April 2023. He has also served on the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Board of Directors since June 2023.

McGee was the mayor of Lynn from 2018 to 2022. He served four terms in the House of Representatives before being elected to the Senate in 2002. He was the Senate chair of the Joint Committee on Transportation from 2011 to 2018.

The other MBTA Board members are Transportation Secretary **Monica Tibbitts-Nutt**, Quincy Mayor **Thomas Koch**, Framingham Mayor **Charlie Sisitsky**, **Robert Butler**, **Eric Goodwine**, **Mary Skelton Roberts** and **Chanda Smart**. Another appointment is expected shortly to fill Glynn's place.

Several municipal officials and employees from around the state received recognition from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 as part of [MassLive's 2024 tribute to the state's Hispanic and Latino leaders](#) during [Hispanic Heritage Month](#). The news organization had asked readers to

nominate Hispanic and Latino leaders for their important contributions, and then published profiles of the nominees throughout the month.

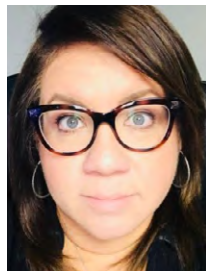
Philip Avila received the honor as Amherst's assistant



Philip Avila

director of diversity, equity, and inclusion. He was previously chair of Amherst's Human Rights Commission, and served on the Community Safety and Social Justice Committee. He also worked as the community meals coordinator at the Amherst Survival Center from 2020 to 2023.

Springfield Councillor **Victor Davila** was recognized for his service to the city. He was first elected to the council in 2019, representing Ward 6. According to MassLive, he is a full-time paramedic and the first Latino of Puerto Rican heritage to be elected as his ward's representative.



Gladys Oyola-Lopez

Springfield City Clerk **Gladys Oyola-Lopez** was honored for her decades of service in local and state government. She was appointed clerk in 2021, and has spent the past two decades working for the city, in a variety of election-related

roles. She has also worked as a legislative staff member in the House of Representatives, and as an office manager at UMass Amherst.

Springfield Police Sgt. **Naomi Reyes** was recognized as the first Hispanic woman to achieve the rank of sergeant in the department. She previously served as a military police officer in the Army National Guard.



Alexandra Valdez

Alexandra Valdez was honored as Boston's first director of cultural affairs. Mayor **Michelle Wu** announced Valdez's appointment in August, and the Cultural Affairs Office was created as part of a restructuring of existing City Hall departments to better serve and support Boston's cultural communities. Valdez most recently served as executive director of the Mayor's Office of Women's

Advancement.

Due to a technological quirk this year, three MMA members from western Massachusetts can claim the honors of being the first registrants for the upcoming Connect 351 conference in January.



Marie Ryan

On Oct. 1, the official opening of registration, West Stockbridge Town Administrator **Marie Ryan** was the first registrant at 7:59 a.m. Ryan, who has served in her current role since 2019, was registering for her fourth MMA annual conference.

"I always try to register first thing when attending any conference to assure I don't miss the deadline and forget to register!" Ryan told the MMA recently. "It is important to attend conferences. I am a firm believer that you can always learn more, so continuing education is important to me."

Ryan said she particularly enjoys attending the Women Elected Municipal Officials Leadership Luncheon, seeing friends, networking, learning new ways to approach local government needs, and attending the Trade Show, where "I get a lot of good ideas."



Nicole LaChapelle

While Ryan was the first to register after the official opening of registration, Easthampton Mayor **Nicole LaChapelle** and her executive assistant, **Lindsay Sekula**, managed to register in September while the MMA was



Lindsay Sekula

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conducting a pre-launch test of its registration system.

“Talk about excitement!” said Sekula, explaining their early signups. “Mayor LaChapelle and I both recognize that this is an event not to be missed.”

Sekula said she is particularly excited to connect with her colleagues from the MMA’s new Massachusetts Municipal Communicators group. Connect 351, she said, “offers an invaluable chance for local officials to share insights and discover effective solutions to the challenges our communities face,” and helps people build connections and gather valuable resources and ideas while exploring beneficial products and services.

“The MMA keeps staff and elected officials connected in ways I never imagined possible in my work life,” Sekula said. “The conference is always a fun opportunity to connect with colleagues, share ideas, and make connections.”



Susan Kay

Susan Kay, the first woman to serve as mayor of Weymouth, died on Oct. 17 at age 74.

Kay became Weymouth’s second mayor, in 2008, and served two terms through 2015. She served as an

at-large city councilor from 2002 to 2007, and, when Weymouth was still a town, served on the Board of Selectmen, as a clerk to the selectmen, as a member of the Personnel Board and the Appropriations Committee, and as a Town Meeting member. A soccer enthusiast, she was deeply involved in Weymouth Youth Soccer and helped build the organization’s success.

In 2017, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women named Kay an unsung heroine.

Former Amesbury Mayor **Kenneth Gray** died on Oct. 22 at age 74.

Gray served three terms as mayor, from



Kenneth Gray

2014 to 2020. After leaving the mayor’s office, he moved to North Andover, where he was a member of the town’s Finance Committee at the time of his death. Earlier in his career, he worked in several

semiconductor equipment industry, and was the founder and CEO of Northwave Technology. An antique car enthusiast, he founded Amesbury’s Carriagetown Car Show in 2016, turning it into an annual event that raises money for local nonprofits.

Rep. **Susan Williams Gifford**, a former Wareham Select Board member who served more than two decades in the House of Representatives, died of cancer on Oct. 22 at age 64.

Gifford, the House minority whip, represented the 2nd Plymouth District (Middleborough, Carver and Wareham). First elected to the House in 2002, she was the ranking minority member on the House Committee on Steering, Policy and



Susan Williams Gifford

Scheduling and the Joint Committee on Agriculture. She also served on the House Committee on Human Resources and Employee Engagement.

She served on Wareham’s Select Board from 1999 to 2002, and served

the town in a number of volunteer roles, including the Marine Resources Commission, the Affirmative Action Committee, the Cemetery Commission, and the Cable Advisory Board.

Before being elected to the Legislature, Gifford worked as an insurance consultant with Boston-based Insurance Overload Systems, where she had managed workers’ compensation claims for victims of the Sept. 11 World Trade Center attacks.

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.



WLG hits the books

Women Leading Government holds its first virtual book group on Oct. 18, with more than 30 participants. WLG members discussed Joanne Lipman’s 2019 book, “That’s What She Said: What Men and Women Need to Know About Working Together.” The highly interactive hour touched on everything from power poses to career advancement. WLG’s next event, on Nov. 7 in Wrentham, will focus on de-escalation strategies.

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CAREERS AT MMA/MIIA

Enrollment and Eligibility Representative MMA/MIIA

The Massachusetts Municipal Association and the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association are seeking an Enrollment and Eligibility Representative to join the MIIA Health Benefits Trust Team. The nonpartisan Massachusetts Municipal Association is the recognized voice of local government across the state, advancing cities and towns as centers of excellence in our economy and society. The MMA provides high-impact services to its member cities and towns statewide, including advocacy, policy research and analysis, multi-faceted education and training, multi-platform publications and nationally recognized municipal service programs. As a membership organization, the MMA works to advance the interests of all cities and towns, uniting local leaders to promote local government policies and programs that build strong communities. The Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association provides property, liability, workers compensation, and group health insurance to cities and towns in Massachusetts. MIIA is a nonprofit organization and subsidiary of MMA. About MIIA Health Benefits Trust: The Trust provides insurance coverage for the employees and retirees of 180 cities, towns, and other municipal entities in Massachusetts. The Trust is the largest municipal joint purchasing association in New England and one of the largest and most successful in the nation. About the position: Under the general direction of the Health Benefits Trust Operations Manager, this position works to enroll members into the Trust. The Enrollment and Eligibility Representative is responsible for reviewing enrollment applications for completeness and eligibility; entering enrollment data into the Health Trust database; working with our insurance partner to ensure proper enrollment of members; researching and resolving health claims problems on behalf of members; and responding to questions and inquiries regarding eligibility and enrollment. Qualifications: A college degree or courses is preferred but not required. Knowledge normally acquired through the completion of course work and an ability to quickly come up to speed on health insurance, health care claims, benefits, the enrollment environment and knowledge of laws, rules, and regulations related to health insurance for Massachusetts' municipalities. Work environment: Our offices are located in Boston's Government Center neighborhood. The position offers a very competitive salary, terrific benefits, and a great collaborative work culture. It is a mostly remote position with a handful of in office days throughout the year. If you are ready to devote yourself to work on behalf of our member cities and towns, then this position may be for you. Timeline: The successful applicant will be available to start in Fall 2024. Applications will be considered on an ongoing basis until the position is filled. How to apply: Please send a PDF of your cover letter and resume to hr@mma.org.

The MMA and MIIA are committed to diversity in the workplace and are proud to be equal opportunity employers. Diverse candidates are encouraged to apply.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, genetics information, pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition, disability, age, or military or veteran status.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Director of Senior Services Town of Pembroke

The town of Pembroke seeks qualified candidates for the full-time position of Director of Senior Services. Please see attached [job description](#). Applicants are invited to submit resumes to the Director of Community Services, Lance Kennedy, at 128 Center St., or LKennedy@townofpembroke.mass.org. This full-time position is 40 hours per week and has a salary range of \$58,930-\$66,458. Resumes will be accepted until the position is filled. AA/EOE

Director of Planning and Community Development City of Easthampton

The city of Easthampton is a small city with a thriving and vibrant community, increasing economic growth, expanding housing production, and a focus on enhancing all forms of infrastructure. The city is seeking the right candidate to help it fulfill established goals and create a vision for the future. The ideal candidate will have experience overseeing staff, applying for and managing grants, and fostering a sense of community. Salary: \$79,000-\$95,000 annually, 37.5 hours per week. Monday through Thursday. To see the full position posting and apply, visit easthamptonma.gov.

Assistant Town Clerk Town of West Brookfield

The town of West Brookfield is looking for a part-time

Assistant Town Clerk for the Town Clerk's office. Candidates must have a high school diploma and at least two years' experience in a similar work environment. Responsibilities include providing administrative support including the maintenance of vital records, voter registration, licensing and assistance in the preparation, staffing and supervision of elections and Town Meetings. A full job description and application are available on the West Brookfield website, www.wbrookfield.com/board-openings-job-opportunities. Applications should be submitted to bgobeille@wbrookfield.com. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Salary is \$20.07 per hour (19 hrs.).

Planning Director Town of Amherst

Are you a dynamic and creative leader looking to make a significant impact in a vibrant and growing community? As our Planning Director you will have the exciting opportunity to engage in transformative community development projects. There is a lot going on in Amherst, including development of new commercial and residential projects, improvements to our parks and commons, preservation of our open spaces, construction of affordable housing, and much more. Our town is home to three distinguished colleges – Amherst College, Hampshire College, and the flagship campus of the University of Massachusetts – creating a collaborative environment filled with fresh ideas and innovative solutions. If you're passionate about fostering inclusive, sustainable development and making a lasting impact, we invite you to help us shape the future of our community! Qualifications: Master's degree in urban, rural, or regional planning or a related field. Four to six years' experience in municipal planning, two years of which was in a supervisory capacity. Or any equivalent combination of education and experience demonstrating knowledge and ability to perform duties. Compensation: \$95,844-\$128,806 commensurate with experience and qualifications.

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Classified advertising rates and information

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

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

Classified advertising rates

Classified ad rates include publication in The

Beacon and on www.mma.org, though a discount is available for those who request placement of an ad only 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.

December Beacon

Deadline: November 26
Publication: December 4

January 2025 Beacon

Deadline: December 27
Publication: January 6

Placing an ad

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

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

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

See www.mma.org for details.

Classified Advertisements

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Visit www.amherstma.gov/Jobs.aspx for the full job 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.

Planning and Land Use Administrator Town of Freetown

This is a full-time position (36 hours); hourly pay rate according to union contract (Step One: \$28.00/hour) will work assisting the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Conservation Commission. Associates degree in field related to community planning and land use, environmental science. Working knowledge of: local government planning, zoning and related laws; symbols and techniques used in community planning work; ability to explain planning drawings, maps specifications, legal descriptions and ordinances; establish and maintain cooperative working relationships. Demonstrative secretarial, bookkeeping and computer skills; excellent communication skills a must. Apply at freetownma.gov/jobs and send resume and cover letter to lsouza@freetownma.gov

Police Officer

Town of Concord

The town of Concord, MA is accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. The Concord Police Department is committed to accountability, customer service, ethical action, excellence and teamwork. Applicants must have received certification from a full-time police officer training academy recognized by the Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC). Out-of-State applicants: contact MPTC for eligibility requirements. Position requires equivalent to two years of college; bachelor's degree in related field or public safety experience preferred. Must have ability to obtain and maintain MA License to Carry Firearms. Full range: \$26.53-35.50/hour, with additional pays/stipends including educational incentive, shift differentials for evening/night time shifts, an annual clothing allowance, specialty pay for certain positions and longevity payments. As a condition of employment, successful candidates must be, and remain, a non-smoker. In addition, employees shall be required to reside within 20 miles of the limits of the town of Concord, as measured from the closest border limits of Concord to the closest border limits of the city or town in which the employee lives. Open until filled. For more information and to apply, visit concordma.gov/jobs or contact Human Resources at 978-318-3025. EEOE

Building Commissioner

Town of Harwich

The town of Harwich is seeking a qualified Building Commissioner to join our Community Development Team. Full-time position, 35 hours per week. Annual salary commensurate with experience ranging from \$87,639-107,994. Attractive benefits package, union position. Please see full job description and application instructions at www.harwich-ma.gov/963/Employment-Opportunities. Contact Assistant Town Administrator Meggan Eldredge with any questions at meldredge@harwich-ma.gov or 508-430-7513

Treasurer/Collector

Town of West Tisbury

The town of West Tisbury is seeking to hire a 40 hour/

week Treasurer/Collector. The position reports to the Select Board. This employee performs professional administrative and technical work involving the receipt, custody, disbursement, investment, and borrowing of funds, and preparation of related records and reports. Department administration includes the management of all town funds, payroll, benefits management, investments, billing and collection of all real estate and motor vehicle excise taxes and other revenues due to the town, the tax title and foreclosure process, borrowing, budgetary and town-wide capital management. Performs certain management processes related to retirement, payroll and benefits. Minimum qualifications: bachelor's degree in financial management, accounting, business administration, or a related field; three to five years of progressively responsible municipal experience in accounting or financial management; or any equivalent combination of education and experience. Must be bondable with a surety company authorized to conduct business in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This is a benefited position. Full job description and required application form can be found on the town's website at www.westtisbury-ma.gov, or by calling 508-696-0102. Starting rate begins at \$51.58/hr. The job will begin Jan. 2. Resume and applications must be returned by Nov. 7 at noon. EOE

Working Foreman

Town of Barre

The town of Barre DPW-Highway Department is seeking qualified applicants for the immediate full-time position of Working Foreman. Applicants must have a valid Massachusetts Driver's License Class B (CDL) with DOT Medical Examination Certification and a Hoisting Engineer License Class 2A with DOT Medical Examination Certification. A full job description with minimum requirements and employment application is available upon request from the Department of Public Works. This position is a union position and the current classification is a PW-4 with a minimum hourly rate of \$30.99/hour and the maximum hourly rate of \$37.57/hour. Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest and an employment application to: Town of Barre, Henry Woods Building, 40 West St., Barre MA 01005 or email at townadmin@townofbarre.com AA/EOE

Town Administrator

Town of West Boylston

The town of West Boylston (population 7,806) seeks an experienced and innovative leader who has successfully managed people, has strong financial acumen, supports excellent customer service, holds self and others accountable, and encourages collaboration between departments. Nestled on the shores of the Wachusett Reservoir and located just north of Worcester, this charming community provides a beautiful natural setting with many recreational activities and protected open space with easy access to the high-quality cultural assets and educational opportunities offered in central Massachusetts. Residents cherish the community's historic roots, family-oriented neighborhoods, small businesses and high-ranking schools. Led by a five-member Select Board, and Open Town Meeting form of government, the Administrator is the town's chief administrative and operating officer and oversees a municipal operating budget of approximately \$30 million. The Town Administrator will support and advise the Select Board and manage the day-to-day municipal operations. Candidates should

have a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in public administration or a related field and experience as a municipal manager/administrator or assistant, or an equivalent public or private sector level of leadership experience. A position profile and job description may be found at www.westboylston-ma.gov. The salary range is \$140,000 +/-, depending on qualifications and experience. Submit cover letter and resume as a single PDF to townadmin@westboylston-ma.gov. Preference will be given to resumes received by Nov. 8. West Boylston is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Master Mechanic

Town of Hanson

The town of Hanson seeks a qualified applicant for the position of full-time Master Mechanic. The work shift is a minimum of 40 hours per week plus additional hours as participation in town-wide weather or emergency operations is required. Pay Range: \$27.40-\$31.27 per hour. Work Shift: Monday-Friday 7 a.m.-3 p.m. To obtain the required employment application form, job description and further information regarding this position, visit the [town of Hanson website](http://townofhanson.com), contact the Highway Department Office at 781-293-2822, or email Highway@Hanson-ma.gov. Applications will be accepted through Highway@Hanson-ma.gov, or at the Highway Office, 797 Indian Head St., Hanson, MA 02341.

Stormwater Manager

Town of Hudson

Under the general supervision of the Public Works Director, the Stormwater Manager will be responsible for completing tasks necessary to maintain the town's compliance with NPDES, MS4 and other stormwater related permits. This position will assist with a variety of project management tasks, data collection, data management and reporting in a variety of areas. May supervise lower level staff when necessary. Please see our website for details: www.townofhudson.org/home/pages/job-opportunities. Position is open until filled.

Assistant Public Works Director

Town of Amherst, N.H.

This highly responsible position performs administrative work and provides management assistance to the Public Works Director. This position is responsible for all divisions and functions of the Public Works Department in the absence of the Director. The position will focus on engineering and environmental-related matters. Key Responsibilities: preparing concise and accurate reports, contracts, and policies, including financial, and budgetary; municipal environmental requirements including MS4 and Multi-Sector General Permit; managing operations and maintenance of the Baboosic Lake Community septic system. Qualifications: Four-year college degree in civil/environmental engineering or related field, valid NH driver's license, NH Grade 2 Wastewater operator license (preferred), NH License professional engineer (preferred), LPA Certificate (preferred) or any combination of training, education, and experience that demonstrates the required knowledge skills, and abilities of which at least three years of experience were at a management or supervisory level. Application Process: A detailed job description and employment application can be found at www.amherstnh.gov/public-works/news/employment-opportunities and a town of Amherst Employment Application can be found at the top of this page. To apply, please

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contact Jennifer Stover at jstover@amherstnh.gov or 603-673-6041 Ext. 210. This position will remain open until filled. Salary: \$94,952-\$111,155 DOQ.

Town Accountant

Town of Tisbury

The town of Tisbury (population 4,740) is seeking an experienced, thoughtful, and skilled accountant to serve as its Town Accountant. Must have bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, business administration or related field and five years of progressively responsible experience in accounting. Salary \$125,000 +/-, commensurate with experience. The Town Accountant will perform the duties and responsibilities of the Town Accountant as defined by Massachusetts General Laws, including administrative and supervisory duties, technical accounting, financial, and computerize functions in maintaining the municipal accounting system and other reporting and related work required in discharging the duties of the office. The Accounting Department is part of the Finance Division under the supervision of the Finance Director who serves as Treasurer and Tax Collector. The operating budget is \$38 million dollars. The successful candidate will have demonstrated skills and abilities in public accounting, use of technology and knowledge of relevant accounting laws and standards. Interested candidates should send a town application available on the town website under Human Resource, cover letter and resume to Pam Bennett at pbennett@tisburyma.gov open until filled. For a full job description, visit www.tisburyma.gov, under Human Resources, Job Opportunities.

Traffic Engineer

Town of Weymouth

The town of Weymouth is currently accepting applications for a Traffic Engineer in the Department of Planning. Under the direction of the Director of Planning prepares traffic studies and reports. Investigates complaints and collects documents for the installation of traffic control devices and determines the capacity and safety of roadways for vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle travel. Prepares, reviews and coordinates the utilization of data from various traffic impact plans relative to new developments and the overall integrity of the town's master traffic plan. Represents the town in transportation and traffic engineering matters involving regional, state and federal agencies, organizations and developers. Coordinates town transportation requirements with various funding sources, which can assist with the subsidizing of the problem's resolution. Develops programs to mitigate traffic congestion, improve travel safety by all modes, and achieve environmental objectives. Upgrades and maintains knowledge and expertise in the field through continuing education. Visit www.weymouth.ma.us/human-resources, Employment Opportunities, for a full description. In order to be considered, the candidates must possess a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering; seven to 10 years of traffic engineering experience preferably within a municipal/state government environment; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. A master's degree is preferred. Special requirements: Registration as a Professional Civil Engineer in Massachusetts required, Professional Traffic Operations Engineer certification and Road Safety Professional certification preferred. The salary range for this position is \$89,916.03 to \$110,821.71.

Interested candidates should forward their resume along with a cover letter to Human Resources, Town of Weymouth, 111 Middle St., Weymouth, MA 02189 Attn: Human Resources no later than Tuesday, Nov. 5. The town of Weymouth is an EEO/AA employer.

Building Commissioner

Town of Barre

The town of Barre is seeking a Building Commissioner who will oversee the regulatory and compliance as compliance aspects of building and construction activities. This role ensures all construction projects adhere to town and state building codes, zoning laws, and safety regulations. The Building Commissioner will lead in enforcing standards, reviewing construction plans, issuing permits, and conducting inspections. This position requires strong leadership skills, in-depth knowledge of building regulations, and a commitment to public safety, customer service, and community development. The qualified candidate will have bachelor's degree in construction management, architecture, engineering, or related field, and three to five years of related experience; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience or in the alternative, a two-year associate degree in engineering related to building construction or design, or an equivalent combination of education and experience approved by the Board of Building Regulations and Standards, Massachusetts Building Commissioner Certification, Massachusetts Motor Vehicle Operator's License, CSL - Construction Supervisor License. This position is part-time, in person, expected to work six to ten hours/wk. Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest and resume to: Town of Barre, Henry Woods Building, 40 West St., Suite 697, Barre, MA 01005 or email townadmin@townofbarre.com. AA/EOE

Director of Community Development

Town of Orange

The town of Orange Community Development office is seeking a full-time Director. Position operates under the direction of the Town Administrator and is responsible for planning, organizing, directing, integrating, and coordinating all town of Orange planning and community and economic development initiatives and activities. The town of Orange offers a wide array of benefits available to full-time employees which include 70% Employer Paid health, dental and life insurance. We also offer retirement plans and supplemental insurances for additional life insurance, short and long-term disability, cancer and accidental policies, etc. The town of Orange is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Job open until filled.

Assistant Traffic Engineer

City of Quincy

The Assistant Traffic Engineer performs traffic engineering and project management in connection with traffic signal maintenance, construction oversight, work zone compliance, plan review, and traffic engineering analysis and design. Bachelor's degree in civil engineering or related field and five years of professional engineering experience on transportation engineering or closely related field required. EIT Registration required, Professional Engineer (PE) Registration in Massachusetts or ability to receive within six months preferred, IMSA Work Zone Safety and Traffic Signal 1 certification preferred. Non-union position with excellent benefits. Salary range \$95,000-\$102,000. Please contact Human Resources for a full job description and entrance requirements.

Deputy Director of Planning

Town of Nantucket

The town of Nantucket seeks an experienced professional for the position of Deputy Director of Planning. Under the direction of the Director of Planning and the NP&EDC, the Deputy supports the operation of the Planning and Land Use Services Department. The Deputy responsibilities include, but are not limited to, developing programs and initiatives in the areas of land use, growth management, code compliance, health, historic preservation, building, environmental protection, open space preservation, transportation and traffic management, affordable housing, and economic development. The Deputy may supervise employees under the Planning and Land Use Services Department and act as an advisor to town boards and committees. Desired Qualifications: A degree in urban and regional planning or a related field with five to seven years of progressively responsible experience in city or regional planning or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions of the position. Experience may include the areas of land use management, transportation, community facilities and services, housing, economic development, open space reservation and environmental quality. The Deputy should be certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners which requires certain experience and qualifications and the passing of a professional exam. If not certified at time of hire, the Deputy shall obtain certification within three years of hire. Position Details: 40 hours per week; non-union exempt position; annual salary commensurate with experience \$121,500-\$148,500; the town actively secures housing for town employees relocating to Nantucket. Application Deadline: Nov. 30 at 4 p.m. Visit www.governmentjobs.com/careers/nantucket to apply online. Benefits Offered: retirement pension through Barnstable County Retirement; 90% employer-sponsored health insurance plan options; diverse selection of supplemental insurance policies. Equal Opportunity Employer Statement: The town of Nantucket is an Equal Opportunity Employer, a D.E.I. community, and encourages women, minorities, and veterans to apply. Contact Information: For inquiries, please contact HR@nantucket-ma.gov.

Transportation Planner

Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

The Northern Middlesex Council of Governments is one of thirteen regional planning agencies within Massachusetts. NMCOG works with the communities of the Greater Lowell region to support and enhance a wide range of planning objectives related to land use, environmental protection, energy, economic development, housing, public health, public safety, municipal service delivery and transportation. NMCOG maintains a staff of professional planners to assist member communities in designing, facilitating, and implementing community development programs and planning initiatives which further the interests of the overall region. Learn more: [Transportation Planner I or II](#).

DPW Assistant Chief Water Operator

Town of Barre

The town of Barre DPW, Water Department, is seeking qualified applicants for the immediate full-time position of Assistant Chief Water Operator. A full job description is available upon request. Applicants must possess a minimum of a MA Grade 1

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CLASSIFIEDS

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Water Distribution License and MA Grade 1 Water Treatment License. This position is a Union position and classified as PW3. The minimum rate is \$27.98/hour and the maximum hourly rate is \$33.70/hour. Interested applicants can submit a letter of interest to: Town Administrator's Office, Henry Woods Building, 40 West St., Suite 697, Barre, MA 01005 or electronically to townadmin@townofbarre.com. AA/EOE

Public Health Nurse South Shore 5 Public Health Alliance hosted by town of Rockland

The South Shore 5 Public Health Alliance, hosted by the town of Rockland, is seeking a part-time Public Health Nurse to join their dedicated team. This position involves providing essential public health services, including health assessments, community outreach, education, and disease prevention across five towns: Hanover, Marshfield, Norwell, Pembroke, and Rockland. The role requires 15-19 hours per week, with varying commitments in each town based on need. Applicants must hold a bachelor's degree in nursing, be certified by the Massachusetts Board of Registered Nurses, and have three to five years of experience in public health or general nursing programs. The ideal candidate will manage and report communicable diseases through the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN), coordinate public health clinics, contribute to immunization efforts, and collaborate with community partners to address service gaps. Familiarity with state public health systems, such as MAVEN and the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS), is preferred. Candidates should have strong organizational skills, the ability to work independently, and the capacity to handle emergency situations with calm efficiency. The hourly wage for this position is \$38-\$40, and applicants are encouraged to submit a resume and cover letter to careers@bmstrategies.com. The full job description can be viewed at www.rockland-ma.gov/184/Employment-Opportunities. This position will remain open until filled. The South Shore 5 Public Health Alliance is committed to equal opportunity employment and encourages applicants from all backgrounds to apply.

SERVICES

Municipal Energy Services

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

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@town-alert.com, 207-713-4302, www.town-alert.com, 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

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

Human Capital Solutions

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

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

VADAR Systems provides financial management software to more than 100 Massachusetts municipalities. Our accounting, cloud, utility and collections applications are designed exclusively for Massachusetts municipalities by Massachusetts end users. The VADAR Cloud maximizes efficiency with 24/7 secure, remote access to all your applications from any device. Our user support offers unparalleled expertise. Proudly serving Massachusetts for 20-plus years. For a free on-site demonstration, please contact us at 877-823-2700 or sales@vadar-systems.com. Learn more at www.VADARsystems.com. 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 long-term claims. We offer training in sexual harassment, social media and the "just cause analysis" to municipal managers. We also serve as appointed hearing officers on a case-by-case basis. Many of our clients take advantage of a flat monthly rate for unlimited phone calls and emails, which encourages key managers to work with counsel prior to making critical personnel decisions. Check our website at CliffordKennyLaw.com to see a complete list of our satisfied clients or call John Clifford or Jaime Kenny at 781-924-5796 for more information.

Executive Recruitment and Municipal Management

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

Municipal 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@mrigrv.com.

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CLASSIFIEDS

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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 www.petrinilaw.com or contact Christopher Petrini at cpetrini@petrinilaw.com or 508-665-4310.

Tax Title Legal Services

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

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

Human Resources Consulting

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

Organizational Development and Conflict Resolution

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

Municipal Accounting and Consulting Services

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

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; mmacinc@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; www.communityparadigm.com. ●



STAM holds fall meeting

Forty-five members of Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts gather for the group's fall meeting in Southwick on Oct. 24. Presenters included Jennifer Thompson from Capital Strategic Solutions, who discussed how to obligate American Rescue Plan Act funds; Ross Seavey, director of building and engineering education, training and code from the Office of Public Safety and Inspections at the Division of Occupational Licensure, who discussed requirements and qualifications of certified building inspectors; and Rutland Building Commissioner Harold Leaming, who covered upcoming building code changes. The administrators also heard from Allan Marsh of AllOne Health, who offered tips on bringing out the best in people. (Photo courtesy Tom Hutcheson)

Calendar



The Beacon

Massachusetts Municipal Association

3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108

NOVEMBER

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

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

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

12 MMA Board of Directors, 10-11:45 a.m., virtual. Contact: MMA Executive Assistant Courtney Butler

12 Local Government Advisory Commission, 1-2 p.m., virtual. Contact: MMA Executive Assistant Courtney Butler

13 MMA Virtual Municipal Leadership Academy, webinar, situational supervision, 12-1:30 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre

18 MMA webinar, public holiday decorations: legal considerations, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Education and Training Coordinator Kristianna Lapierre

21-22 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, fall conference, Hotel Northampton, Northampton. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

DECEMBER

4 Massachusetts Mayors' Association, holiday dinner. Contact: MMA Membership and Project Assistant Maddie Roberts

5 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, holiday meeting, virtual. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

10 Massachusetts Municipal Communicators, webinar, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Membership Director Candace Pierce

11 Massachusetts Select Board Association, virtual meeting with Massachusetts Cultural Council, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Member Program Coordinator Anneke Craig

12 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, holiday meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., The Publick House, Sturbridge. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

JANUARY

23-25 Connect 351, Boston Convention & Exhibition Center and Omni Boston Hotel, Boston. Visit connect351.org or contact MMA Conference and Meeting Planner Timmery Kuck.

FEBRUARY

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

11 MMA Board of Directors, virtual meeting, 10-11:45 a.m. Contact: MMA Executive Assistant Courtney Butler

11 Local Government Advisory Commission, virtual meeting, 1-2 p.m. Contact: MMA Executive Assistant Courtney Butler

For more information, visit www.mma.org

27 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, mini boot camp, 10 a.m.-noon, Grand View Farm, Burlington. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

MARCH

6 Women Leading Government, conference, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Lake Pearl, Wrentham. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

20 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, professional development conference, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Devens Common Center, Devens. Contact: MMA Senior Member Program Coordinator Denise Baker

26 Massachusetts Mayors' Association, meeting. Contact: MMA Membership and Project Assistant Maddie Roberts

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

MMA contacts

Denise Baker can be reached at dbaker@mma.org

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Kristianna Lapierre can be reached at klapierre@mma.org

Candace Pierce can be reached at cpierce@mma.org

Maddie Roberts can be reached at mroberts@mma.org