

The Beacon

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May 2020

Uncertainty clouds budget picture

By John Robertson

When Gov. Charlie Baker filed his fiscal 2021 budget recommendation on Jan. 22, prospects for enacting a state budget bill, and for finalizing amounts to be spent on municipal and school aid and other budget accounts, appeared to be on a normal course.

The House and Senate were expected to approve budget bills in April and May and send a final version to the governor around July 1, and state revenue assumptions would be largely based on a consensus revenue forecast adopted in late December.

By March, the COVID-19 pandemic had turned the world on its head, and the budget process for next year at the state and local levels is now characterized by extreme uncertainty about when budgets can be finalized and what levels of spending might be included.

There have been no announcements from the governor's office or the Legislature as to when the fiscal 2021 budget will be taken up or how decisions will be made on funding levels. There has been some un-

official talk, however, about a House-Senate joint budget being taken up later in the budget process and about the state starting fiscal 2021 with interim budgets. A decision on the state process may be delayed for another several weeks until a clearer picture of the state's fiscal condition emerges.

At the local level, municipal officials are revisiting almost every assumption about how to close fiscal 2020 and get started on fiscal 2021, while at the same time reinventing how local government is practiced and decisions get made.

The main reasons for the high level of budget uncertainty are the still-unfolding economic and revenue impacts resulting from actions taken to counter the pandemic, including business closures and social dis-



Rep. Aaron Michlewitz, Sen. Michael Rodrigues and Administration and Finance Secretary Michael Heffernan (l-r) hold a budget conference on April 14. (Photo by Sam Doran/State House News Service)

tancing rules. While plans are being drawn to restart economic and social activity, the timing and results are unknown.

Projecting revenues

At the consensus revenue hearing in December, the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation provided state finance officials with a "limited growth forecast" of 1.7% for fiscal 2021 after accounting for

■ BUDGET *continued on 23*

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Administration seeks municipal input as it develops plan to reopen workplaces

By John Ouellette

Moments after the April 28 announcement of a two-week extension of the state's stay-at-home advisory and non-essential business closure due to COVID-19, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito told local officials that their input will be an important part of developing a plan to gradually reopen the state's economy and workplaces.

"You're the ones that need to know that your community is safe enough for these reopenings and gatherings," she told hundreds of local officials from across the state during a weekly confer-



Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito speaks during an April 28 briefing where it was announced that the state's stay-at-home advisory and non-essential business closure were being extended to May 18. Polito spoke with local leaders immediately afterward. (Photo by Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office)

■ ADMINISTRATION *continued on 16*

2020 MMA Board of Directors

The MMA Board of Directors holds regular meetings in Boston, followed by a meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission with the administration. For information on the board's activities, call the office of MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith at 617-426-7272.

Executive Committee

Cecilia Calabrese, MMA President
Councillor, Agawam

Adam Chapdelaine, MMA Vice President
Town Manager, Arlington

Ellen Allen, MMA Immediate Past President
Selectman, Norwell

Michael Bettencourt, MSA First Vice President
Select Board Member, Winchester

Lisa Blackmer, MMCA President
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Mayor, New Bedford

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Steve Bartha, Town Manager, Danvers

Peter Christopher, Councillor, Winthrop

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Claire Freda, Councillor, Leominster

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Thomas Hutcheson, Town Administrator,
Conway

Dan Matthews, Select Board Member, Needham

David Narkewicz, Mayor, Northampton

John O'Rourke, Select Board Member, Conway

Jeovanny Rodriguez, Councillor, Lawrence

Alan Slavin, Selectman, Wareham

Peter Spellios, Select Board Member, Swampscott

Eric Steinhilber, Councillor, Barnstable

Kevin Sweet, Town Administrator, Wrentham

Arthur Vigeant, Mayor, Marlborough

Martin Walsh, Mayor, Boston

Kristi Williams, Town Manager, Westborough

Executive Director's Report

Reopening plans must provide cities, towns with clear roadmap

The COVID-19 surge continues in most parts of Massachusetts, with tens of thousands of confirmed cases, thousands of deaths, and thousands more under intensive hospital care. While this is the grim and tragic reality, it is clearly true that the leadership and actions of our local and state officials have saved thousands of lives, and protected us from much greater agony and loss.



By **Geoffrey Beckwith**

The public health interventions that cities, towns and state agencies have put in place have "flattened the curve," and protected our health care system from being overwhelmed. First responders, essential municipal employees, and local leaders have been on the front lines of this effort, and every resident of our state is abidingly grateful.

The past 60 days have brought unprecedented change that has disrupted everyday life for virtually every person we know. And all of us are realizing that the new COVID-19 reality will be with us for a long time, which means that this change will continue to impact every aspect of our economy, society and government.

Even when we get past the surge, and infection rates start to fall, the novel coronavirus will continue to be a deadly threat, especially to our most vulnerable neighbors and family members. That's why the next year – or more – will certainly

include physical distancing, face coverings and PPE, limits on social and public gatherings, intense regulation of businesses and public spaces, testing, intense hygiene and sanitation, quarantine and isolation, and more.

We cannot relax our commitment to the public health interventions and strategies that have

succeeded so far. If we retreat on what works, the loss and heartache that has hit Massachusetts will become unimaginably worse.

Yet we cannot stay at a standstill forever, sheltering in place for months and months. The lost income, lost businesses and increased poverty and financial pain would lead to many other damaging health and social declines, touching millions of our neighbors. As the surge recedes, Massachusetts must do what it can to re-engage our economy. But this must happen carefully, without endangering workers, customers, neighbors, families, and ourselves.

A safe and sustainable path

We have come to a natural tension point in this crisis, where the desire to return to normal days is increasing faster than the COVID-19 threat is falling. It will be important to moderate the impulse to run too quickly, and instead to move forward

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



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MMA member groups adjust programs during COVID

The COVID-19 public health emergency has upended the typically busy spring schedule for MMA member group meetings, a vital and popular association service.

But the groups remain connected and active, while shifting to an array of remote meetings and webinars. In some cases, groups have joined forces to offer programming of interest to a broader audience.

The following is a summary of the many adjustments being made by MMA member groups to comply with the ban on gatherings and protect the health of members.

Mayors' Association

The Massachusetts Mayors' Association generally holds in-person meetings on the third or fourth Wednesday of the month in cities around the state, but the group has shifted to briefing conference calls beginning with its scheduled meeting on March 18.

On April 15, the mayors met virtually with Administration and Finance Secretary Michael Heffernan and Sean Cronin, senior deputy commissioner at the Division of Local Services.

Mayors will be notified directly of upcoming remote meetings as details are finalized.

Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce at cpierce@mma.org

Management Association

The Massachusetts Municipal Management Association's March, April and July monthly meetings have been cancelled.

The [April program was presented as a webinar](#) jointly with Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources on its scheduled date of April 9, focusing on how to effectively manage and support employees during the ongoing crisis as well as the legal impacts of the COVID-19 emergency in the human resources arena.

On May 7, attorneys John Clifford and Jaime Kenny of Clifford & Kenny will give a remote presentation on collective bargaining, covering some of the basics of bargaining, as well as specific challenges that COVID-19 has brought to the negotiating table.

The MMA discusses COVID-19 response with members of the Massachusetts Select Board Association and the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association during an April 10 Zoom call.



John Clifford



Jaime Kenny

The next tentative in-person event is the "boot camp" for new managers on Oct. 2 at Pine Ridge Country Club in Oxford.

The group's popular annual Spring Conference, a two-day event normally held during the week of Memorial Day, has been rescheduled as a Fall Conference, set for Nov. 18-20 in Chatham.

The Management Association continues to explore what types of online and virtual training to provide to its members during the period of social distancing.

Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker at dbaker@mma.org

Select Boards

The Massachusetts Select Board Association's annual Leadership Conference, previously scheduled for June 6, will be restructured as a series of free webinars conducted over the spring and summer months.

The first of these webinars will be held

on May 20 from 2 to 3 p.m., when KP Law President Lauren Goldberg will lead a discussion about common challenges faced by municipal government, including the open meeting and public records laws, social media, and conducting public hearings. This webinar is open to all MSA members, but the discussion will be targeted to a more experienced audience.

Programming and scheduling for additional webinars, including those specifically for newly elected select board members, are still in development. Additional information will be shared in the coming weeks.

The MSA's next scheduled in-person event is a regional meeting on the morning of Sept. 11 at the Sharon Community Center.

The second annual Western Massachusetts Municipal Conference is currently scheduled to take place on Oct. 3 at The Log Cabin in Holyoke.

The [MSA partnered with the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association for a COVID-19 briefing call on April 10](#) via Zoom, which featured MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith and Legislative Director John Robertson giving a range of updates and answering member questions.

The MMA will continue to host the MSA/MMCA briefing call on a monthly basis, with the next call scheduled for

■ **MEMBER GROUPS** *continued on 19*

Municipal organizations call for \$250B federal aid

By John Ouellette

In a letter to Congressional leaders and the Trump administration on April 16, [three nationwide local government organizations urged the federal government to provide \\$250 billion in support for the local response to and recovery from COVID-19.](#)

The National Association of Counties, National League of Cities and U.S. Conference of Mayors are jointly advocating for “robust, dedicated, and flexible funding for all local governments in any interim emergency coronavirus package currently being negotiated.”

The International City/County Management Association joined the effort with an April 18 letter to congressional leaders asking for additional federal aid to help localities recover revenue losses attributable to the COVID-19 crisis.

The efforts are supported by the state municipal leagues across the country, including the MMA, which, working with the National League of Cities, has secured the support of the Massachusetts congressional delegation.

“Local and state governments face a massive fiscal crisis due to the economic freeze caused by the coronavirus pandemic,” said MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith, who also serves on the NLC’s Board of Directors. “Without direct federal aid, no state or community, including Massachusetts and our 351 cities and towns, will be able to navigate the looming crisis without unprecedented and very painful budget cuts.”

The bipartisan Coronavirus Community Relief Act (HR 6467), which has 134 co-sponsors in the House, would provide

\$250 billion in direct aid to cities and towns across the country. A matching bill is being filed in the Senate, with a dozen co-sponsors expected. The funds could be used to support essential services, make up for revenue losses, and keep communities strong during the economic downturn.

A survey of more than 2,100 local officials conducted by the National League of Cities and U.S. Conference of Mayors shows that nearly 100% of communities with populations above 50,000 will see a revenue decline this year, and more than half report that revenue declines will impact core functions, including police hiring and retention, and public safety.

The letter from the NLC, mayors’ conference and counties association states that local governments “are fighting this pandemic as partners” and provide unique services to protect public health and economic stability, “despite significant losses of revenue as a result of public health measures requiring a pause on most economic activity.”

“At the local level, the battle to contain COVID-19 is crisis-management beyond anything in recent memory. Both counties and cities are expending an unprecedented amount of resources while losing historic amounts of revenue.

“All local governments, regardless of population, urgently need direct federal funding to help us continue to fight COVID-19 and protect our residents through the summer and beyond.”

In addition to first responders (fire, EMS and police), local and county governments across the country are responsible for emergency operations centers



The United States Capitol Building

and 911 services, human services, public health departments, coroners and medical examiners, public hospitals, long-term care facilities and behavioral health departments.

The letter from the 13,000-member ICMA identified four priorities:

1. Allow all local governments, including those with a population under 500,000, to be eligible to receive direct grants for emergency COVID-19 expenditures. Amend the language in the CARES Act to include COVID-19 revenue shortfalls in the calculations.
2. Waive all cost-share requirements for FEMA grants.
3. Make state and local governments eligible for the emergency paid leave tax credits that were provided to the private sector in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.
4. Restore advance refunding of tax-exempt bonds (H.R. 2772) to free up billions of dollars that governments and nonprofits could spend on other projects. ●

MMA Board appoints new members to fill vacancies

The MMA Board of Directors on April 14 elected several new members to serve on the board.

For the Massachusetts Select Board Association, the MMA board elected Peter Spellios of Swampscott to serve as the MSA’s District 2 representative to the board, and Dan Matthews of Needham as the District 3 representative.

For the Massachusetts Municipal Councillors’ Association, Eric Steinhilber of Barnstable has been elected as the



Eric Steinhilber



Peter Christopher



Peter Spellios

District 4 representative to MMA board, and Peter Christopher of Winthrop will serve as the District 5 representative.

The new members fill seats that were vacant following the MMA Annual Meeting in January. ●

Towns reschedule meetings, elections – and wait

By Jennifer Kavanaugh

Another month of the coronavirus pandemic has brought some clarity, but still more questions for town officials planning upcoming town meetings and elections.

On April 28, Gov. Charlie Baker extended the state's stay-at-home advisory and ban on gatherings of more than 10 people for an additional two weeks. Many communities had already postponed their meetings and elections beyond May 18, but local officials said they are monitoring developments and may rethink plans as conditions evolve.

To give communities greater flexibility during the public health crisis, the state has allowed towns to reschedule pre-June 1 municipal elections until as late as June 30. Communities can also delay town meetings past June 30, the last day of the fiscal year, and submit to the state month-by-month, "one-twelfth" budgets if town meetings are unable to convene and approve fiscal 2021 budgets by June 30.

In Danvers, officials have postponed the mid-May Town Meeting until June 15, and the early-May election until June 2. Town Manager Steve Bartha said he feels confident about managing the election's safety, but the town's representative Town Meeting presents other health concerns.

"We have and will continue to closely follow the governor's guidance," Bartha said. "If in the coming weeks we see a loosening of some of the restrictions and cases continue to decline, I think we'll be feeling pretty good about the Town Meeting in mid-June. But if ... we see some of the case counts start to spike again, I think we would have some real concerns about bringing our Town Meeting members together in one place."

For the election, Danvers officials will use masks and gloves, spread out precinct check-ins at the high school, have voters stand 6 feet apart, and have a separate entrance and exit to manage foot traffic. The town is also recruiting poll workers who may fall into low-risk categories for becoming seriously ill with the virus. The town has also ordered more absentee ballots to allow for more mail-in voting.

Danvers has a large auditorium for Town Meeting, Bartha said, but could potentially move the meeting to the high school

football stadium, where Town Meeting members could spread out in the seats, and presenters could stand on the track. Bartha said the situation should be clearer in a few weeks.

New safety measures

In Eastham, Town Administrator Jacqueline Beebe said the town may be taking temperatures, giving staff personal protective equipment, and having attendees wear masks and staying apart when Town Meeting does occur. The town would provide public health instructions beforehand.

Eastham originally planned to hold its Town Meeting and election in May, but has rescheduled the events to June 15 and June 23, respectively. It has extended voting by mail to three weeks, and postponed ballot questions.

Beebe said she doesn't feel confident about the June dates. The town might still postpone the Town Meeting until Oct. 19, for a combined annual and special Town Meeting, she said, if public health warrants it.

"We should not be taking risks," Beebe said.

Littleton moved its election from May 9 to June 20. Town Administrator Nina Nazarian said the town clerk has doubled the number of precinct check-in counters, will order workers to clean pens and surfaces after each use, and will continue supplying sanitizer. The clerk is also preparing a public service announcement for community television to explain the mail-in voting process for people who don't want to vote in person.

Town Meeting triggers additional considerations. Littleton officials hope to proceed on the already delayed date of June 15, Nazarian said, and avoid the challenges of moving to a one-twelfth, month-by-month budgeting process if a fiscal 2021 budget isn't approved by June 30.

Littleton is also considering whether to meet indoors or outdoors, and whether to use handheld voting devices, Nazarian said. For an indoor meeting, people would



Steve Bartha

be seated 6 feet apart, and possibly spread out into two rooms if needed.

For a meeting at the football field, Nazarian said, the town may need to set two rain dates. Officials would remind attendees to bring bug spray, and have the field sprayed for mosquito control beforehand. Since large screens might create sun glare, the town might distribute PowerPoints and other visuals via handouts, screen sharing or other electronic means, she said.

"Once we dive deeper, we will likely have additional logistical challenges to work through," Nazarian said.

Mail-in voting

Williamstown has moved its election from May 12 to June 23, and Town Manager Jason Hoch expressed confidence about that date. This year, the town has only one contested race, for the Planning Board, and so the date change and the heavier emphasis on mail-in voting should be manageable, Hoch said.

The town has been promoting mail-in voting at public meetings, on its website and on Facebook, and officials plan to discuss the process during the town's weekly COVID-19 TV updates.

"Our expectation is we will see an increase of ballot requests by mail," Hoch said. "The additional time should allow us to make that process work reasonably smoothly and [provide an] opportunity for people who have not previously voted absentee to learn about the process and request a ballot."

Williamstown has also postponed its May 19 Town Meeting, but hasn't set a new date.

Budget uncertainty

The town of Athol has rescheduled its June 8 Town Meeting to June 29, but officials might rely on the new state law allowing the town moderator to postpone Town Meeting in 30-day increments, until they learn more about fiscal 2021 revenue projections and economic impacts, according to Town Manager Shaun Suhoski.

"The primary purpose of the Annual Meeting is setting the ensuing fiscal year budget, which would be an exercise in futility at this point," he said.

■ MEETINGS *continued on 22*

MMA staff continue to support members remotely

Due to the COVID emergency, the MMA office at One Winthrop Square in Boston remains closed, but MMA staff continue to support the important work of our members remotely.

As of mid-March, all MMA staff were given the tools and resources to work safely from home. The MMA continues to offer all of its member services, including existing and new ways to connect members to timely information on the COVID-19 crisis, training and learning opportunities to help members lead their communities, and the latest advocacy efforts on Beacon Hill.

The MIIA team is also fully engaged with trainings, informative webinars, communications about renewals, and answers to any insurance-related questions for MIIA members.

“Because the health and safety of our staff and membership is our top priority, the MMA staff will be working remotely at least until June 1,” said MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith, “and we will not produce any in-person membership meetings, either on-site or off-site, until July 1 at the earliest.”



“The MMA staff will be working remotely at least until June 1, and we will not produce any in-person membership meetings, either on-site or off-site, until July 1 at the earliest.”
– MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith

“We are working with all membership groups and affiliates to reschedule and/or rework all previously planned meetings into remote sessions or webinars as appropriate, as well as scheduling and producing new virtual/online meetings, based on the capacity of our staffing and resources.

“In-person networking and learning experiences are clearly superior to distant, remote or virtual sessions for our core members,” Beckwith continued. “However, this new format, while temporary, has the advantage of broadening our potential circle of engagement, and may attract greater participation from smaller communities and those in more distant regions. One of the MMA’s goals is to emerge from the COVID-19 emergency with a larger corps of active and engaged members in all of our groups.”

As always, members may reach any member of the MMA staff at their email address (first initial, last name @mma.org) or by calling 617- 426-7272 and the person’s extension number, which is listed on the MMA website. ●

FY21 funding round opens for Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has opened applications for a new round of [MVP Planning Grant](#) proposals.

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Planning Grants award funding to communities to complete vulnerability assessments and develop action-oriented climate resiliency plans.

The program helps communities:

- Define extreme weather and natural and climate related hazards
- Understand how their community may be impacted by climate change
- Identify existing and future vulnerabilities and strengths
- Develop, prioritize and implement key actions

State-certified MVP providers offer technical assistance to communities in completing the assessment and resiliency plans.

Communities that complete the MVP

planning grant program become certified as an MVP community and are eligible for MVP Action Grant funding.

The Planning Grant response period will be open on a rolling basis until 4 p.m. on Aug. 7 for MVP planning processes that must be completed by June 30, 2021. Early application is encouraged.

• [Visit COMMBUYS website for Planning Grant RFR](#)

MVP Action Grants

Applications are also open for the fourth round of [MVP Action Grant](#) proposals.

Action Grants provide funding for designated MVP Communities to implement priority adaptation actions identified through the MVP planning process or similar climate change vulnerability assessment and action planning that has led to MVP designation after EEA review.

Projects are required to use the best available climate data and projections.

Projects that propose nature-based solutions or strategies that rely on green infrastructure or conservation and enhancement of natural systems and that have robust community engagement plans are preferred.

There have been a number of updates to the Action Grant RFR from last round, so it is recommended to read it in full.

Applicants can request up to \$2 million in funding (regional proposals may request up to \$5 million), and a 25 percent match of the total project cost is required.

Action Grant proposals are due by 2 p.m. on June 11 for project proposals that must be completed by June 30, 2021, or June 30, 2022.

• [Visit COMMBUYS website for Action Grant RFR](#)

For more information, [visit the program information page](#) and contact MVP regional coordinators. ●

EPA proposes MS4 permit modifications for Mass.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced on April 23 that it is proposing targeted modifications to the 2016 Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) general permit for Massachusetts communities.

An EPA statement said that the proposed modifications would give municipalities more tools and flexibility for permit implementation while also ensuring that the water quality goals of the Clean Water Act are met.

The proposed modifications were developed through a multi-year mediation between the EPA and parties who challenged the underlying 2016 permit.

Last December, the EPA announced that a settlement agreement had been reached between the agency and the permit litigants – including municipalities, environmental groups and other stakeholders – and initiated a public comment period. The settlement agreement was executed in mid-April. According to the EPA, the proposed modifications to the permit are identical to those contained in the settlement.

The EPA will hold two informational webinars on the proposed permit modifications, with the first set for May 4. To register and for more information, visit www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/massachusetts-small-ms4-general-permit.

The EPA will accept public comments on the proposed permit modifications for 45 days from the announcement date.

EPA New England Regional Administrator Dennis Deziel called the modifications to the 2016 MS4 “a win-win.”

“These changes balance the implementation needs of Massachusetts communities with the water quality protections required under the Clean Water Act,” he said. “When fully implemented, the MS4 permit will continue to protect the environment and adhere to the law.”

“Stormwater is the largest contributor of pollutants to impaired rivers, lakes, streams, ponds and other waters in Massachusetts. The MS4 permit is an important step to reduce the harmful impact of polluted stormwater on local water bodies.”

The EPA’s New England Regional Office issues Clean Water Act National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. MS4 permits are NPDES permits that authorize certain discharges of municipal stormwater to surface waters.

After the EPA finalized the Massachusetts Small MS4 General Permit, parties filed petitions for review, including the National Association of Homebuilders, the Home

Builders and Remodelers Association of Massachusetts Inc., the Center for Regulatory Reasonableness, the Massachusetts Coalition for Water Resources Stewardship, the town of Franklin, the city of Lowell, the Conservation Law Foundation, and the Charles River Watershed Association. These petitions were consolidated with a challenge to the EPA’s 2017 New Hampshire Small MS4 General Permit in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Once consolidated, the cases were entered into the DC Circuit’s mediation program. After more than two years of discussions, the parties negotiated a proposed settlement agreement, which was announced on Dec. 27, 2019, issued for public comment, and executed by all parties on April 15.

The Federal Register notice, proposed MS4 permit modifications, statements of basis that explain the EPA’s rationale for the proposed modifications, and instructions on how to formally submit comments on the proposed permit modifications are available on <https://regulations.gov> under the docket number EPA-R01-OW-2020-0216. ●

Law makes number of school-related adjustments due to COVID

Chapter 56 of the Acts of 2020, signed on April 10, suspends MCAS testing requirements for the school year, pushes back due dates for school district improvement plans required by the Student Opportunity Act, and allows the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to modify or waive graduation requirements for students set to complete high school this summer.

The law also suspends the rules governing approval of regional school district budgets and allows districts to adopt temporary budgets to start fiscal 2021

if the annual regional school budget has not been adopted by the communities in the district by June 30. The state commissioner of education would approve monthly budgets until a final budget can be approved locally.

The regional school budget provisions are similar to rules enacted earlier this month that allow towns to start a fiscal year without a budget approved by town meeting in the event of a state-declared emergency. The interim municipal spending plan would be approved by the Division of Local Services.

The law also delays the budget deadlines for the MBTA by a month.

A [section-by-section summary of the new law bill](#) is available on the state website.

School districts were closed by executive order effective March 15.

The federal government allowed states to cancel testing requirements if they filed waivers, which Massachusetts did, along with the vast majority of other states. ●

U.S. Census Bureau makes further schedule changes

By **Brittney Franklin**

The U.S. Census Bureau suspended 2020 Census field operations until June 1 in order to protect the health and safety of the American public, Census Bureau employees, and those going through the hiring process for temporary census-taker positions.

Once they resume, in-person activities will incorporate the latest guidance to promote the health and safety of staff and the public, such as social distancing practices, the Census Bureau said [in an April 13 release](#).

The Census Bureau also announced it would be seeking statutory relief from Congress to delay two major reporting deadlines: the Dec. 31 deadline for the Census Bureau to deliver each state's population total to the president; and the April 1, 2021, deadline for the bureau to deliver the local counts that each state needs to complete legislative redistricting.

The Census Bureau has requested those dates to be delayed to April 30, 2021, and July 31, 2021 respectively.

Congress has not yet acted on the requests.

The bureau has extended the deadline for census self-response online, by phone or by mail from July 31 to Oct. 31. Any households that haven't yet responded to the census and are accessible by the postal service were sent a postcard invitation to complete the census around April 16.

Non-response follow-up by Census Bureau personnel will now take place between Aug. 11 and Oct. 31.

As of April 30, 54.6% of households across the country have responded to the 2020 Census, and 56.7% of Massachusetts households have responded, according to the [Census Bureau's self-response rate map](#).

Census statistics are used to determine the number of seats each state holds in the U.S. House of Representatives and informs how billions of dollars in federal funds will be allocated by state, local and federal lawmakers annually for the next 10 years.

Update leave

Census takers drop off invitations to respond and paper questionnaires at the front doors of approximately 6.2 million primarily rural households and most Native American reservations.

Prior to the suspension of field operations, the Census Bureau completed about 12% of its update leave operation. This process is scheduled to resume between June 13 and July 9.

Group quarter enumeration

In-person group quarter enumeration is now projected to occur between July 1 and Sept. 3. This includes locations that are institutional and noninstitutional, such as correctional facilities, nursing homes and college dormitories. Enumeration of transitory locations such as campgrounds, RV parks, marinas and hotels is tentatively delayed to September.

More guidance is forthcoming in the effort to count off-campus college students. Previously, the Census Bureau clarified that even if students are now home, they should be counted where they were living during the school year.

Service-based enumeration

Service-based operations are aimed at counting those without conventional housing or who are experiencing homelessness. The Census Bureau has indefinitely suspended in-person counting pending further review and coordination with outside partners and stakeholders.

Before the pandemic, the Census Bureau planned to count at service-based operations by interviewing each person served a meal or staying at the facility at a time the service providers choose, between March 30 and April 1.

For some homeless shelters and other group shelters, the Census Bureau is now working to collect information remotely via administrative records.

Mobile Questionnaire Assistance

Mobile Questionnaire Assistance is targeted assistance for communities with low-response rates where Census Bureau staff help people fill out the census online or by phone at events or at key locations like grocery stores, libraries and community centers.

This assistance has been indefinitely suspended pending further review and coordination with outside partners and stakeholders. ●

COVID-19 Command Center launches Food Security Task Force

By **Ariela Lovett**

Responding to a spike in food insecurity across the Commonwealth as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the state's Covid-19 Command Center has launched a Food Security Task Force.

The task force's mandate is to coordinate resources and communication around food insecurity, meet urgent food shortage needs, identify and strategically address gaps in the food chain, plan for the short- and medium-term future, and identify metrics to measure food insecurity, gather the appropriate data, and monitor on a regular basis.

The group is co-chaired by Massachu-

setts Emergency Management Agency Director Samantha Phillips, Department of Transitional Assistance Commissioner Amy Kershaw, and Mary Joyce of the Command Center staff. Legislative liaisons are Sen. Jo Comerford and Rep. Hannah Kane.

According to a report in the Boston Globe, the Greater Boston Food Bank, New England's largest hunger relief organization, has seen a 50% increase in demand over this time last year.

Task force members have been divided into three workgroups: identifying immediate needs; enhancing access to, and enrollment and participation in food

assistance programs; and addressing the capacity and resiliency of the existing food supply chain.

The task force is working to refine the recommendations offered by each of the three workgroups and report them back to the COVID-19 Command Center.

The MMA has a seat on the task force, currently held by Legislative Analyst Ariela Lovett, who is participating in the immediate needs workgroup. To share local needs or engage in the work of the task force, contact her at alovett@mma.org. ●

ATFC holds webinar exploring budget impacts

The Association of Town Finance Committees held a webinar on April 29 to discuss how the COVID-19 emergency could impact municipal budgets for the rest of the current fiscal year and in fiscal 2021.

The unprecedented shutdown of the economy has taken a toll on state and local revenue streams that has not yet been quantified. While the Baker-Polito administration has indicated that the state will continue to meet its commitments to cities and towns through June 30, the budget picture for fiscal 2021 is still a ways from coming into focus, creating an enormous challenge for local budget development.



Brian Boyle, president of the Association of Town Finance Committees, speaks during the ATFC's April 29 budget webinar.

The webinar panelists – MMA Legislative Director John Robertson and Hudson Town Manager Thomas Moses – covered all of this and more, exploring a range of scenarios and strategies that can help communities plan budgets in a time of uncertainty.

They also answered questions from town finance committee members during the 75-minute webinar.

[A recording of the webinar is available on the MMA website.](#) ●

Guidance offered on solid waste, recycling operations

By Ariela Lovett

In a letter to municipal and regional recycling contacts, the Department of Environmental Protection's solid waste management team shared guidelines and resources related to the continuation of municipal waste and recycling operations during the COVID-19 emergency.

The governor's emergency order regarding essential services includes support workers who ensure the effective removal, storage and disposal of residential and commercial solid waste and hazardous waste. This includes all activities related to the handling of waste materials for recycling, composting or disposal.

The DEP guidance reminds operators of recycling facilities, transfer stations, landfills and municipal waste combustion operations of their obligation to report any issues

that may impact their operations, and not to make alterations to their activities without DEP approval.

The DEP will continue to work with site operators to provide authorizations and make adjustments as needed, including, but not limited to, operating hours, daily/annual capacity levels, storage limits, and waste ban waivers.

The governor's March 23 emergency order provides relief from state and federal requirements that govern the hours of service for commercial vehicle operators involved in waste and recycling transportation and collection, while maintaining important safety protections and measures.

The DEP's Recycling and Solid Waste Information for Municipal Officials can be found at www.mma.org/covid19/#guidance. The DEP website has a full listing of its guidance

and [resources related to solid waste and recycling during COVID-19](#).

Questions about state guidance regarding solid waste and recycling operations can be directed to Brooke Nash, branch chief for municipal waste reduction, at brooke.nash@state.ma.us, or to John Fischer, deputy division director for solid waste materials management, at john.fischer@state.ma.us.

The Northeast Resource Recovery Association has created a [web page](#) with resources on solid waste and recycling during the COVID-19 emergency, which includes a webinar on best management practices for recycling facilities.

The [Solid Waste Association of North America](#) also has a [guidance page](#). ●

Application deadline extended for fall MMA-Suffolk leadership

Classes for the MMA-Suffolk University Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program are expected to start as scheduled in September in Shrewsbury and Danvers.

Applications are available on the [MMA website](#), and the application deadline has been extended to May 31 at 5 p.m.

The application is a fillable PDF, so it can be completed and submitted remotely, to certificate@mma.org. Electronic

signatures will be accepted, or an email can be sent separately to indicate the applicant's support.

The program is designed for municipal employees interested in furthering their professional degree in local government. The graduate-level classes, taught by Suffolk faculty, are held on 25 Fridays, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., beginning in September and ending in May.

Interested students are invited to

a Zoom informational meeting on Wednesday, May 13, at 1 p.m. [Click here to register](#). Registrants will receive a confirmation email containing the information needed to join the meeting.

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

Local governments shifting gears to continue services

By Lisa Capone

Local governments and the services they provide are reliable ports in the storm during times of crisis – performing critical public safety functions, connecting residents with urgent information and resources, and fulfilling responsibilities that keep residents and businesses going until the emergency has passed. Often, these functions come with a human touch, such as helpful interactions with knowledgeable staff at city and town halls.

Not this time. The COVID-19 emergency makes face-to-face meetings largely out of the question, requiring city and town officials to walk a challenging line of continuing to provide essential municipal services while protecting the health of municipal employees and the public.

Across Massachusetts this spring, mayors, city and town managers, city councils and select boards had to quickly pivot from business-as-usual to business without precedent.

From Cape Cod and Greater Boston to Worcester County, the North Shore and western Massachusetts, cities and towns across the Commonwealth have scrambled, collaborated and innovated to keep municipal services flowing and lines of communication with constituents open. Their resilience provides a note of normalcy during uncertain times.

“Government officials at all levels are facing monumental challenges in this unprecedented public health crisis,” said Auburn Town Manager Julie Jacobson, president of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association.

Jacobson said information-sharing forums provided by the MMA and the Management Association reveal many common concerns, including planning for backfilling positions if essential employees are infected with COVID-19, learning new technology platforms for remote meetings, and keeping work areas clean and disinfected in the face of difficulties procuring cleaning supplies.

Like many other Massachusetts communities, Auburn has temporarily closed its town hall (and other town buildings) to the public. Town Hall employees are working from home as much as possible, with minimal in-building staffing for essential functions that can't be done at home. Examples include using software that can't



Auburn Town Hall

be accessed remotely due to security systems (for payroll and accounts receivable/payable, for example), and certain town clerk functions that require in-office access to databases, original documents, legal documents and licenses.

Jacobson signed an executive order governing work-at-home and in-office protocols on April 6.

Other staffing models that have emerged around the state include offering town and city hall visits only by appointment (Boston and Methuen, for example); and rotating skeleton staffs (sometimes labeled teams A and B, as in the towns of Shrewsbury and Upton) to ensure some in-building presence for most departments for at least part of each day. Most city and town halls are encouraging residents to conduct business, such as tax payments, online.

The town of Yarmouth has set up UPS-style boxes where residents and businesses can drop off documents for processing. Noting that pre-summer construction planning is underway on Cape Cod despite COVID-19, Yarmouth Town Administrator Dan Knapik said his town placed a drop-off box at Town Hall on Friday, April 3, and by Monday morning, four contractors had dropped off project plans for review. He said the local economy depends on a steady flow of permit reviews and approvals, so businesses can hit the ground running once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

Since the early days of the crisis, Knapik said, the ability to connect with other municipal officials via MMA conference calls and online communications has been an invaluable way to share ideas for navigating uncharted territory, including staffing of town offices.

One topic that's generating considerable buzz is the increasing and critical role technology is suddenly playing in municipal operations. Hopedale, for example, established virtual private networks (VPNs)

for essential personnel, while department heads in Wellesley are conducting meetings with Zoom and Citrix. Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno holds daily morning meetings with his cabinet by video conference.

In early April, the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security announced an arrangement with LogMeIn giving municipalities and school districts free access, for 90 days, to a remote-working kit that includes remote meeting hosting and attendance software. (For more information, email catherine.marques@mass.gov.)

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that only 15.2 percent of local government employees regularly worked remotely from 2017 to 2018. That is changing not just in Massachusetts, but nationwide, as workers move to home offices to abide by social distancing protocols. And, while the learning curve has been abrupt and steep, some see this as a trend that could persist after the COVID-19 crisis passes.

“Overall, we're used to it now. It's kind of the new way,” said Walpole Town Administrator Jim Johnson, who organized his first Zoom meeting for key staff on March 15. “This may change things, even after the crisis.”

For that first meeting, Johnson said, close to half the 30 to 40 participants joined on their phones, leery of the online meeting platform. Now, only a handful use the phone, the rest attending his weekly meetings via the Zoom app. Johnson said other town managers have reached out to him for advice about using Zoom.

“Standing up the technology has been a challenge,” said Dominick Pangallo, chief of staff for Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll. “But we've been able to provide most employees with the devices and access to remote desktop and online software systems. A lot of our business processes have involved paper, like invoice processing and payroll. And, while we had hoped to move away from paper before the outbreak, this certainly accelerated that effort.”

Knapik agrees that the COVID crisis could be a game-changer in terms of municipalities' appetite for conducting more business online. A key consideration, he said, is ensuring that meeting moderators know how to keep meetings cybersecure.

“When this is over, town government will have advanced its technological ability by light years,” Knapik said. ●

Managers, MMHR discuss supporting employees

The Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources association held a joint webinar on April 9 to discuss how the COVID-19 emergency is affecting the workplace.

Susan Retik and Cindy Joyce led a discussion about how to effectively manage and support employees during the ongoing crisis. The presenters covered proven strategies that can be used to make a difficult situation less stressful for employees.

Retik, an experienced leadership coach, public speaker and facilitator, is co-founder and CEO of Beyond the 11th, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping widows in Afghanistan. Joyce is the founder and CEO of Pillar Search & HR Consulting, an instructor at the Harvard Extension School, and an adjunct professor with the Sawyer Business School at Suffolk University.

Following the discussion, MMA Senior Legislative Analyst Lisa Adams and attorney Michele Randazzo of KP Law provided an update about the legislative response and legal impacts of the



Leadership coach Susan Retick (top left), Needham Human Resources Director Rachel Glisper (top right), and Cindy Joyce, CEO of Pillar Search & HR Consulting, speak during an April 9 webinar about supporting employees through the COVID-19 crisis. The webinar was a joint meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources.

COVID-19 emergency in the human resources arena. (Note: The second session begins at 1:06 in the video.)

More than 250 human resources

professionals and town managers participated in the [webinar, which can be found on the MMA website.](#) ●

Experts discuss cybersecurity for municipalities during COVID

By Isabelle Nichols

More than 200 elected and appointed officials participated in an MMA [webinar on April 26 to discuss how and why municipalities should continue to prioritize cybersecurity](#) during the COVID-19 emergency.

Ron Ford, New England regional cybersecurity advisor with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency, provided an update on [his agency's response to COVID-19](#), including providing guidance on telework best practices and a cyber alert regarding the methods cyber criminals are using to target individuals and organizations during the COVID-19 emergency.

Ford led a discussion about the importance of cyber resiliency plans and covered best practices to ensure that municipalities are prepared in the event of a cyber incident.



In an April 26 MMA webinar, more than 200 local officials learned why cybersecurity matters as much as ever during the COVID-19 emergency.

Stephanie Helm, director of the MassCyberCenter at MassTech, gave an overview of the nature of cyber threats faced by cities and towns. She highlighted the Cyber Resilient Mass Working Group, which brings together public and private sector tech leaders to improve cybersecurity resiliency in Massachusetts through planning.

Helm discussed the MassCyberCenter's [Cybersecurity Toolkit for Municipalities](#), and the state-funded Incident Response Plan Workshops that are being developed to support municipalities in developing or reviewing their cyber incident response plans in collaboration with neighboring communities.

The cybersecurity webinar, along with an audio recording and webinar materials, [can be found on the MMA website.](#)

Cybersecurity resources

- [IT security products and services from the U.S. General Services Administration](#)
- [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency](#)
- [CISA Coronavirus resources](#)
- [FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center](#) ●

MSBA to districts: project grants, rates cannot change

The [Massachusetts School Building Authority](#) issued a statement on April 17 reminding districts that grant amounts and reimbursement rates that districts can receive for school construction projects are set at the time of project approval, and the authority cannot later increase those amounts.

As a matter of policy, the statement said, the MSBA does not reimburse for change orders due to schedule delays or accelerated costs, and the authority has caps on change orders that are set at the time of project approval.

“We have done our programmatic planning and based our capital pipeline invitations according to this process and based on the annual funding cap limitation that we have,” the authority stated. “To change our processes or make exceptions would have a profound impact on our future program and impact the ability to continue with other projects in our pipeline.”

Several districts with projects in the MSBA’s capital pipeline have contacted the authority with concerns related to

the effect that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on projects. Each district and each project is facing its own challenges, according to the MSBA, depending on what phase the project is in, as well as each district’s decisions on implementing COVID-19 guidelines. Some of the major concerns conveyed to the authority regard MSBA deadlines, project schedules and potential budget increases.

The MSBA concurs with recommendations from the National Council on School Facilities to keep track of any additional facilities expenses related to the current health crisis, though it is unclear at this time whether any of these expenses may be eligible to be reimbursed by funding to be allocated to the Commonwealth through the federal CARES Act.

The MSBA recommends that districts work with their project teams and local counsel to review their project contracts and documents to identify any avenues of budgetary relief. Additionally, the MSBA suggests that districts work with

their local governmental leaders and local counsel to determine whether there may be some type of assistance through the CARES Act.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Massachusetts School Building Authority office has been closed since March 17, until further notice.

The authority reports, however, that it remains committed to its partnership with districts, and continues to accept reimbursement requests, contracts and other documents electronically in order to continue to support project approvals and reimburse districts during the pandemic.

The MSBA is taking multiple steps to assist districts. It is holding board, subcommittee, panel and other meetings remotely so the MSBA process can continue to move forward. And the authority is working with districts to provide flexibility with extensions and MSBA deliverables. ●

AGO launches programs to help small businesses affected by COVID

The Office of the Attorney General, through its Small Business Relief Partnership Grant Program, has committed funding to assisting municipalities and regional planning agencies with the provision of financial relief to local small businesses most impacted by closures, policies or general loss of revenue due to COVID-19.

Municipalities and regional planning agencies will be awarded funds up to \$50,000 per request to administer or supplement a grant program targeting local small businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19.

Grant funds may be used by small businesses to help address fixed debt, payroll, accounts payable, lost sales, lost opportunities, and other working capital expenses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Industries include, but are not limited to, food service and production; restaurants; bed and breakfasts; house cleaners; laundromat or dry-cleaners; car repair/garage; barber shops/beauty

salons; health care and social assistance; and small retail shops.

Grant awards will be issued in varying amounts up to \$500,000. Individual requests may not exceed \$50,000. The AGO expects that the entirety of the funds received by the applicant will be earmarked to help small businesses. No portion of the awarded funds may be used to defray any administrative or operational costs associated with delivering the funds. All funding decisions will be at the discretion of the AGO.

[A grant RFP is now available.](#) Applications must be delivered electronically via the AGO Grants [website](#) and will be accepted on a rolling basis until funds are depleted. Applicants are reminded to review their contact information and update as necessary.

Pro bono legal support

The Attorney General’s Office also joined a coalition of law firms, nonprofits, and government agencies – led by Ropes

& Gray, Lawyers for Civil Rights and Lawyers Clearinghouse – to launch the [COVID Relief Coalition](#) to provide pro bono legal support to vulnerable businesses and mission-driven organizations.

Coalition partners have created a new website that will support the coalition’s mission by enabling small businesses and nonprofits to learn about and apply for emergency loans and other sources of relief. The website will connect eligible small businesses and nonprofits to free legal support by coalition partners.

In addition to the Attorney General’s Office, coalition partners include the city of Boston; Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce; Boston Bar Association; The Boston Foundation; United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley; Dechert, Fish & Richardson; Foley Hoag; Foley & Lardner; Goodwin, Goulston & Storrs; Mintz, Morgan Lewis; and WilmerHale. ●

Cities, towns act on urgent need to shelter homeless

By Lisa Capone

Determined to slow the spread of COVID-19, local leaders mounted an all-out effort to keep residents safe by keeping them apart. When it comes to safeguarding the homeless, however, the usual playbook doesn't work.

[Social distancing protocols](#) create a new and daunting challenge for the operators of often-crowded homeless shelters. Finding or creating suitable spaces to protect healthy people and enable those who have been exposed to COVID-19 to quarantine quickly rose to the top tier of issues confronting many municipal leaders in March.

According to [2019 data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#), more than 18,400 people experience homelessness in Massachusetts. Across the Commonwealth, municipalities are wading into yet another pool of uncharted waters as they brainstorm solutions and partner with community organizations to set up temporary shelters to house homeless populations, as well as first responders who have tested positive for COVID-19 or know they've been exposed.

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency provides resources and guidance to local leaders regarding the sheltering of homeless people and first responders, but it is largely up to municipalities to hammer out solutions. As with everything related to COVID-19, there's no time to lose.

Vulnerable population

"This is a very vulnerable population, and we have to make sure they are properly treated and make sure we can contain and isolate any situation that might arise," Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno told WAMC Radio regarding his city's Homeless Tent Triage Facility – three 12,000-square-foot heated tents (one for testing, one for isolating the sick, and a third for those in quarantine because they may have been exposed to COVID-19).

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will reimburse 75 percent of "reasonable and necessary costs" associated with operating "non-congregate medical sheltering" for homeless families and individuals and for first

responders and health care workers who need to isolate or quarantine safely without exposing others in their households, according to MEMA.

"We need to ensure that people in every part of the state who are experiencing homelessness have access to immediate, safe and appropriate spaces for isolation, quarantine and social distancing," said Kelly Turley, associate director of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless. "It has been heartening to see a number of municipalities from all across the state step up to create additional spaces for residents without homes."

The coalition is encouraging cities and towns to secure motel rooms, college dorms, sports facilities and unoccupied housing units, and to partner with local nonprofits to provide these safe spaces during the pandemic.

Expanding capacity

Like Springfield, the city of Brockton is using heated tents to expand its accommodations. Calling the homeless "Brockton's most vulnerable residents," Mayor Robert Sullivan partnered with two nonprofits – Father Bill's & MainSpring and the Brockton Neighborhood Health Center – to open the tents on April 6. They currently provide shelter to approximately 60 former guests of FBMS' MainSpring House.

"By opening the tents, guests in both our shelter and in the tents now have the space needed to practice social distancing," said FBMS Community Relations and Marketing Manager Patrick Ronan, adding that shelter guests who test positive for COVID-19 will be transported by the state to an off-site isolation center. The Baker-Polito administration has established two regional isolation and recovery sites, in



On April 6, Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno (second from left) tours the city's Homeless Tent Triage Facility established to serve the city's homeless population during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Photo courtesy city of Springfield)

Lexington and Pittsfield, with more on the way.

Valued partnerships

Pittsfield Mayor Linda Tyer worked with the Diocese of Springfield, which granted the use of the former Saint Joseph's Central High School for housing the homeless. ServiceNet is operating the temporary shelter, which will ensure adequate room for social distancing while providing guests with a warm place to sleep, daily meals, bathroom facilities for showering, and laundering resources.

In addition, Tyer said, "the city has entered into arrangements with two local hotels for the purpose of housing first responders who may need isolation or quarantine. We extended the availability of these rooms to first responders from other Berkshire communities that have mutual aid agreements with Pittsfield.

"As we continue to fight the spread of COVID-19, we are truly grateful for the support and collaboration of our community partners that has allowed for thoughtful problem-solving during these challenging times."

Hotels and schools are also being pressed into shelter service elsewhere. Northampton has a new emergency shelter at its high school to accommodate guests from two ServiceNet shelters that lacked the space to meet social distancing criteria. Staffed by ServiceNet employees and about 60 volunteers,

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SHELTER

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this “well shelter” had more than 50 guests last week.

Northampton Mayor David Narkewicz said each guest gets screened for COVID-19 symptoms upon entering, and then twice daily. Anyone with symptoms is transferred by a partnering taxi service to a local hotel that serves as a quarantine and isolation shelter with a capacity of 50. (So far, only a handful have needed it.) A Northampton medical group provides support there, and a local pharmacy is delivering medicine.

“Northampton has a moral obligation to safeguard our city’s houseless population during this national emergency,” said Narkewicz, who announced on March 26 that he had contracted COVID-19 himself. “Fortunately we had a location, a strong partner in ServiceNet for expert staffing, Smith College and the Hampshire County House of Corrections for food, and willing volunteers ready to step up and create a shelter that is succeeding in preventing widespread infection among this vulnerable population.”

In Worcester, the city and its partners set up temporary homeless shelters at North High School, as well as Ascension and St. John’s Churches, all overseen by the Worcester nonprofit Net of Compas-

sion. The city also established a shelter at Worcester Technical High School specifically for homeless people who test positive for COVID-19 or are quarantined and/or awaiting test results.

Collaborative efforts

Some cities have joined forces to help the homeless. Salem, Beverly and Lynn partnered to open a quarantine site at the Salem High School fieldhouse to serve up to 100 guests.

“Establishing a temporary quarantine location for the most vulnerable populations has been a shared priority of the mayors of the North Shore since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis,” Lynn Mayor Thomas McGee said. “Together, we will do everything we can to ensure that those who face housing insecurity will have a dignified place to shelter, as they are affected by the spread of COVID-19.”

While homelessness is often viewed as an urban issue, some Massachusetts towns also face challenges around housing homeless individuals during the COVID-19 emergency.

In Amherst, a church basement shelter houses 28 individuals, but the town was struggling to find space for isolation or quarantine until Hampshire College stepped forward to offer a dormitory for this purpose.

“Clearly, those experiencing homeless-

ness are very susceptible to spreading the disease as they sleep in a congregate setting and share many things,” said Amherst Town Manager Paul Bockelman.

He said it’s much easier to find isolation or quarantine shelter space for first responders and hospital workers than it is to secure appropriate emergency shelters for those experiencing homelessness.

He said every local leader dreads the “nightmare scenario” where a COVID-19-positive patient “is discharged from the hospital and told to self-isolate at home, but they have no home to go to, and they wind up back on the street.”

Turley, of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, urged cities and towns to ask the Commonwealth for “a statewide, systemic response,” particularly for families with children and for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness – groups that are largely left out of the plans developed so far to depopulate overcrowded congregate shelters.

“Without proactive interventions,” she said, “we will be leaving people experiencing homelessness in situations where this destructive virus can and will spread unabated.” ●

State guidance, resources support communities in homeless care

By Ariela Lovett

To support efforts to isolate and quarantine homeless individuals and families who have tested positive for COVID-19 or are at risk of exposure, the state has developed [a series of guidelines and resources](#) for local governments and community organizations.

The state has worked with local partners to set up regional isolation and recovery centers in Everett, Lexington, Northampton, Pittsfield and Taunton, and has consulted on several other sites.

The state webpage includes the following documents:

- Homeless Shelter COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions
- COVID-19 Guidance for Individual Homeless Shelters
- Support for Drop-In and Access Shelters During COVID-19
- Frequently Asked Questions for Cities and Towns Regarding FEMA Reimbursement for Quarantine/ Isolation Solutions

Under the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Public Assistance Program, affected local governments may be reimbursed for up to 75% of their costs associated with emergency response and safety measures, which includes housing homeless populations.

Questions regarding state and local efforts to safely manage homeless populations during the COVID-19 emergency can be directed to Thomas Mangan at thomas.mangan@state.ma.us or Faye Boardman at faye.boardman@state.ma.us. ●

Application available for MMA-Suffolk finance

The application is now available for the MMA and Suffolk University's fourth Municipal Finance Management Seminar, to be held this fall in Southborough.

The seminar is designed to provide an overview of municipal finance in Massachusetts, including operational aspects of finance structure, and systems and processes in Massachusetts cities and towns. Topics will include budgeting, financial reporting, treasury functions, property assessment, and costing out contracts.

The seminar is for municipal officials interested in furthering their careers in

municipal finance or employees who are new to municipal finance. Applicants must be currently employed by a city or town, and must have the approval of their municipal manager, administrator or mayor to apply.

The program will be held in Southborough on five Fridays beginning in November. Classes are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with the last class including a panel discussion and celebratory lunch. The cost of the seminar is \$825.

The program application can be found on the MMA website under Featured Services, and the application deadline

is July 31 at 5 p.m. Completed applications can be sent to seminars@mma.org.

Interested applicants are invited to a Zoom informational meeting on Wednesday, May 13, at 1 p.m. [Click here to register](#). Registrants will receive a confirmation email containing the information needed to join the meeting.

For more information, visit www.mma.org/about-mma/services/. For specific questions, contact Katie McCue at 617-426-7272, ext. 111, or kmccue@mma.org. ●

MMA begins Massachusetts Municipal Directory process

The MMA has started work on the 2020-2021 edition of the Massachusetts Municipal Directory, and will begin contacting municipalities later this month to enlist their help in updating the information for their communities.

The process will be a little different this year, in order to minimize the time and effort required by member communities during this challenging time.

The MMA greatly appreciates the attention local officials give each year to updating their communities' profiles. We particularly thank you in advance for your help this year, given the

added challenges you face during the COVID-19 emergency response.

Because town elections have been delayed this year, the MMA will conduct its outreach in two stages, first by emailing towns to update information for non-elected municipal positions, and then following up to confirm elected positions after town elections are held. The MMA will also email cities this spring to confirm their information.

Communities will be given access to an online update form, which is pre-populated with the personnel information currently in the MMA database.

The MMA's annual directory includes listings of local officials and contact information – as well as demographic and financial data – for all of the state's cities and towns. There are also sections devoted to regional school districts, state and federal government agencies, and relevant professional organizations, as well as a guide to products and services for municipalities.

The new edition of the directory will be published in early fall.

For more information, contact the MMA at directory@mma.org. ●

EEOC issues guidance on workplace anti-discrimination laws

By Lisa C. Adams

On April 23, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued a technical assistance bulletin titled "What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws."

The document is intended to help employers navigate the impact of COVID-19 in the workplace. The guidance was written for the H1N1 pandemic, with added COVID-19 information appearing in bold.

The bulletin reminds employers that workplace anti-discrimination laws, including the Americans with Disabil-

ities Act and the Rehabilitation Act, continue to apply during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Equal Employment Opportunity laws continue to apply during the pandemic, and they do not prevent employers from following COVID-19 public health guidelines outlined by the federal government or state and local public health authorities.

The bulletin includes a question and answer section on disability-related inquiries and medical exams, confidentiality of medical information, hiring and onboarding, reasonable accommodation, pandemic-related harassment due to

national origin, race, or other protected characteristics, furloughs and layoffs.

In addition to the ADA and Rehabilitation Act, the EEOC enforces Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act. ●

ADMINISTRATION

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ence call convened by the MMA. “And you [generally through local boards of health and health departments] can be the enforcers as well if things don’t add up.”

The administration announced the creation of a 17-member Reopening Advisory Board that includes three municipal representatives: Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera, Easthampton Mayor Nicole LaChapelle, and Kathryn Burton, chief of staff to Boston Mayor Martin Walsh. In addition, Polito said, the administration will be gathering input from municipal leaders provided through the MMA.

“It’s a very hard, complicated process to reopen in a safe way and without creating risk of another spike,” she told the municipal CEOs. “We’ll have you right there with us, as we always do.”

The MMA has formed a working group of mayors and town managers, chaired by Arlington Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine, the vice president of the MMA, to gather feedback from local leaders across the state about concerns, priorities and resource needs, and to share that information with the administration.

Polito said the Reopening Advisory Board has been tasked with producing “a plan for phasing in reopening of certain activities in workplaces throughout our Commonwealth” by May 18 – a tight, three-week timeframe. The board includes 11 business and health care leaders as well as Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel and Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack.

The administration is open to considering different reopening scenarios for different regions of the state that are experiencing varying COVID case levels, she said.

She said the state is in a plateau period in terms of its confirmed COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, but “what we’d like to see is a decline in those numbers ... that will inform us about the conditions making a safe reopening in a phased manner possible.”

Still, she called today’s announcement “good news” that suggests the end of a disease surge and a pivot to the reopen-

ing process. She added that the state’s hospital capacity – bolstered by temporary field hospitals just in case – had successfully withstood the surge, and beds are now available for patients that have been awaiting treatment for non-COVID health issues.

Polito said the state will continue to work on expanding its COVID testing capacity – currently ranked second in the country on a per capita basis – and seeking federal support, but added that testing is only one tool in the toolkit, along with physical distance, face coverings, setting capacity levels and gathering size limits, and sanitization and disinfection efforts.

Asked about the feasibility of widespread testing of asymptomatic individuals, Dr. Larry Madoff, medical director at the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences at the Department of Public Health, explained that testing is prioritized for those experiencing symptoms, followed by those in settings such as congregate housing (e.g., nursing homes, homeless shelters), to guard against spread of the disease in close quarters. Those who may have been exposed to COVID are also good candidates for testing, he said. Others should approach their doctor if they feel they should be tested.

He warned that a negative test result for an asymptomatic individual “is just a snapshot in time” that could change in days or mere hours, “so we don’t want people to be falsely reassured by that.” He also warned that antibody tests, at the individual level, are not a reliable predictor of whether someone is protected from infection in the future.

Communities that feel they need more testing, he said, should contact local health care providers.

Fiscal matters

Once again, local leaders sought clarity about the state budget picture for fiscal 2021, which begins on July 1, and the expected impact on local aid, and once again they were told there’s no news yet. Municipal officials raised the concept of a degree of relief from certain mandates and assessments if local aid levels are slashed next year.

Likewise, there has been no legislative movement as yet on the administration’s bill to reduce quorum require-

ments for open town meetings this spring and enable representative town meetings to be held remotely.

William Bell, senior associate commissioner/CFO at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, reassured local officials that all state funding for K-12 public educational programs, including grants, will continue to flow to districts as promised through fiscal 2020.

He said DESE is pursuing about \$214 million in funding through a grant included in the federal CARES Act specifically for emergency public educational support. He added that 90% of this grant funding would go directly to cities and towns.

Education Secretary James Peyser is pursuing another grant worth \$50.8 million, Bell said.

The CARES Act also includes a Coronavirus Relief Fund with \$2.7 billion for Massachusetts. These funds must be used for necessary but unexpected expenditures incurred between March 1 and Dec. 30, 2020, by state and local governments in connection with COVID-19 response, and the spending has to be for things that were not budgeted for as of March 27.

MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith reminded those on the call that municipal groups across the country are urging Congress to enact an additional stimulus bill that would provide aid directly to states and cities and towns specifically to help offset lost revenue and increased expenses resulting from the COVID-19 public health emergency. The state’s congressional delegation is supportive, and Polito said she’s seen “good signals” from Washington.

Schools and summer programs

Jeffrey Riley, commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, reviewed the various steps taken to close public schools and efforts made to work with school districts to quickly establish meal distribution sites and educational programming for students.

Regarding the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s remote learning guidance, “We basically said, ‘We expected kids to engage in meaningful and productive learning,’” Riley said. “We wanted staff to make multiple

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connections with students during the week, and we wanted staff to provide feedback to kids.”

DESE also applied for waivers at the federal and state level around nutrition, finance, educator licensure, Student Opportunity Act, regional school districts MCAS testing and the competency determination.

Without the need to spend the time usually spent on testing in May, he said, “We have the whole months of May and June to teach, and we think it’s a great

opportunity” to ensure that kids are ready for the next grade level.

The next step is preparing for school reopenings in the fall.

He said DESE is working with health experts and looking at the experiences of other countries for guidance. These strategies include randomly checking students’ temperatures when they come into school, having students wear face masks, staggering schedules so that only half the students are at school at a time, continuing remote learning, and taking other measures to keep students six feet apart.

“We are hoping that we’ll have the summer, and at least some summer programs, to be able to have kind of a soft opening to try some of these things out ... but that is to be determined by the administration.”

On the topic of summer activities for kids, Polito said the administration recognizes the urgent need that families have, and the DPH is taking the lead on developing guidance, which is expected by mid-May.

“Ideally, we’d like to see these camps and activities at the end of the school year,” she said. ●

MassDEP announces new round of municipal recycling grants

By Ariela Lovett

The Department of Environmental Protection has opened its annual application season for its Sustainable Materials Recovery Program, which provides grants to municipalities and other regional entities for recycling, composting and other waste reduction activities that support the state’s Solid Waste Master Plan.

Sustainable Materials Recovery Program grants provide funding in nine categories:

- Mattress recycling incentive program
- Pay-As-You-Throw assistance
- Education and enforcement coordinator
- Recycling and food waste collection carts

- Recycling drop-off containers
- School recycling assistance
- Small-scale initiatives
- Organics capacity/waste reduction projects
- The Recycling Dividends program

The DEP will be holding an informational webinar about the grant program on May 5, 1-3 p.m. To register, visit register.gotowebinar.com/register/1061144574686066443.

In 2019, the DEP awarded more than \$6.6 million in recycling-related grants to 268 municipalities and regional entities through the SMRP.

The grant program was created under

the Green Communities Act and DEP regulations (310 CMR 19.300), and it is funded by the Waste Energy Credits Expendable Trust, also created under the Green Communities Act.

The application deadline for SMRP grants is currently June 10 but may be extended by the DEP if necessary. Applications must be filled out online.

For more information about program eligibility and for detailed application instructions, visit www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-sustainable-materials-recovery-program-smrp-municipal-grant. ●

Galkowski Legacy Fund accepting applications

The Nancy Galkowski Legacy Leadership Fund is accepting applications for its spring/summer awards.

Nancy Galkowski served a 35-year career in municipal management in Massachusetts, with a passion for mentoring younger managers and being of service to all of her peers. Following her death in February 2013, her colleagues in the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association established a fund to honor her memory and continue her legacy.

Applicants may use the funds to further their professional development on their path to a career in municipal management. Awards have been made in the past for International City/County Manage-

ment Association trainings and conferences, specialized topical training, the MMA-Suffolk Finance Certificate Program and the MMA Annual Meeting.

Amherst Communications Manager Brianna Sunryd was a recipient of an award last year.

“Receiving the Galkowski Scholarship last year allowed me to attend my first ICMA conference, in Nashville,” she said. “The MMMA and the Galkowski Legacy funds were critical in making it possible for my community to send me to the conference, where I was able to attend my first Digital Strategies Advisory Board meeting for the ICMA.”

She said the civic health and community

cohesion sessions at the conference “were invaluable, allowing me to bring back strategies to Amherst for engaging diverse residents and building more just and inclusive communities.”

“If you’ve been looking to forward your career through a professional development opportunity, I strongly encourage applying to the Galkowski Legacy Fund.”

Applicants do not need to be a member of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association.

The [application is available at www.mma.org](https://www.mma.org), and the deadline is June 15.

Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker at dbaker@mma.org ●

Cybersecurity is critical issue for municipalities

By Lin Chabra

Last year, municipalities across the country experienced an increase in ransomware, a type of malicious software designed to block access to a computer system until a sum of money is paid.

In 2019, the U.S. was hit by ransomware attacks that impacted at least 966 government agencies, educational organizations and health care providers, Emsisoft Malware Lab reported, at a potential cost in excess of \$7.5 billion.

At least one in six communities in Massachusetts has been infected by ransomware, according to a survey conducted last year by Boston's NBC 10, with more than 260 cities and towns responding. At least 10 of these municipalities made cash payments, many in the form of bitcoin, an encrypted, digital currency that is almost impossible to trace. The ransom payments ranged from \$300 to more than \$11,000.

CSO Magazine reported in March that 94% of malware is being delivered via email, phishing attacks account for more than

80% of reported security incidents, and 60% of breaches involve vulnerabilities for which a patch was available but not applied.

Cybersecurity resources and planning

Lack of funds or resources are often given as reasons that cities and towns are not prepared for cyberattacks, but many security measures can be implemented easily at minimal cost. Many resources are available for free to assist municipalities in their cybersecurity efforts.

The Baker-Polito administration has focused on filling the funding gap and the informational resource deficit for municipal cybersecurity since 2017, when the governor filed legislation to establish the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security. In April of last year, Gov. Charlie Baker filed a bond bill that dedicated \$140 million to cybersecurity across the state.

Massachusetts is also one of seven states that is receiving cybersecurity assistance

from the [National Governors Association](#) to bolster the security of critical infrastructure, among other objectives.

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center, National Governors Association and the National Association of State Chief Information Officers have called for all levels of government to focus on the following three areas:

1. Back up your systems daily.
2. Reinforce basic cybersecurity awareness and education.
3. Revisit and refine cyber incident response plans.

Strong defense with cyber response plan

The [MassCyberCenter](#), a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, partnered with the Massachusetts Municipal Association to send out a survey last October asking the state's 351 cities and towns if they have a cyberattack incident response plan in place. Only 76 municipalities responded, and, of those, only eight reported having a plan in place.

This year, the MassCyberCenter is creating training materials regarding municipal cyber incident response plan development and will host workshops across the state for municipalities to build cohesive cyber incident response plans.

One of the first steps toward improving cybersecurity and developing an incident response plan is to identify areas of vulnerability. Municipalities are advised to conduct a comprehensive risk assessment across all departments, identifying potential risks, exposures and areas for improvement in order to have a complete picture of any potential security gaps.

An incident response plan should address issues like cybercrime, data loss and service outages, among other impacts that can threaten to disrupt daily municipal operations. Information on developing these plans can be found on websites of the

■ MIIA continued on 22

Protect property during shutdown

As municipalities focus on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's important to make sure that municipal properties and schools are properly monitored during this closure period, in much the same way they are for school vacations and extended holidays.

Although we are likely past the risk of low temperature freeze-ups, mechanical failures can occur at any time. For example, one municipality recently suffered a major property loss due to a third-floor water line failure that occurred overnight.

The following are some basic building maintenance checklist items to help prevent losses:

- Set heat setbacks to a seasonal level to prevent freezing.
- Properly close and secure all doors and windows.
- Have staff perform walkthroughs during the closure period and provide them with a list of the key shut-offs.
- Provide copies of building response plans to key vendors and contacts.
- Check water connections for signs of deterioration or leaks. If found, turn off that area until normal activities are resumed.
- Ensure that all remote detection and sensor technology batteries are fully charged.
- Check and test sump pumps.

MEMBER GROUPS

Continued from page 3

May 8 at noon.

Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols at inichols@mma.org

Councillors' Association

The Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association has pivoted to provide some of its scheduled training remotely via Zoom.

The group cancelled its Statewide Spring Dinner on March 11 and its May 2 regional meeting.

On April 10, the [MMCA and Massachusetts Select Board Association hosted a COVID-19 briefing call](#) via Zoom.

MMA President and Agawam Councillor Cecilia Calabrese provided much-needed words of encouragement in her opening remarks, and MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith and Legislative Director John Robertson gave a range of updates and answered member questions.

The MMA will continue to host the MSA/MMCA briefing call on a monthly basis, with the next call scheduled for May 8 at noon.

The MMCA will host a webinar on city budgeting on May 13 at 3 p.m. featuring Framingham Chief Operating Officer Thatcher Kezer, a former mayor of Amesbury. Kezer will discuss the impacts of the COVID emergency on the city budget process. All members will receive an invitation to register.

The next tentatively scheduled event for the Councillors' Association is a Fall Conference on Sept. 10 at the Delaney House in Holyoke, 4-7 p.m.

Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker at dbaker@mma.org

EPA grants support 'environmental justice' communities

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced on April 30 that it is making \$1 million in grant funding available to states to help address COVID-19 concerns faced by low-income and minority communities.

Through the [State Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreement Program](#), the EPA will provide funds to states and local governments to work collaboratively with environmental justice communities to understand, promote and integrate approaches to provide meaningful

Finance Committees

The Association of Town Finance Committees' first Spring Conference, on May 9, had to be canceled.

The group did hold a [budgeting webinar on April 29](#), with MMA Legislative Director John Robertson and Hudson Town Administrator Tom Moses. ATFC President Brian Boyle facilitated the program, which tried to answer questions towns are facing as they rework their budgets for fiscal 2021.

ATFC members are encouraged to send online training suggestions to Denise Baker at the MMA (dbaker@mma.org).

The group's next tentative meeting is its Annual Meeting on Oct. 24 in Marlborough.

Arlington Finance Committee Chair Al Tosti, the editor of the ATFC Finance Committee Handbook, is beginning his work on a new edition of the book, which is now easily downloaded in a digital format. Members will be able to download the new edition in October at the Annual Meeting.

Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker at dbaker@mma.org

Human Resources

Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources has rescheduled its HR 101 Boot Camp from May 14 to Sept. 17, tentatively in-person at Lake Pearl in Wrentham.

In place of the boot camp, MMHR will host a free Zoom webinar on May 14, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The program will kick off with a brief wellness exercise led by EAP provider Joe LaLiberte. MMA Senior Legislative Analyst Lisa Adams and attorney Melissa Murray of Norris, Murray & Peloquin will lead a discussion on current legislation and legal consid-

erations related to the issues of furlough and unemployment.

and measurable improvements to public health and the environment. "Environmental justice grants aim to support public education, training, and emergency planning for communities across the country impacted by COVID-19, regardless of their zip code," said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler.

Projects could include sharing information related to EPA-approved disinfectants to combat COVID-19; addressing increased exposure of residents to

in-home pollutants and healthy housing issues; and training community health workers.

The EPA anticipates awarding five grants of approximately \$200,000 each for up to a two-year funding period. The agency encourages applicants to develop innovative plans and processes to conduct effective outreach to underserved communities, especially in places where Internet access may not be readily available to all residents.

The [application](#) deadline is June 30. ●

erations related to the issues of furlough and unemployment. MMHR's Annual Meeting will be held on June 11, as scheduled, but will be conducted virtually. Additional details about the program and timing will be shared in the coming weeks. The meeting will be free of charge. In recognition of the fiscal challenges that the COVID emergency has created for cities and towns, MMHR will convert its 2020 Fall Conference to a more cost-effective, virtual format. The conference will be made available as a series of webinars that can be purchased in a package. The first of these webinars is tentatively scheduled for Oct. 8 to continue the conversation from the March meeting on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additional information about the webinar series, including how to register, will be available in the coming months.

On April 9, MMHR partnered with the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association [to jointly present a webinar](#) on how to effectively manage and support employees during the ongoing crisis, as well as the legal impacts of the COVID-19 emergency in the human resources arena.

Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols at inichols@mma.org

The MMA's member groups will continue to follow all guidelines set out by the governor and will make further scheduling adjustments as needed.

People



Scott Lambiase

Scott Lambiase will become Abington's new acting town manager on May 4, replacing **Richard LaFond**, who left to return to the town administrator position in Carver (see below).

Since 2005, Lambiase has been working for the town of Duxbury, where he had been the director of inspectional services/building commissioner, and was promoted to municipal services director in 2010.

Lambiase served on Whitman's Board of Selectmen from 2012 to 2019, and has been a member of the Whitman Finance Committee for the past year. He has also served on the MMA's Policy Committee on Personnel and Labor Relations.

Lambiase attended Northeastern University, and expects to receive his bachelor's degree in business administration from Western Governors University in September.

Richard LaFond became Carver's interim town administrator on April 18, replacing **Michael Milanoski**, who is in transition.

LaFond most recently served for seven years as the town manager in Abington. He was the town administrator in Carver from 1996 to 2013. He has also served as the executive secretary in Abington from 1994 to 1996 and in East Bridgewater from 1992 to 1994, and the assistant to the town administrator in Easton from 1990 to 1992.

LaFond earned a master's degree in public administration from Suffolk University, and a bachelor's degree in political science and history from Stonehill College.



Michael Boynton

Medway's chief municipal officer has a new title, as a result of an updated charter signed into law on April 15.

On April 16, **Michael Boynton** ended a nearly six-year period as town administrator and

became Medway's town manager. The title change was primarily a change in name only, as the position already had full appointment authority for employees since 2009.

Before coming to Medway, Boynton had served as town administrator in Walpole from 2001 to 2014, as Sutton's town administrator from 1997 to 2001, and as town administrative assistant in Mendon from 1995 to 1997. He was also a town councillor in Franklin from 1992 to 1995.

Medway's charter update also involved a department name change, the expansion of some boards and commissions, and the conversion of the town clerk from an elected to an appointed role.



Richard Furlong

Richard Furlong, who had served 15 years as Becket's town administrator, died on March 28 at the age of 77.

A veteran of what is now the U.S. Navy Reserve, Furlong spent a quarter century working

in nursing home administration. He finished his career in his hometown of Becket, retiring from the administrator role in 2009.

As a community volunteer, Furlong served on the Becket Finance Committee and on the Building Committee for the Nessacus Regional Middle School, which is located in Dalton and serves Becket students.



Paul Kalill

Former Springfield City Councillor **Paul Kalill** died on April 7, shortly after being diagnosed with COVID-19. He was 77.

Kalill served three terms on the City Council from 1973 to 1979. He ran

unsuccessfully for mayor in 1991.

A Vietnam veteran, Kalill rose to the rank of captain and was awarded the Bronze Star for his service. He had been a U.S. land reform advisor in Vietnam and later served as an advisor to President Jimmy Carter. Having earned a Ph.D. in forensic psychology, Kalill taught at numerous institutions, including Springfield College.

For the last 42 years, Kalill, who had moved to Westfield, was a partner in the Springfield law firm of Kalill, Glasser and Associates.

Former Westfield Mayor **George Varelas** died of COVID-19 complications on April 26. He was 88.

Varelas had served four two-year terms as Westfield's mayor, from 1986 to 1994. He had also served for 32 years in law enforcement in the city.

A native of Athens, Greece, Varelas had served in the Greek army before emigrating to the United States and settling in Westfield. After working as a machinist, Varelas joined the Westfield Police Department in 1963 as an officer, subsequently rising to the ranks of sergeant and lieutenant.

In addition to his public service, Varelas volunteered in the local Greek community.

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.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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with a clear roadmap, following a path that is safe and sustainable.

This past week, Gov. Charlie Baker and Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito announced their intention to do just that, creating a statewide COVID-19 Reopening Advisory Board of health experts, business leaders and municipal officials to present a framework for a phased-in economic re-entry that will be guided by public health indicators and practices.

We applaud the administration for including three top municipal leaders on the state panel – Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera, Easthampton Mayor Nicole LaChapelle, and Kathryn Burton, chief of staff to Boston Mayor Martin Walsh – to provide an essential municipal perspective as we begin to phase-in economic and social re-engagement as thoughtfully and cautiously as possible.

The MMA has been anticipating this planning effort, and under the leadership of MMA President Cece Calabrese and our Board of Directors, had already established its own COVID-19 Reopening Advisory Committee, bringing together municipal CEOs from across the state, including the top leaders of the Mayors' Association, and town and city managers representing a cross-section of Massachusetts. Arlington Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine, the MMA vice president, is chairing the group.

Of course, the MMA will coordinate and communicate with all local officials to make sure we include and reflect the diversity of our membership. The committee will collect all this information and provide the Baker-Polito administration and the state Reopening Advisory Board with input and feedback regarding the critical on-the-ground policy, administrative, implementation, enforcement and resource concerns and priorities of municipalities.

Even a slow and gradual reopening process will create very big challenges for cities and towns. At the same time, no reopening process will be successful or safe without cities and towns at the center. At the very beginning of this process, we have identified a number of high-level priorities to ensure that communities have the information, resources and policies they need to facilitate and lead our recovery, and there certainly will be more.

Local priorities

- First and foremost, communities will need strong, clear and detailed guidance from the state on what will and will not be allowed in each phase of the re-opening, and what specific conditions and actions will be required to ensure public health and safety in each sector or segment of activity. This is necessary so that we can achieve consistency across communities and within regions, and avoid unnecessary variance and confusion among residents. In addition to private business activity, this includes clear guidance on public services, operations, buildings and spaces such as libraries, recreation programs, parks, pools, golf courses, beaches, senior and youth centers, indoor and outdoor sports, summer concerts, parades, holiday celebrations (including Memorial Day and the Fourth of July), summer school programs, elections, and more.
- The plan should provide clear and specific guidance for private businesses, and provide adequate enforcement and resource capacity at the municipal level. This will enhance consistency and avoid cross-boundary differences, confusion and unintended burdens or conflicts in regions as business activity resumes. Communities will need a clear understanding of how and when construction, retail, restaurants, bars, farmers markets, event venues, hair and nail salons, private golf courses, and others can operate safely.
- Cities and towns will need adequate lead-time and flexibility in responding to the needs of businesses that will be restarting operations, especially in the area of inspections and permitting. Communities will be facing the challenge of bottlenecks, resource constraints and employee safety concerns as demands for outward-facing municipal services increase.
- Municipalities must have access to equipment and supplies. This goes beyond PPE to include cleaning and sanitation supplies (communities are reporting an inability to purchase Lysol and restaurant-grade gloves, for example) for buildings and public spaces. Without equal access across the state, some regions/communities will be able to open buildings and spaces, and others will not.
- Testing and health data will be paramount. There must be ubiquitous testing for municipal employees and residents in every region, and localities will need real-time access to critical public health data (test results, hospitalizations, contact tracing, and so on) to identify and manage outbreaks and hotspots, and to inform local, regional and state decision-making.
- Some variation between communities is inevitable, given our state's diversity in density, downtown development, commercial development, ease of access, and other factors. These differences will inform local decision-making and interest regarding the speed or level of reopening. This is in the context of the need for overall caution in re-engaging, because moving too quickly may trigger a second wave and force another shutdown, which would expose more people to the virus and undermine public confidence and buy-in to the process. Establishing a strong statewide baseline would minimize this tension, and still leave open some local or regional variance.
- The state must continue to provide clear and strong statewide policies and communication to guide public behavior, including requirements and expectations in following public health guidelines and personal responsibility for social distancing, face coverings, per-person limits on gatherings, and more during each phase of the reopening.
- As managers, cities and towns will need guidance on challenging equity issues for public and private employers, such as how to address the lack of daycare that will inhibit the ability of some workers to return to work, or how to address the issue of those with underlying health conditions.

While the path forward will not be easy, we know that progress and recovery will and can happen. Throughout this crisis, the Baker-Polito administration has partnered with communities in every corner of our Commonwealth. A strong reopening and recovery plan that places cities and towns at the center, answering these questions and delivering essential resources, will continue this partnership and ensure a safer and faster recovery for every person.



OSHA issues enforcement guidance for recording cases of COVID-19

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration on April 10 issued interim guidance for enforcing its recordkeeping requirements as it relates to recording cases of COVID-19.

Under OSHA's recordkeeping requirements (29 CFR Part 1904), COVID-19 is a recordable illness, and employers are responsible for recording cases of COVID-19 if the case:

- Is confirmed as a COVID-19 illness;
- Is work-related as defined by 29 CFR 1904.5; and
- Involves one or more of the general recording criteria in 29 CFR 1904.7, such as medical treatment beyond first aid or days away from work.

In areas where there is ongoing community

transmission, employers other than those in the health care industry, emergency response organizations (e.g., emergency medical, firefighting and law enforcement services), and correctional institutions may have difficulty making determinations about whether workers who contracted COVID-19 did so due to exposures at work. Accordingly, until further notice, OSHA will not enforce its recordkeeping requirements to require these employers to make work-relatedness determinations for COVID-19 cases, except where: 1) There is objective evidence that a COVID-19 case may be work-related; and 2) The evidence was reasonably available to the employer.

Employers of workers in the health care in-

dustry, emergency response organizations and correctional institutions must continue to make work-relatedness determinations pursuant to 29 CFR Part 1904.

The purpose of OSHA's recordkeeping requirements (29 CFR Part 1904) is to require employers to record and report work-related fatalities, injuries and illnesses. Recording or reporting a work-related injury, illness or fatality does not mean that the employer or employee was at fault, that an OSHA rule has been violated, or that the employee is eligible for workers' compensation or other benefits.

For more information and resources, visit [OSHA's COVID-19 webpage](#). ●

MIIA

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MassCyberCenter and the [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency](#).

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security also offers a [digital toolkit for small businesses, educators, and governments on how to strengthen their security efforts](#).

Education and awareness

Employees are often a weak link in the defense against cyber incidents and are a frequent target of phishing emails, which are designed to get them to release sensitive information or click on a malicious link. With regular training on cybersecurity best practices and potential scams, however, employees can also be the first line of defense against such intrusions.

MassCyberCenter Director Stephanie Helm offers the following guidance for municipal leaders:

- Clearly articulate the importance of maintaining cybersecurity best practices during remote operations.
- Keep in contact with employees to ascertain how things are going from a technical perspective.
- Encourage "see something, say something" to promote cybersecurity vigilance.
- Engage your IT team early to support hardware, software and licensing requirements.
- Remind users that public records requirements are still valid for municipal business done remotely.

The MassCyberCenter's employee guidelines include the use of government-issued devices that are compliant with municipal IT systems and applications, and avoiding the use of personal email accounts, instant

messaging or texts to conduct municipal business.

It is also important for employees to use strong password management, avoid clicking on suspicious links, and be alert for social engineering scams.

Additional resources

Municipal leaders are advised to speak with their insurer about additional resources and services to help manage cyber risks. MIIA offers CyberNET protection that includes access to expert cyber risk advisors, 15 online training courses available 24/7, sample cyber risk policies and procedures, and guidance with sample contract provisions that can be added to vendor agreements to reduce cyber risk exposure.

For more information on MIIA's cybersecurity training, visit www.emiia.org.

Lin Chabra is MIIA's Member Training Manager.

MEETINGS

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In the meantime, Suhoski is developing one-twelfth budgeting scenarios for the Select Board's approval and for submission to the state if the town can't enact a spending plan by June 29.

Suhoski is looking for a Beacon Hill consensus on state aid, including general government and education funding; additional reporting on the loss of meals tax revenue; additional data on real estate and personal property tax collection rates; insight into reduced local receipts; information on whether federal stimulus

relief will expand to cover revenues lost by the state and cities and towns; and details on whether the federal government will extend its unemployment supplement to help local households.

Athol also postponed its election from early April to June 22. The election's few contested races would likely generate low turnout, Suhoski said. He anticipates it will be easier to manage safety for the election than at Town Meeting.

Grafton Town Administrator Timothy McInerney said he doesn't know if the Town Meeting and election, moved from May to June 20 and June 23, respectively,

will be able to take place on their new dates.

"It's 50-50 at this point," he said.

Grafton has established a return-to-work committee and is considering new safety measures, McInerney said. Officials are following the governor's leadership, he said, but they are also listening to the concerns of residents and workers in deciding whether it's safe to hold these events.

"Again if it's not completely safe to do so, I would expect both the election and Town Meeting to be rescheduled again," McInerney said. ●

AG advisory urges smoking cessation to lower COVID risks

By D.J. Wilson

On April 9, Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey, in conjunction with Massachusetts General Hospital, issued an advisory recommending that people try to stop smoking and vaping because doing so leaves them susceptible to a more severe response to COVID-19, which is primarily a respiratory disease.

The advisory, in English and in Spanish, can be found at www.mass.gov/doc/covid-vaping-advisory-english-and-spanish.

The health dangers of smoking have been well documented over the past 50 years. Respiratory problems caused by vaping came to light in 2019, when scores of American users developed what became known as EVALI

(e-cigarette or vaping product use-associated lung injury).

The medical documentation on the relation between COVID-19 and smoking or vaping is not extensive, and the topic is certainly secondary to employing effective testing methods, alleviating symptoms, and producing a vaccine. A recent study in the European Respiratory Journal posits that a smoker has an increased amount of ACE-2 receptors in their lungs, which helps the COVID-19 virus gain entry into the body.

The study's summary notes that active cigarette smoking boosts ACE-2 in lower airways, "which in part may explain the increased risk of severe COVID-19 in these populations. These findings highlight the importance of smoking cessation for these individuals."

Smokers and vapers also may facilitate conveyance of germs, as they typically touch their hands to their face repeatedly while using these products. The vapor exhaled by smokers and vapers also may carry the virus responsible for COVID-19.

Members of MIIA's Health Benefits Trust who would like to quit smoking or may visit <https://portals.selfhelpworks.com/wellaware/app2/#!/landing> for cessation services. Members may access a new program, Truth Initiative (www.theexprogram.com), beginning June 1.

Other Massachusetts residents wanting to quit can contact the Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or <https://ma.quitlogix.org>.

BUDGET

Continued from page 1

scheduled tax cuts. The governor's budget (H. 2) used a growth rate of 2.8%, and preliminary municipal Cherry Sheets released in January were based on this estimate, which allowed for a \$32 million increase in Unrestricted General Government Aid and a \$304 million increase in Chapter 70 school aid to implement the first year of the Student Opportunity Act.

After Gov. Baker's state of emergency declaration on March 10, the Taxpayers Foundation forecast that fiscal 2020 revenues would fall short of the benchmark by some \$300 million to \$500 million, and that fiscal 2021 revenues could drop by \$2 billion or \$3 billion.

At an April 14 virtual revenue hearing convened by the administration and finance secretary and the chairs of the House and Senate budget committees, the Taxpayers Foundation forecast that revenues could drop by \$4.4 billion next year, or 14%. Foundation President Eileen McAnneny pointed out that this was not a worst-case scenario, and that their forecast would be revisited as circumstance warranted. By the end of April, there were

informal estimates that the collapse in state tax collections next year could be steeper.

Federal support

A modest response to this grim news is a state stabilization fund balance of almost \$3.5 billion, which is available to help close fiscal 2020 and mitigate cuts next year.

The most meaningful offset to state and local budget woes will be relief actions from the federal government. The CARES Act approved by Congress in late March provides about \$2 trillion in federal stimulus and relief funds to counteract the impact of the pandemic, including \$150 billion for a Coronavirus Relief Fund to help state and local governments with COVID-related costs. The Relief Fund includes about \$2.7 billion for Massachusetts that can be used to help pay for eligible costs this year and in fiscal 2021. There is a separate much smaller education relief program.

There is interest building in Washington for another relief bill with substantial stabilization revenues for state and local government. Congress is slated to come back on May 4 to work on that legislation.

The amount of stabilization funding

included the bill for Massachusetts, and the rules governing use of the funds, will help the governor and the Legislature prepare a budget schedule and provide a much clearer picture of funding options for next year.

Local budgets

Through this uncertainty, city and town officials must still work on budgets and be ready with a spending plan when the new fiscal year begins on July 1.

May is typically the big month for town meeting votes on local budgets, with action on city budgets to follow. It's hard to envision much action, however, even with new options in the works in the Legislature, including remote participation in representative town meeting towns and a quorum reduction for open town meetings.

While there could be a flurry of town meeting action in June, due to postponements, ongoing uncertainty could also mean that cities and towns use new rules to start the fiscal year with interim budgets authorized under a new law enacted last month. ●

Classified Advertisements

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Assistant Town Manager

Town of Plainville, Connecticut

Town of Plainville, Conn. is accepting applications for its Assistant Town Manager who assists the Manager administering/managing affairs of town performing high level administrative, technical and professional work, administration of projects, including the CIP/Budget process. Looking for someone energetic and committed to local government and quality customer service, with five years of progressively responsible municipal government/supervisory experience and a degree in public administration, business management or related field. MPA desired. Salary range is \$85,000-\$95,000 DOQ. Job description/application is at www.plainvillect.com. Applications can be emailed to sosle@plainville-ct.gov or mailed to Human Resources, Town of Plainville, One Central Square, Plainville, CT 06062. Deadline is Wednesday, May 20, by 4 p.m.

Building Maintenance

Town of Saugus

The town of Saugus is looking for a Building Maintenance person who may need to supervise, plan, organize, coordinate, evaluate, and provide direction to assigned staff engaged in operation, maintenance and upkeep of town buildings, and parks grounds/facilities. Operates earth moving, snow removal, lawn maintenance, pneumatic, and aerial equipment. Education and Experience: Four years of increasingly responsible experience in the operations and maintenance of parks, open spaces, or municipal public works facilities AND four years of increasingly responsible experience in a supervisory capacity in ornamental horticulture, construction management, parks management, public works systems or a field related to the work; OR an equivalent combination of education, training and experience. Required Knowledge and Skills: Knowledge of: Principles and practices of employee supervision, including selection, work planning, organization, performance review and evaluation, and employee training and discipline. Welding/fabricating, AC wiring, plumbing, concrete, mechanical, electrical or carpentry practices. Please email all cover letters/resumes to Human Resources Manager, Gabriela Lagattolla at glagattolla@saugus-ma.gov.

Part-time Health Agent

Town of Marion

The town of Marion seeks qualified applicants for the part-time position of Health Agent. Under the general supervision of the Town Administrator and the Board of Health, this position performs technical environmental health work in the inspection of private, public and commercial properties for environmental health hazards. Qualified applicants will have a bachelor's degree in a related discipline and one to three years of experience in an environmental and/or health related field, including experience conducting food service inspections. Knowledge of alternative systems approved by Mass. DEP to enhance or provide removal of nitrogen preferred. ServSafe, Certified Pool Operator, Title 5 Systems Inspector preferred. A cover letter and resume must be submitted to: dpaiva@marionma.gov or Town of Marion, Board of Selectmen, 2 Spring St., Marion, MA 02738. The deadline for this submission is May 13. The town of Marion is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Treasurer

Town of Brookfield

Responsibilities include the town's investments, cash management, debt service management, issuance of bonds and administration of payroll, including fringe benefits and related personnel requirements. 32-36 hours/week, competitive pay and full benefits. Municipal experience required. Full job description and qualifications are posted on the town website: www.brookfieldma.us/home/pages/employment-opportunities. Please submit email cover letter and resume to: selectmen@brookfieldma.us or mail to The Board of Selectmen, c/o 6 Central St., Brookfield, MA 01506.

Director of Human Resources

City of Somerville

The city of Somerville seeks a Director of Human Resources with more than 10 years of work experience in the human resources field, at least six years of which are in an HR manager-level role, to join a data-driven progressive executive team committed to providing the highest-quality municipal services for all Somerville residents. The Director will manage a full-time staff of thirteen to oversee the city's human resources including employee relations, labor relations, recruitment and training, employee benefits, and the classification and compensation of positions. The Director will contribute in a key policy role to the future of this city workforce serving a diverse urban constituency. This core management position requires a tactful, discreet, and compassionate strategic thinker who is highly organized with excellent communication and listening skills. SPHR and/or SHRM-SCP certification is desired. Juris doctor or master's degree in an applicable field, and experience in public sector human resources, is strongly preferred. For full job description and application procedure visit: www.somervillema.gov/departments/personnel. Position is open until filled. Hours: full-time plus benefits. Salary: \$132,600 annually.

Economic Development/Tourism Coordinator

Town of Sturbridge

The town of Sturbridge is seeking applicants for the position of Economic Development/Tourism Coordinator. Ideal candidates will have proven economic development experience and will work to promote tourism in one of the premiere tourist towns in central Massachusetts. Experience in economic development, tourism promotion, event planning and execution, and strong social media skills are a must. The town of Sturbridge offers an excellent benefits package and a salary range for the position is between \$47,015 and \$50,135 per year. For a full description, go to the vacancies link at www.town.sturbridge.ma.us. Submit resumes immediately to: The Town Administrator's Office, 308 Main St., Sturbridge, MA 01566. Or email to amensen@sturbridge.gov. Position open until filled, first review April 27. The town of Sturbridge is an EOE.

Assessor

City of Chelsea

Pay Class/Grade: MM9. Salary range: \$87,507.76-\$109,285.20/year. Position Summary: The Chief Assessor serves as Chairman of the Board of Assessors and is responsible for establishing and maintaining assessments of real estate and personal property within the city of Chelsea. Assists the Board of Assessors in calculating the fiscal year tax rate and completion of the state's recap forms to generate city revenues in accordance with guidelines from the State Department of Revenue. The Assessor is required to perform all similar or related duties. Education and Experience: Bachelor's degree and five years of experience; or any equivalent combination of education, training and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job. Licensure by the Mass. State Board of Real Estate Appraisers, IAAO or MAA designation is required. Appraisal experience preferred. Previous experience managing staff. Skills,

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 (print 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 (print 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 printed in mid-July.

June Beacon

Deadline: May 19
Publication: June 1

Summer Beacon (July/August)

Deadline: July 10
Publication: July 22

Placing an ad

You may use our convenient online form at www.mma.org.

For more information, call Meredith Gabrilkska at the MMA at 617-426-7272.

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

Knowledge & Abilities: Required experience and knowledge of property valuation techniques according to Massachusetts Assessing Association. Excellent written and verbal communication skills. Ability to convey and enforce procedures in a professional, impartial and diplomatic manner. Confidentiality is crucial due to access to sensitive information. Must have good math and computer skills and the ability to analyze data. Good knowledge of Microsoft Excel and Word is essential. Valid Driver's License and dependable vehicle. Assessing designation from certified assessing or appraising organization. Must pass background CORI check and all other confidentiality requirements set forth by the MA Department of Revenue. Must pass the Mass. Department of Revenue Course 101 within one year of hire. Qualified candidates should submit a cover letter and resume to the city of Chelsea at jobs@chelseama.gov. www.chelseama.gov/jobs. The city of Chelsea is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Town Engineer

Town of Dunstable

The town of Dunstable (pop. 3,200) seeks a qualified candidate and/or firm to serve as a consulting (one day a week) Town Engineer. The Town Engineer will provide the town assistance with a variety of infrastructure matters that arise from time to time including providing assistance to the Roads Commission, Parks Department, and Town Administrator. The Town Engineer will provide assistance to the town managing its MS4 requirements and will assist the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals with plan reviews and determinations as needed. The Town Engineer will also perform construction inspections for subdivisions and site plans. The individual or firm chosen must have a Professional Engineer's license in the state of Massachusetts. Salary DOQ. Position open until filled, first review of resumes will be Monday, May 11. Please send a cover letter and resume to: Brian Palaia, Town Administrator, Town Hall, 511 Main St., Dunstable, MA 01827 or by email at bpalaia@dunstable-ma.us. EOE

Director of Municipal Finance

Town of East Longmeadow

The town of East Longmeadow is accepting applications for this highly visible and responsible position. The Municipal Finance Director provides management and administrative support to the Town Manager and the Town Council along with the Finance Oversight Committee. Candidate will help ensure that all departments reporting to the Town Manager are operating effectively and efficiently. Responsible for establishing all department budgets, as well as coordinating preparation of the annual town budget. The Finance Director is responsible for overseeing the Assessors and the Treasurer/Collector Departments, ensuring timely and accurate reporting of said departments with oversight of bonding and finance investments initiated by the town. The incumbent interacts frequently with the general public and senior management from other departments, as well as outside vendors, and local and state officials. This position requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree, with a master's degree preferred in public administration or business management. Minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible experience in the public sector, of which a minimum of three years

must be in a supervisory capacity. Additionally, the candidate we seek must have extensive knowledge of general municipal government, a demonstrated ability to work collaboratively to achieve established goals, and be proficient in word processing, spreadsheets, databases and presentation software. Possesses excellent communication skills both written and oral, and a strong knowledge of MUNIS. A detailed job description is available upon request to Elaine Grimaldi in the Human Resources Department at elaine.grimaldi@eastlongmeadowma.gov. Interested candidates should submit an online application, available at www.eastlongmeadowma.gov, along with a cover letter and resume to the Town of East Longmeadow, 60 Center Square, East Longmeadow, MA 01028, attention: Human Resources Department or to elaine.grimaldi@eastlongmeadowma.gov.

SERVICES

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.

Executive Recruiting, Interim Staffing, Human Resources and Management Consulting

GovHR USA/GovTempsUSA provides executive recruiting and interim staffing solutions, management and human resource consulting to local government and nonprofit clients across the country. Seasoned local government professionals provide 5-star quality services including: Classification and Compensation Studies; Temporary and Outsourced staffing; Performance Evaluation System and Training. Visit our website at www.GovHRUSA.com or contact us at 847-380-3240 or info@govhrusa.com to discuss how we may serve your organization. Post to our job board at www.govhrjobs.com.

Management, Human Resources and Executive Search

Rutherford Advisors Inc., DBA The Executive Suite, with more than 40 years' experience, is an expert in providing comprehensive, detailed and effective classification and compensation plans; human resource, performance evaluation, and management efficiency studies; interim management; and executive and senior staff recruitment for public, nonprofit and private organizations. We emphasize innovative solutions to commonly encountered management challenges. For discussion on your needs, please contact Warren J. Rutherford at 508-778-7700 or wjr@theexecutivesuite.com, or visit www.theexecutivesuite.com.

GIS Consulting Services

As a local government, does your community expect more from you? Geospatial technology is a great tool to use to meet these expectations and build trust. Spatial Relationships is a GIS consulting firm in Boston that specializes in on-demand personalized GIS services for local government. Need extra GIS support for an important project, but don't want to deal with the overhead of a large firm? Don't have GIS staff, but have a one-time need? Indispensable GIS staff going out on leave? We're here to help. To learn more about us, please visit www.spatial-relationships.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.

Governance and Management Consulting and Recruitment Services

The Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts Boston provides a comprehensive range of professional services to public sector clients, including executive recruitment, organizational and management studies, charter development, compensation and classification plans, and the design and implementation of performance management programs. The Center's goal is to support enhancements to the productivity and effectiveness of government. The Center carries out its work using a combination of University professional staff and seasoned associates. Services may be obtained through intergovernmental agreement. For more information, please visit our website at www.collinscenter.umb.edu or contact Stephen McGoldrick at 617-287-4824 or stephen.mcgoldrick@umb.edu.

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;

■ CLASSIFIEDS continued on 25

Classified Advertisements

CLASSIFIEDS

Continued from page 25

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@mrigriv.com.

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 Peter Berry for labor matters, employment matters, civil rights matters and retirement matters, or Paul DeRensis for all other public law issues, at 857-259-5200.

Organizational Development and Conflict Resolution

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

Town Counsel Services

Miyares and Harrington 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@miyares-harrington.com or 617-489-1600.

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.

OPEB Funding via Tax Title Sale

Tallage, a real estate investment company in Boston, assists cities and towns at no charge to execute tax title sales under M.G.L. Ch. 60, Sect. 52, for strategic purposes, such as using a percentage of the revenue to set up an OPEB Funding Trust. Using a small initial funding amount from tax title sales with a long-term strategy can dramatically reduce the OPEB number on the balance sheet. Other benefits of a tax title sale include payment of 100 percent of the principal, interest and fees owed per tax title; significant reduction in the expense of managing tax titles; and valuable due diligence provided by private investors on the validity and economics of the tax titles. To schedule a free meeting to discuss the tax title sale process that 45-plus municipalities across the state have recently experienced, and how the tool can be used in conjunction with an OPEB or other funding strategy, please contact Bill Cowin at Tallage at 617-543-7214 or Bill.Cowin@TallageLLC.com.

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

VADAR Systems provides financial management software to more than 100 Massachusetts municipalities. Our accounting, cloud, utility and collections applications are designed exclusively for Massachusetts municipalities by Massachusetts end users. The VADAR Cloud maximizes efficiency with 24/7 secure, remote access to all your applications from any device. Our user support offers unparalleled expertise. Proudly serving Massachusetts for 20-plus years. For a free on-site demonstration, please contact us at 877-823-2700 or sales@vadarsystems.com. Learn more at www.VADARsystems.com. Locally owned and operated at 20 Main St., Suite G1, Acton, MA 01701.

Management Consulting Services

The Matrix Consulting Group is a management consulting firm that provides detailed analysis of public-sector agencies in New England. The firm's services include management, staffing, organizational and operations studies of every local government function, as well as feasibility studies, fleet management and facilities needs. Our staff expertise encompasses police, fire, public works, utilities, planning and building, recreation, finance and administrative functions. For more information, please contact Robin Haley, 17A Steele St., Worcester, MA 01607; 508-887-6564.

Labor Counsel Services/Municipal Human Resources Specialists

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

decisions. Check our website at CliffordKennyLaw.com to see a complete list of our satisfied clients or call John Clifford or Jaime Kenny at 781-924-5796 for more information.

Municipal Financial Management Services

Eric A. Kinsherb, CPA, has been involved in municipal finance since 1994 in various capacities, ranging from Finance Director to an auditor of municipalities as a Certified Public Accountant. Cities and towns in need of a CPA specializing in municipal auditing and consulting are offered services such as municipal audits, assistance in year-end closing, interim treasurer, collector and town accountant services, revenue forecasting, and capital financing plan assistance. If you are in need of a municipal audit or a financial consultant, please contact Eric Kinsherb at eric@erickinsherbcpa.com or at 508-833-8508. Learn more at www.erickinsherbcpa.com.

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 Street #7, Plymouth, MA 02360; 508-746-3653; mmacginc@gmail.com.

Human Resources Consulting

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

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. ●



Massachusetts Municipal Association
One Winthrop Square, Boston, MA 02110

MAY

7 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, collective bargaining webinar, 10-11 a.m. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

8 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association and Massachusetts Select Board Association, webinar briefing, 12-1:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker or Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

12 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, Board of Directors, 8:30-9:30 a.m., remote meeting. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

12 MMA Board of Directors, 10-11 a.m., remote meeting. Contact: MMA Executive Director's office

12 Massachusetts Select Board Association, Board of Directors, 2-3:30 p.m., remote meeting. Contact: Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

13 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors Association, webinar, 3-4:15 p.m. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

14 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, webinar, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

JUNE

9 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, Board of Directors, 8:30-9:30 a.m., remote meeting. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

9 MMA Board of Directors, 10-11 a.m., remote meeting. Contact: MMA Executive Director's office

If any part of the address on this issue is incorrect, please email the correct information to database@mma.org.

Due to the ongoing COVID emergency, MMA has suspended all in-person meetings through the end of June. The meeting details here are subject to change.

9 Massachusetts Select Board Association, Board of Directors, 2-3:30 p.m., remote meeting. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

11 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, webinar, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

JULY

15 Massachusetts Mayors' Association, monthly meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

SEPTEMBER

10 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, 4-7 p.m., Delaney House, Holyoke. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

11 Massachusetts Select Board Association, regional meeting, 8 a.m.-12 p.m., Sharon Community Center, Sharon. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

17 Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources, boot camp, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Lake Pearl, Wrentham. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

23 Massachusetts Mayors' Association, monthly meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact: MMA Communications and Membership Director Candace Pierce

OCTOBER

2 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, boot camp, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Pine Ridge Country Club, Oxford. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

3 Massachusetts Select Board Association, Western Massachusetts Conference, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Log Cabin, Holyoke. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Isabelle Nichols

15 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, meeting, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Lake Pearl, Wrentham. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

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

MMA contacts

Denise Baker can be reached at dbaker@mma.org

Isabelle Nichols can be reached at inichols@mma.org

Timmery Kuck can be reached at tkuck@mma.org

For more information, visit

www.mma.org.

Online registration is available for most of these events.