

Health bills leave out 32B reform

By David Baier

The House and Senate each passed differing health insurance reform bills, but neither version would reform Chapter 32B, the state law that has handcuffed municipal managers and made it nearly impossible to manage health care costs.

The MMA had sought to have language added in both the House and Senate that would give cities and towns the same authority as the state in providing health insurance for employees. The two changes would have permitted the local legislative body to set municipal contribution rates and allowed locally adopted

group insurance commissions to determine health insurance plan design.

The municipal public employee unions vehemently opposed these proposals, however.

Municipalities, meanwhile, continue to face extraordinary pressure from dramatic health cost increases.

Municipal health insurance costs have grown from 7 percent of municipal budgets in 2001 to 10.6 percent in just four years. This represents a 42 percent increase over that period. Ab-

sent any change in Chapter 32B, health insurance costs will soon be an astounding 15 percent of municipal budgets.

For nearly every municipality, health insurance now eats up at least 80 percent of the allowable property tax increase under Proposition 2 1/2.

The changes sought by the MMA would allow cities and towns to treat municipal employees in the same manner that state employees are treated in terms of health insurance.

The House and Senate

health care bills were focused on access and covering the uninsured. The chairs of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing, Rep. Patricia Walrath and Sen. Richard Moore, have both acknowledged that the current system of providing health insurance for municipal employees is broken and in need of a substantive overhaul.

The MMA will continue to work toward solving the problem of providing health insurance for municipal employees. *

Bill would help reduce energy costs

The Legislature has sent to the governor a bill regarding heating, energy assistance and tax relief that would help municipalities make their buildings more energy efficient.

The bill would allow cities and towns to implement guaranteed performance contracting for the purchase, installation and maintenance of energy conservation equipment for municipal buildings.

"This measure will make an enormous difference for cities and towns all across the state," said MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith. "We are very grateful that the Legislature has embraced this important priority and acted so swiftly to make their energy assistance bill a big win for municipalities."

Guaranteed energy performance contracting would

give municipalities relief at a crucial time. Hundreds of municipal buildings are in

need of capital renovation and repairs, and, unfortu-

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Regional update meetings held

Judy Booman, co-chair of the Berlin Finance Committee, asks a question during an MMA Regional Update Meeting in Boxborough on Nov. 9. To Booman's left are Townsend Finance Committee member Donald Klein (center) and Townsend Town Administrator Greg Barnes. Update meetings also took place in Tewksbury, Northampton and Randolph. Topics included the impact of rising health care costs on municipal budgets.

2005 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, contact the office of MMA Executive Director Geoff Beckwith at (617) 426-7272.

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- Mary Clare Higgins**, MMA Vice President
Mayor, Northampton
- Geoffrey Beckwith**, (non-voting)
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- Stanley Usovicz**, Mayor, Salem

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dispelling more myths

The cost of government is a topic that always triggers lively discussions and strong opinions. Indeed, for the past 25 years, much of the discourse in American politics has been about the cost and benefits of government at all levels.

The roots of our country were established by a revolutionary people, and the flow of our political culture for three centuries has always included a decidedly anti-government undercurrent, even as the role of government has grown to be an integral part of our daily lives, a central force in our quality of life, and an essential aspect of our security in the world.

For local and state lawmakers and leaders who make it their business to deliver public services efficiently and effectively, it can be particularly exasperating when ill-informed critics ignore reality and disregard facts in order to score rhetorical points or push a particular agenda.

It is even more frustrating

By
Geoffrey Beckwith



when this criticism comes from people who should know better. This happens all the time, of course – at town meetings, in newspapers, at the supermarket, in city hall chambers, and almost everywhere in between.

The most recent front-page splash was from a former state secretary of administration and finance, who tried to blame cities and towns for the fiscal woes that beset local government by erroneously claiming that local workforces and payrolls are too large and municipalities are too generous to their employees.

In fact, localities in Massachusetts are more frugal than the rest of the country.

A study published by the

Federal Reserve Bank of Boston this past summer, before the former secretary's finger-pointing, concludes that "the picture that emerges ... is one of a relatively lean and competitive public sector workforce in New England" when compared with the rest of the nation.

The report "Do New England State and Local Governments Have Too Many Employees, and Are They Overpaid?" was published in the Federal Reserve Bank's summer 2005 edition of New England Fiscal Facts. The analysis is eye-opening, especially for those who need to be educated about this subject area.

Here are some highlights:

For the latest data available, the U.S. average state and local government employment per 10,000 people is 542 employees. In Massachusetts, we have 498. We employ 9 percent fewer state and local workers than the national average.

The U.S. average local gov-

DIRECTOR, continued on 13

The Beacon

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We encourage readers to send their comments, story ideas, news items, and notices of upcoming events. To send us messages electronically, through Massachusetts Local Net or through the Local Net's link to the Internet, the Local Net address is: Beacon Editor. The Internet address is: beacon_editor@mma.org

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Ch. 90 gets boost from state surplus

By John Robertson

The Legislature last month included \$55 million in a special budget bill funded by fiscal 2005 year-end surplus revenues to help cities and towns pay for local road projects through the Chapter 90 program.

The proposed Chapter 90 distribution would be in addition to the \$120 million provided last April for use this year and the \$120 million slated for release in April 2006.

Gov. Mitt Romney proposed a \$100 million supplemental distribution last

July and is expected to approve the Legislature's plan when it reaches his desk.

Both the House and Senate rejected proposals to help cities and towns with snow and ice deficits carried forward from last year's extraordinary winter or with skyrocketing fuel costs this year.

The financial picture for state government continues to improve as a slow economic expansion takes hold. According to a preliminary review, the state ended fiscal 2005 with a structural surplus of \$300 million or

more and was able to make deposits to the stabilization (rainy day) fund, bringing the total to \$1.7 billion, or almost 7 percent of spending. Tax collections last year grew by 7.1 percent.

On Oct. 26, the governor's chief financial officer, Thomas Trimarco, increased the tax collection projection for fiscal 2006 by \$509 million to \$17.96 billion. This amount is \$674 million higher than the conservative estimate used by the Legislature when it approved the fiscal 2006 state budget.

The new projection for the

year reflects an expected 5.1 percent increase from the final fiscal 2005 amount and is based in part on collections through the first four months of the year that increased 8.5 percent over the same period last year. The increase in the projection offsets the \$600 million that the Legislature drew from the stabilization fund to fund the fiscal 2006 budget.

In a first look at fiscal 2007, Trimarco projected tax collections at \$18.68 billion, an increase of \$721 million (4 percent) over the projection for this year. *

Senate OKs expedited permitting reform plan

By Matthew G. Feher

An economic stimulus package approved by the Senate on Nov. 3 would make it easier for cities and towns to implement Chapter 43D, the local-option expedited permitting law enacted last year.

The Senate bill calls for a total of \$4.5 million to be made available in the form of technical-assistance grants to enable communities to implement Chapter 43D. The bill also would double the time allowed to complete the permitting process from 90

days to 180.

The bill would allow communities to designate particular projects as 43D priority development sites instead of having to designate the entire municipality as such. This change would enable local leaders to target development where they envision the best overall benefit to the city and town.

The economic stimulus package was sent to a House-Senate conference committee. The House version of the bill does not include provisions to reform

Chapter 43D, although House leaders have indicated that reforming the program is a priority.

The language in the Senate package amending Chapter 43D was crafted by the MMA and the Executive Office of Economic Development over the past several months. The Romney administration had filed the plan as part of his economic stimulus bill back in March and re-filed it as stand-alone legislation in July.

The MMA successfully opposed an amendment man-

dating that any site selected by a city or town for 43D had to comply with rigid "smart growth" criteria. Additionally, the MMA argued that another amendment would have created more bureaucracy by empowering regional planning agencies in the distribution of technical assistance.

Chapter 43D seeks to provide municipalities with incentives and new options to provide expedited permitting for facilities for new businesses. No municipality has yet adopted the local-option program, however.

Sen. Jack Hart, Senate chair of the Joint Committee on Economic Development, has made reforming Chapter 43D a cornerstone of the Senate's stimulus package. Senate President Robert Travaglini and Sen. Therese Murray also have played important roles in advancing the plan.

Among other provisions, the \$473 million Senate economic stimulus bill recapitalizes the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund at \$30 million. *

Turco to entertain Annual Meeting

John Turco, a veteran of the Boston and Providence comedy scenes, will entertain attendees of the MMA Annual Meeting during the Saturday evening banquet on Jan. 14.

Turco held a job in the corporate world for eight years before his comedy career took off, giving him a unique perspective of workplace life. He's known for a clean, edgy style, a few impressions, and light-



John Turco

ning-fast crowd work.

He is a regular at clubs and corporations all over New England, and he has appeared at more than 100 colleges and universities in the re-

gion over the past 10 years. He has entertained crowds at Nick's Comedy Stop, Dick Doherty's Comedy Clubs, Stitches Komedy Kafe in Providence, Giggles, and the Comedy Connection.

Turco has worked with many national acts, including Anthony Clark, Jim Bruer, Jay Mohr, and Dom Irrera, and he has toured with Pauly Shore.

- John Ouellette

Legislature works on senior tax relief bills

By John Robertson

Comprehensive legislation that would expand property tax relief programs for elderly homeowners and renters was approved by the Legislature's Committee on Revenue in October after months of work by legislators and advocates to reach agreement on a plan.

The Legislature enacted parts of the plan last month (H. 2511) to expand eligibility for the property tax "circuit breaker" credit on the state income tax by raising the home value qualification cap from \$432,000 last year to \$600,000 and by changing the index used to adjust the cap each year. H. 2511 also included a change to how interest payments are determined in the property tax deferral program. The remaining provisions of the

bill, including a new local option exemption program, are being reviewed by the House budget committee.

Action on property tax relief legislation follows on the heels of a report from State Auditor Joseph DeNucci that found that existing exemption qualification levels and benefits have not kept pace with inflation and rising property values. The report identified a decrease from 30,905 to 20,813 in the number of taxpayers participating in the main set of local exemption programs for the elderly and a drop from 19,699 to 15,300 in another set of local programs.

The auditor's report proposes that local property tax exemption programs be consolidated into a single state-funded program that pro-

vides uniform and increased benefits to senior citizens to a level of 50 percent of the state median property tax bill, which was \$2,891 in fiscal 2004.

The Revenue Committee bill (H. 4468) would expand the range of tax relief programs currently available to elderly taxpayers, including the following major changes:

- Property tax "circuit breaker" on state income tax: The bill would increase the home value qualification cap to \$750,000, with adjustment annually by a housing price index, and allow tax credits when taxes exceed 8 percent of income rather than 10 percent, as is now the case.

- New local option exemption program: The bill would allow cities and towns, by vote of the local legislative body, to adopt a new exemption, Clause forty-first C 1/2, for elderly taxpayers of 10 percent of the average assessed value of residential property in the community. Taxpayers would have to be

at least 70 years of age and meet certain residence requirements and income limits. Cities and towns would be allowed to increase the exemption to 20 percent of average residential values and ease qualification limits.

- Reform of property tax deferral program: The bill would change the fixed 8 percent interest rate, applied to deferred property tax payments allowed to elderly taxpayers, to a locally set rate of up to 8 percent, and expand eligibility for the program to include disabled taxpayers.

- Local hardship exemption: The bill would loosen the criteria for qualification for the municipal hardship exemption granted at the discretion of the local board of assessors from a determination of inability to make tax payments due to age, infirmity and poverty to any one of the three current criteria.

- Work for exemption program: The bill would in-

TAX RELIEF, continued on 16

Ch. 40R incentives for education approved

On Nov. 16, the final day of the formal session for the year, the Legislature sent a bill to the governor that would offset education-related costs incurred with development under Chapter 40R, the local-option "smart growth" zoning incentive program.

The plan will reimburse cities and towns for a broad range of costs associated with school enrollment growth as a result of 40R development, including increases in local public or charter school attendance (K-12) and the need for services such as special education programs.

The MMA advocated for this change because of the fiscal impact associated with an increase in housing development. The lack of this

incentive, as well as several other issues regarding the structure of 40R itself, explain why no community has adopted the program.

Chapter 40R encourages the adoption of zoning overlay districts that allow higher density residential and mixed-use development in so-called "smart growth" locations by providing fiscal incentives to cities and towns. Besides these new education incentives, 40R provides cities and towns with an up-front zoning incentive payment, a density bonus payment per unit of housing constructed, and priority consideration for various discretionary grant programs.

The governor was expected to sign the bill into law.

— *Matthew G. Feher*

House approves federal affordable housing bill

The U.S. House of Representatives on Oct. 26 passed a Federal Housing Finance Reform Act, which would establish a new source of funding for cities and towns to assist in the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing.

The bill (H.R. 1461), which passed by a wide margin, would require Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae and the Federal Home Loan Banks to contribute 3.5 percent of their annual profits to the new Affordable Housing Trust Fund for the first two years and 5 percent for the following three years. The fund is targeted to families making 50 percent or less of the local area median income.

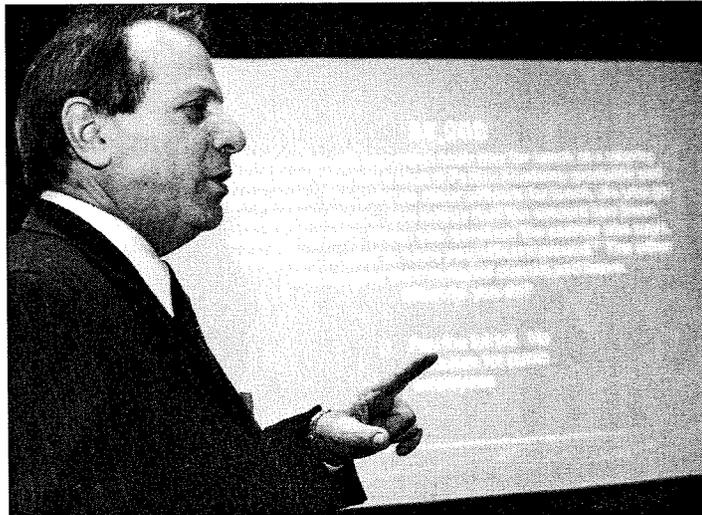
The Senate companion bill (S. 190), the Federal Housing Enterprise Regulatory Reform Act, was approved by the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs over the summer, but it is not known when it will be put before the full Senate for debate.

— *Marc Hymovitz*

Workshops to address range of key topics

A highlight of the 2006 MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show will be the 27 workshops designed to provide information and insight to local officials.

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Rocco Longo, now town manager in Billerica, leads a workshop on ethics during the 2005 MMA Annual Meeting.

The workshops, to be held during three time slots, cover a range of legal, technical, administrative, financial and human service issues important to local governments in Massachusetts. Each workshop will present the latest information on the topic and allow ample time for questions from attendees.

To gain the most from the workshops, Annual Meeting attendees from the same community are encouraged to attend different sessions and then share the information.

Complete workshop descriptions are available on www.mma.org and will be published in the Annual Meeting Program Book.

The following is a list of workshop titles and presenters:

Friday, Jan. 13, 2-3:30 p.m.

- Are You the Master of Your Plan?
Presenter: MMA Policy Committee on Municipal and Regional Administration
- Collective Bargaining and Health Insurance: What You Should, Can and Can't Do
Presenter: Massachusetts Municipal Association

- Association
- Economics 101: Creating Vibrant Communities
Presenter: Executive Office of Economic Development and the MMA Policy Committee on Municipal and Regional Administration
- Emergency Preparedness for Local Officials: Community Health and Protection
Presenter: Massachusetts Municipal Association
- Federal Telecommunications Update: What Changes Could Mean for Local Authority
Presenter: Massachusetts Municipal Association
- Municipal Management: What Local Officials Need to Know
Presenter: Massachusetts Municipal Management Association
- New Issues in Municipal Finance and Administration
Presenter: Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services
- Public/Private Partnerships: Innovative Strategies to Fund Water System Improvements
Presenter: Massachusetts Municipal Association

- School Building Authority Update
Presenter: Massachusetts School Building Authority
- Survivor's Guide to the Open Meeting and Public Records Laws
Presenter: City Solicitors and Town Counsel Association

Friday, Jan. 13, 4-5:15 p.m.

- Conflict Negotiation and Mediation Skills: Becoming a Nimble Negotiator
Presenter: Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association
- Human Resources: A Strategic Partner in Municipal Management
Presenter: Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association
- Pension Obligation Bonds: Is It the Right Strategy for Your Community?
Presenter: Massachusetts Municipal Association
- The Challenge of Retiree Health Benefits: Growing Population and Growing Complexity
Presenter: Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association's Health Benefits Trust
- The Safety Net: How Does Your Community Measure Up?

- *Presenter: Local Officials Human Services Council*
- TIFs and DIFs: Managing Economic Development
Presenter: Massachusetts Government Finance Officers Association
- Water Management Act Changes: Understanding the Impacts on Your Community
Presenter: Massachusetts Municipal Association
- What's the Road Ahead?
Presenter: Executive Office of Transportation and the MMA's Policy Committee on Public Works, Transportation and Public Utilities

Saturday, Jan. 14, 2:15-3:45 p.m.

- Campus Contributions to Community and Regional Development
Presenter: Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association
- Crystal Ball Finances: Multi-Year Revenue Forecasting
Presenter: Association of Town Finance Committees
- Eminent Domain: Economic Development in the Post-Kelo Era
Presenter: Massachusetts Municipal Association
- Lakes, Ponds, Rivers and Coasts: Development, Permitting and Stormwater Issues
Presenter: Massachusetts Municipal Association
- Municipal Law Update
Presenter: City Solicitors and Town Counsel Association
- Personnel and Labor Law Update
Presenter: Massachusetts Municipal Association
- No Need for Highway Design Exceptions
Presenter: Massachusetts Highway Association
- The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Tips for Dealing with Difficult Citizens
Presenter: Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association
- Women Leading: Politics, Policy Making and Public Management
Presenter: Massachusetts Municipal Association *

MMA Trade Show has new vendors, features

Local officials may visit some of their regular vendors as well as check out new ones at the MMA Trade Show on Jan. 13 and 14.

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Several new companies will be at the 2006 event to showcase the latest products and services tailored for municipalities. Also featured will

be companies whose products and services communities have relied on for years. This is a great opportunity to meet vendors face-to-face and ask questions.

Trade Show features include:

- Exhibitor seminars offered during Trade Show hours
- A driving simulation system for public safety personnel, public works personnel, and others who

drive for municipalities to test their driving skills

- A Firearms Training System simulator (back by popular demand)
- An Incident Support Unit provided by the Department of Fire Services
- A Holistic Wellness Fair on Saturday, Jan. 14, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Trade Show hours are Friday, Jan. 13, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., and Saturday, Jan.

14, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

A welcoming reception will be held at the Sheraton Boston Hotel on Friday, 5:30-7 p.m., immediately following the last Annual Meeting workshop of the day.

"Trade Show Only" invitations are available to municipal employees and college students by contacting Trade Show Manager Karen LaPointe at (800) 882-1498, ext. 154, or karen_lapointe@mma.org. *

Economic report to be unveiled at meeting

By John Ouellette

This year's MMA Annual Business Meeting, to be held on Saturday, Jan. 14, will feature the unveiling of an extensive study of the relationship between local aid and the state's economic health. The report, a joint effort of the MMA and Northeastern University's Center for Urban and Regional Policy, focuses on the need for reinvestment in revenue sharing in order for the Massachusetts economy to compete and thrive.

Business meetings are just one feature of the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show, the largest annual gathering of municipal officials in the state. The event, to be held Jan. 13 and 14 in Boston, also features 27 timely workshops (see related story), a trade show, noted speakers and entertainment, receptions and other activities.

This year's keynote speaker is Dan Pink, a former speechwriter for Vice

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Sherborn Selectman Paul DeRensis speaks during the 2005 MMA Annual Business Meeting.

President Al Gore and the author of two books about the changing nature of the workplace. Former New Hampshire Gov. Jeanne Shaheen is the speaker for the Women Elected Municipal Officials annual Leadership Luncheon.

Annual Meeting attendees will also have a chance to meet the next governor during a moderated session with the declared candidates.

This year's Annual Meeting theme is "Investing Lo-

cally, Competing Globally: Communities Build Our Economic Future."

The Trade Show will once again feature more than 200 exhibitors highlighting products and services essential to community operations. The Trade Show will be open on Friday, Jan. 13, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., and on Saturday, Jan. 14, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Educational opportunities will extend to the Trade Show floor, where exhibitors will be hosting workshops. More information about these workshops will be

available on www.mma.org.

The popular Power Hour sessions will be offered again midday on Saturday, covering timely, special-interest topics.

Reservations are being accepted for the WEMO Luncheon on Friday, Jan. 13 and the Friday and Saturday evening dinners, which will feature informative speakers and quality entertainment.

The MMA has negotiated reduced room rates at the host hotel, the Sheraton Boston, located adjacent to the Hynes. (See related story.) All Annual Meeting events will be held at the Hynes, except for the opening session and the banquet dinners, which will be held at the hotel.

Annual Meeting registration fees remain the same for the fourth straight year, in order to encourage all MMA members to attend and participate in this important event.

For more information on the Annual Meeting, contact Marisa Lutz at (617) 426-7272, ext. 106. For Trade Show information, contact Karen LaPointe at (617) 426-7272, ext. 154. *

Act now to qualify for reduced meeting rates

The early registration rate for the 2006 MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show will end on Dec. 10. After that, the cost for members to attend the meeting will increase from \$140 to \$175 for both days and from \$110 to \$130 for just one day. The registration form, included in this issue of The Beacon, may be mailed or faxed back to the MMA office. Registrations cannot be taken over the phone.

Those who plan to stay in Boston during the MMA Annual Meeting are also ad-

vised to make reservations as soon as possible at the host hotel, the Sheraton Boston. The MMA has secured a special rate for meeting attendees of \$129 for single occupancy or \$139 for double occupancy. The reduced rate is available only until Dec. 22, or until all the rooms in the block have been filled. The hotel room reservation form (included in this issue) should be returned to the hotel, not the MMA office. Or, the hotel may be called directly, at (800) 325-3535. *

Details available on mma.org

The MMA Web site is the best source of up-to-date information about the MMA's 2006 Annual Meeting & Trade Show.

Information about schedules, workshops, speakers and the MMA Business Meeting is available on www.mma.org.

Program and hotel registration forms are available online, as is an attendee information brochure. The Web site also features information about the Hynes Convention Center and Sheraton Boston Hotel, including directions and parking information.

Boston Attractions lists things to do and see while visiting the city, as well as descriptions of local restaurants within walking distance of the Annual Meeting site.

To access Annual Meeting information online, visit www.mma.org and click on the MMA Annual Meeting link on the home page. *

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Baker addresses health care at ATFC meeting

By Ellen Stoolmacher

Charles Baker, president and CEO of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, called for a thorough and honest discussion on health care during the Association of Town Finance Committees' Annual Meeting on Nov. 5 at Holy Cross College.

As a head of a health insurance plan, a former senior state official (administration and finance secretary and health and human services secretary) and current municipal leader (first-term selectman in Swampscott), Baker offered a unique perspective on rising health care costs and the impact on cities and towns.

Baker began with a quick overview of the competing health care bills in the Legislature and lauded state officials for taking up the issue in light of the \$400 million in federal funds reserved for Medicaid ser-



Harvard Pilgrim Health Care President and Swampscott Selectman Charles Baker speaks at the annual meeting of the Association of Town Finance Committees.

vices that could be at stake.

Baker stressed "the need to create a more transparent health care system." He said the relationship between health care costs and quality needs to be better understood, and this discus-

sion needs to take place in the public domain.

Baker noted the price discrepancies at hospitals across the state, saying that the cost of similar procedures performed in Massachusetts hospitals can vary by up to 300 percent. Baker said, however, "There is no evidence that quality varies by 300 percent."

If more information regarding health care quality was available to the public, he said, then perhaps care providers and the public could be more sensitized to the link between quality and cost.

Baker described the current health care situation as a "flight to brand" – customers flock to certain hospitals because of the name, regardless of whether there is a difference in quality. Ten years ago, 70 percent of customers used community hospitals, while 30 percent used so-called "teaching" hospitals; since then the ratio has shifted to 60 percent for community hospitals and 40 percent academic.

The move to higher-cost academic hospitals contributes to higher health care costs. Community hospitals, Baker said, can often perform the same service with the same quality for less money.

"If we start making it public and publish information on outcomes and quality care, things could change," he said.

Without information relating quality to cost, some facilities can continue to charge \$2,000 for an MRI while others charge \$300.

Baker also discussed his experiences as a selectman in dealing with rising health care costs, collective bargaining and state-local relations. He noted the challenges of bargaining health care at the local level and said that without more flexibility, cities and towns could be in a "terrible spot" on this issue.

He said there needs to be a shared benefits/shared burden approach to state-local relations. Many cities and towns, he said, are operating with state aid at levels below what they received in 2001. He said spending data indicates that the increase in spending at the local level over the last 10 years is equal to or less than the increase in spending at the state level over the same period.

State cuts in local aid merely pass fiscal problems from the state level to the local level, he said. Baker urged attendees to raise this issue in the public debate and engage the gubernatorial candidates in the discussion on local aid. The current system, he said, "sets many communities up to fail." *



Forum addresses fiscal future

Noah Berger, executive director of the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, answers a question during the Nov. 5 annual meeting of the Association of Town Finance Committees. Berger was joined on a panel discussing the state's fiscal future by Barbara Anderson, executive director of Citizens for Limited Taxation, and former Arlington Selectman Charles Lyons. Roughly 200 finance committee members and other local officials attended the meeting, which took place at Holy Cross College in Worcester.

Changing demographics affect workforce

By Ellen Stoolmacher

There is a significant connection between Massachusetts's shifting population and its labor force growth, according to Andrew Sum, co-director of the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University.

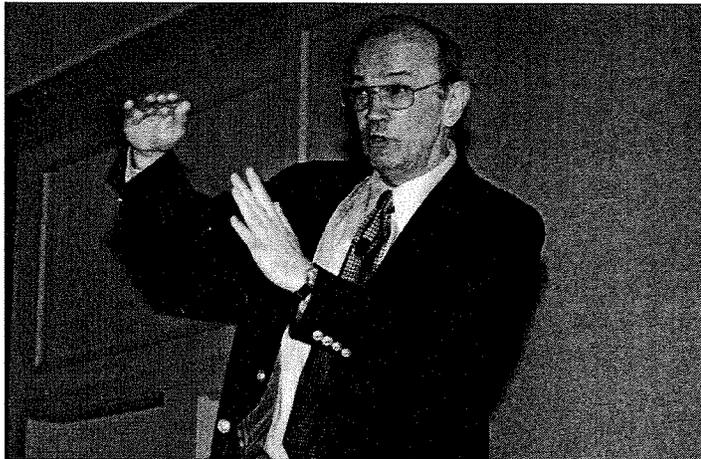
Sum, an expert in labor force development, was the keynote speaker at the Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association's Annual Labor Relations Seminar on Nov. 4 in Marlborough.

He noted that the state's overall population has experienced little net growth over the past five years. In 2004, Massachusetts was the only state in the country to see a decline in population.

Most of the population loss is among relatively young, highly educated adults, with the largest loss being residents between age 35 and 54, Sum said. The loss of this key segment of the working-age population has had an impact on the development of the labor force.

Massachusetts has also seen a shift in its ethnic makeup. Sum said the new residents coming to Massachusetts are primarily foreigners, and as a result "the share of immigrants in the Massachusetts workforce is growing." Recently arrived immigrants, according to Sum, have become "the state's key source of new labor."

Recent immigrants are mainly coming from Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia, with Brazil being the single largest source of new immigrants. In 2004, 18 percent of Brazilian immigrants in the United States were living in Massachu-



Andrew Sum, co-director of the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University, addresses the Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association's annual Labor Relations Seminar on Nov. 4.

setts.

Sum said some of the recent immigrants are highly educated and some have very limited schooling.

"Adult immigrants were more than three times as likely as native-born residents to lack a high school diploma," he said, "although newer immigrants tend to be better educated than older immigrants."

A greater challenge for employers is the English-speaking proficiency of recent immigrants. In 2004, nearly 40 percent of new foreign-born immigrants in Massachusetts spoke little or no English, Sum said. The increasing number of new immigrants who lack English-speaking skills is causing a shift in the available workforce and the jobs that can be filled.

"The type of job that an immigrant holds is related to his or her ability to speak English well," Sum said. "Teaching immigrants to speak English is central to enhancing the state's available labor force."

Sum encouraged municipal employers to address this challenge in both workforce development and in

the public domain.

The growing population of older workers is also affecting the state's workforce. While there has been a decline in younger workers, Sum said, "older workers and immigrants keep us afloat."

"Our labor force is aging and we will be heavily dependent on older workers to expand the labor force in

the future," he said.

People today will work far longer than their parents, he added.

Overall, the state's "unemployment rate has fallen because people are leaving Massachusetts."

Both the employed and unemployed are leaving the state for more affordable living in other parts of the country. Sum encourages employers to think about this trend and engage in the public policy debate about why young mid-level workers – those between age 35 and 54 – are leaving Massachusetts.

Sum's research finds that the contribution of new immigrants to the population will continue, and new immigrant workers will continue to be the state's principal source of new labor. The challenge for employers, he said, is to engage this new diverse labor force and to examine the flight of the state's existing native workers. ■



DEP gets feedback

Doug Fine, assistant commissioner of policy and planning for the Department of Environmental Protection, addresses the MMA's Policy Committee on the Environment on Nov. 9. Fine was seeking feedback on the DEP's plans to increase technical assistance and outreach to cities and towns.

Legislative committee holds hearing on WMA

By Marc Hymovitz

In response to complaints from groups including the MMA about the implementation of updates to the states' Water Management Act, the Legislature's Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture held an oversight hearing in an effort to determine whether any legislative action should be taken.

More than 100 people attended the hearing Oct. 26 at the State House, including watershed associations, the Conservation Law Foundation, and several panels of local officials. Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Robert Gollidge described his department's efforts to create and implement a plan to limit the amount of water withdrawn from stressed river basins.

The DEP implemented updates to the state's Water Management Act in 2004. Local officials have been critical of both the plan and the process, arguing that the DEP pushed the new policy through without the public input required for regulation changes. Critics have also questioned the science that the DEP used to develop the proposal, saying there is no evidence that water withdrawals are the main cause of low river flows.

Under the updated plan, the DEP will do the following when considering all Water Management Act permitting decisions, including permit and permit amendment applications, five-year compliance reviews of existing permits, and other permit modifications:

- Impose water conservation and reporting standards
- Use site screening criteria

to identify where new sources or increases from existing sources would likely have significant flow impacts and therefore require a more rigorous review, including an evaluation of need and alternatives to any increase in volume

- Require that proposals for new or increased withdrawals include an evaluation of ways to offset the withdrawals by reducing out-of-basin flow or increasing water returned to the basin
- Deny requests for new or increased withdrawals that cannot be mitigated and will cause significant impact

The Water Management Act permit regulates how much water a community may produce for its customers. For communities in designated medium- or high-stress basins, the residential use limit is 65 gallons per capita. For low-stress and unstressed basins, the limit is 80 gallons.

Local implementation of these initiatives is expected to have dramatic effects on municipal budgets. These changes come in addition to other recent state and federal regulatory initiatives, such as testing for perchlorate, implementation of the Phase II Stormwater Management Rule, and changes to lead and copper testing rules.

All of these regulatory initiatives come at a time when the aging municipal water infrastructure is in need of rehabilitation and the federal Department of Homeland Security has issued new system safeguard requirements. Cities and towns also face fiscal stress

due to several years of local aid cuts.

The Water Management Act was raised at the June 14 meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission with Lt. Gov. Kerry Healey, where Gollidge agreed to convene a meeting of local officials to discuss how to proceed on the issue. The DEP then created focus groups made up of stakeholders charged with examining the various pieces of the Water Management Act updates. While progress has been made – the DEP has discussed phasing in some of the requirements and postponing punitive fines – much was left off the table, including the basic science behind the plan.

At the legislative hearing, the panels of local officials discussed the impact the policy will have on their

communities. They argued that while the DEP put forth the plan as a policy with little input from local government, it has the force of law, which should be subject to the public hearing process.

Panelists urged the committee to create, through legislation, a special commission made up of all stakeholders charged with examining all of the issues and concerns and developing a workable plan that would accomplish the goal of all sides – to protect our limited water supply – while allowing for growth across Massachusetts. Under the proposal, the commission would have six months to report back. The MMA has suggested language to the committee and will continue to work on the issue when the Legislature reconvenes in January. *



Design manual reviewed

MassHighway Commissioner Luisa Palewonski meets with the MMA's Policy Committee on Public Works, Transportation and Public Utilities on Nov. 3 to review a revised highway design manual, which is expected to be released in January. The revised manual will give communities more of a voice, as well as new responsibilities, in context-sensitive design. Palewonski will be discussing the manual in a Jan. 14 workshop during the MMA's Annual Meeting.

House passes bill to limit eminent domain

By Marc Hymovitz

The U.S. House of Representatives last month overwhelmingly approved a bill (H.R. 4128) that would limit the use of eminent domain by cities and towns.

The bill would freeze for two years all federal economic development funds to governments that use eminent domain for economic development purposes. The bill defines "economic development" broadly to include projects that "increase tax revenue, tax base, employment or general economic health." The exceptions to this definition are considered insufficient to protect many economic development projects in communities.

The bill essentially would

shift land use controls from the local and state levels to the federal level.

In response to last summer's U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Kelo v. City of New London*, Congress and state legislatures around the country have rushed to pass property rights legislation in an effort to limit the use of eminent domain. In Massachusetts, House Minority Leader Brad Jones of North Reading has filed a bill that would limit a community's rarely used ability to take land for economic development purposes. That bill has yet to be admitted.

The MMA, the National League of Cities and other municipal associations have urged Congress and the

states to avoid taking away this state-derived power. These groups argue that decisions about the proper use of eminent domain – including whether additional checks and balances are needed to protect individual rights – are best left to states and municipalities.

During debate on H.R. 4128, four amendments were offered that would have limited the scope of the bill, but all four were rejected. The amendments would have:

- Eliminated the penalties in the bill while allowing property owners to seek injunctions against takings
- Reduced the legislation to a "sense of Congress" measure declaring disap-

proval of the *Kelo* decision

- Specified that increasing tax revenue must be the "primary purpose" of a taking by a government penalized under the legislation
- Exempted projects intended to address "blight" as defined in state statutes throughout the country

Seven members of the Massachusetts delegation either voted for one of the amendments and/or against the bill. These Congressmen were John Olver, Richard Neal, James McGovern, John Tierney, Edward Markey, Michael Capuano and William Delahunt.

The Senate is expected to take up similar legislation, though no timetable has been set. *

MunEnergy offers online energy information tool

Today's volatile energy market makes it more important than ever to purchase electricity through a competitive supplier in order to achieve price stability and budget certainty.

Being well informed about energy usage is also important to effective energy budget management. The MMA's MunEnergy program, in cooperation with Constellation NewEnergy, announces a new tool to help MunEnergy members stay up to date on their energy use.

NewEnergy Online, previously known as WebJoules, is a free online tool that helps customers analyze energy usage data and budget electricity costs. The easy-to-use system lets customers track consumption, review past and current invoices, and start budgeting for next year's energy costs.

The system lets users view electricity usage in a variety of different graphic

displays and then generates usage reports to help track trends and compare facilities. Local officials can view energy consumption with usage reports, which show how much energy their facilities consume on a monthly basis, or with billed charges reports, which show the daily average of energy costs over the past year.

NewEnergy Online can even display energy consumption in 15-minute intervals. Users can print or save usage reports, or set up a subscription to receive them automatically by e-mail.

One key NewEnergy Online feature for municipalities is the ability to group multiple accounts and view them in aggregate. Municipal officials can use historical data to create, modify and graph energy budgets, enabling them to forecast next year's energy budget with greater accuracy and fewer surprises.

NewEnergy Online also allows customers to keep up on the latest energy industry news, including regional energy rates and changing regulations. The system also provides hourly averages for real-time energy prices in certain zones. NewEnergy Online keeps tabs on the market, and enables customers to set up price alerts that will notify them by e-mail when energy prices rise or fall. Customers may choose to receive invoice notifications as well.

The system also provides

a simple conduit for contacting customer service representatives about billing, electricity usage, or a price quote for an additional account or a renewal.

NewEnergy Online is a free, exclusive service for customers and requires no software set-up. Simply log in at www.newenergy.com.

For more information or to set up a NewEnergy Online login, contact MunEnergy Program Manager Erik Everton at (617) 772-7530 or erik.everton@constellation.com. *

Wellness is MMPA topic

"Learn, Laugh, Live with Less Stress" is the subject of the Dec. 9 meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association. Janet Fontana, a registered nurse and founder of Spectrum LifeWorks, will lead an interactive session on practical ways to alleviate stress and maintain wellness. The featured session will be followed by a festive luncheon. The meeting will be held at the Wayside Inn in Sudbury.

Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Ellen Stoolmacher

House OKs state surplus land sale bill

By Matthew G. Feher

On Nov. 10, the House unanimously approved legislation that would maintain an expedited process for selling surplus state land while giving cities and towns the right of first refusal at a reduced sale price (85 percent of fair market value) under generous timeframes.

The Senate, which was working on its own proposal but had not released a bill by the time the Legislature recessed on Nov. 16, is expected to take the issue up next year.

From a municipal perspective, the House bill is an improvement over an earlier version released by House leadership in July. At the MMA's urging, language that would have given Mass-

Development the first opportunity to purchase state surplus property was scrapped. The House-approved plan would allow municipalities and MassDevelopment to simultaneously prepare any exercise of their right of first refusal, but would give municipalities the first opportunity to close the sale.

The House also adopted an MMA-supported amendment that would give cities and towns more time to exercise their right of first refusal if the community chooses to finance the purchase through a debt exclusion vote. A second MMA amendment included in the bill would not preempt cities and towns from collecting 10 percent of net cash proceeds

of a sale if the debt exclusion vote fails, even though they technically exercised their right of first refusal. Under all other circumstances, these proceeds are only available to communities that do not exercise their right of first refusal.

Other highlights of the House-approved plan include:

- Timeframes: Cities and towns would have 210 days to exercise their right of first refusal and an additional 180 days to close the sale. Communities that choose to finance the purchase through a debt exclusion vote would have one week after the vote to exercise its purchase option.
- Financial incentives: If a community does not exercise its right of first refusal, or the debt exclusion vote fails, the city or town would receive 10 percent of the net cash proceeds of the sale of the parcel, and up to 25 percent if the community advances expedited permitting.
- Options: A community would be allowed, at no cost, to engage the services of MassDevelopment

to perform planning, feasibility, marketing and other studies, or to provide project management services in connection with the parcel's reuse or redevelopment. A community could elect to assign its right of first refusal to a nonprofit organization.

- 40R funding: After proceeds of the sale of surplus parcels have been distributed to cities and towns, \$2.8 million of the balance would be deposited into the District Local Technical Assistance Fund, and the remainder would be deposited into the Smart Growth Housing Trust Fund to provide incentives under the Chapter 40R program.
- Local government/DCAM partnership: The plan would create a level playing field between state and local government by creating a Surplus Land Coordination Committee to help guide the disposition process in conjunction with the Division of Capital Asset Management. The MMA would have a seat on the committee. *

State passes benefit mandate for firefighters

By David Baier

On Nov. 8, Gov. Mitt Romney signed into law a new unfunded mandate requiring towns to provide an accidental death benefit for call or volunteer fire, emergency and police personnel.

Towns have three options to provide this new benefit:

1. The town may provide an annual annuity of at least two-thirds but not more than 100 percent of the annual rate of compensation of a permanent fire, emergency or police officer in the first year of service. If the community does not have permanent personnel, the annuity will be based on average first-year salary of three surrounding towns (to be selected by the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission).

2. The town may establish an insurance policy that provides a one-time accidental

death benefit of \$500,000, indexed for inflation.

3. The town may establish an insurance policy that provides an annuity payment of not less than two-thirds but not more than 100 percent of the annual rate of compensation of a permanent fire, emergency or police officer in the first year of service. If the community does not have permanent personnel, the annuity will be based on the average first-year salary of three surrounding towns to be selected by PERAC.

The MMA opposed this unfunded mandate and worked with Sen. Stephen Brewer to allow towns to take a vote as to whether to provide the benefit. In the end, the Legislature chose to adopt House language mandating coverage, as opposed to the Senate "opt-out" provision. *



LGAC briefed on revenue forecast

Bob Costrell (right), chief economist for the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, on Nov. 15 updated members of the Local Government Advisory Commission on the state's revenue forecast for the next fiscal year. Examining Costrell's report are Lt. Gov. Kerry Healey (left) and MMA President and Brookline Town Manager Richard Kelliher.



A member shares MIIA Rewards success

The MIIA Rewards Program has completed 22 seminars since Sept. 27, with eight more available through the middle of December.

This year, "Implementing a Sewer Management Program" was one of the activities offered under the general liability coverage. Members who develop a plan in line with the MIIA guideline can receive 3 percent credit off their fiscal 2007 general liability premium. (Guidelines are available from Maryann Marino at (800) 882-1498, ext. 262, or Maryann_Marino@mma.org.)

J. Bradford Lange, superintendent of the Millbury Sewer Department, recently sent a letter describing how, during the recent "100-year flood," the emergency plan in place benefited the residents of the town.

The Millbury Sewer Department is staffed by four state-licensed operators. Operations include 48 miles of collection system, includ-



Superintendent Brad Lange (second from left) and the staff of the Millbury Sewer Department

ing 11 pumping stations and 3,000 residential/industrial connections serving 6,500 people. In January 2005, the town decommissioned its wastewater treatment plant and opened a new \$11 million pumping station and five miles of 24-inch force main to discharge its wastewater to a 50 million gallons per day regional facility.

"During the week of Oct. 9," Lange writes, "forecasters had predicted rain and seasonably cool tempera-

tures. By the 13th, seven inches had accumulated and then eight inches more on the 14th, bringing the total rainfall to 15 inches in nine days.

"As is customary, pumping stations are built in low-lying areas where gravity systems are compromised. On Friday, Oct. 14, at 11 p.m., the first alarm came in. The Blackstone River, Broadmeadow Brook, and Singletary Brook had overflowed their banks, putting four pumping sta-

tions in peril of flooding.

"Although the pumping stations worked flawlessly, they were unable to keep up with the amount of water, and our emergency back-up system was called in to assist. A complement of four septic trucks with 4,000-gallon tanks over the next 36 hours removed 1.3 million gallons until the water had receded. A total of 7 million gallons had been recovered and pumped during this period from our new pumping station, which was also under eight feet of water.

"I am proud and honored to report that we, along with our customers, didn't have any sewer back-ups. This is a tribute to the hard-working men and women of our department and support staff."

To share any of your Loss Control or MIIA Rewards experiences, or for more information, call Lin Chabra or Maryann Marino at MIIA. *

Team Rochester wins 2005 Snowplow Rally

The annual MIIA-sponsored snowplow rally was held on Oct. 14 at the Plymouth Airport.

Participation was strong again this year despite pouring rain and difficult driving conditions, with 14 teams turning out for the competition.

The team from the town of Rochester - Bob Lake and Bob Laferriere - won

first place overall.

The strong team of Jeff Madden and Mike Mullins from Hingham finished second.

Two teams from Brockton were serious contenders in the competition and finished first or second in four different events. The Brockton duo of Mike Rodnickas and Bob Pozerski won the written test portion of the rally

and also finished second in the Circle Check and the Plow Mount.

A second Brockton team, Ed Sylvester and Eric Duquette, tied for second place in the written test and won the Backing with Compressor event.

Another strong showing was turned in by Wareham, with a sweep of the Slalom; first place went to the team

of James Maxim and Andy White, and second went to Phil Cleveland and Tobey Macomber.

Carver (Mike Harriman and John Woods) tied for second place in the written test, while Barnstable (Mike Burdick and John Baker) was second in Backing with Compressor.

MIIA Loss Control Manager Jeff Siena organized the event.

Executive director's report

continued from page 2

ernment employment is 398 workers per 10,000 population. In Massachusetts we have 356 local government workers for every 10,000 people. That is 11 percent below the national average. For non-education local employees, the national average is 167 employees per 10,000 people, and Massachusetts cities and towns have 128 workers. That's 23 percent below the national average.

In terms of payroll costs, the study compares the salaries paid in various states as a percentage of the state's personal income, to take into account the varying cost of living in dif-

ferent regions. Nationally, the U.S. average state and local payroll cost is \$6.08 per \$1,000 of income. In Massachusetts, the total state and local payroll cost is \$4.96, a full 19 percent lower than the national average. At the local level, Massachusetts cities and towns pay 21 percent less in relative payroll costs than the national average for all education and non-education employees. For non-education payroll, our localities are 32 percent below the national average.

In terms of average salaries paid to public employees in Massachusetts,

the average salary for local government workers is 7 percent below the average salary paid to state workers.

The bottom line is clear: When you look at the facts and compare Massachusetts with the rest of the nation, the truth is that our cities and towns have a smaller and less expensive workforce.

The bad news is that old and outdated rhetoric will still fly as we seek to rebuild a stronger and more robust partnership with the state. The good news is that the facts are on the side of those who believe that we can and should reinvest in local aid and local government, as

well as state services. Indeed, if we want to build and strengthen services to the people of Massachusetts, this important analysis certainly underscores the need for additional funding, not further downsizing or finger-pointing.

From city and town halls to the halls of the State House, lawmakers and local officials can use these facts to make sure that rhetoric is squared with reality. Our state's reputation should include credit for effective public management, and this aspect of the public record should be applauded instead of distorted. *

After charter change, Winthrop elects town council

Winthrop, which last spring voted to abolish its Board of Selectmen, on Nov. 8 elected a nine-member Town Council.

Five of the new councillors, including Council Pres-

ident Thomas Reilly, were elected to two-year-terms. Four other were elected to four-year terms.

Philip Boncore was elected to a two-year term as councillor-at-large, while Joseph

Ferrino Jr. was elected to a four-year at large position. Linda Calla, James Letterie and Jean Maggio won two-year terms as precinct councillors. Nicholas DelVento, Richard Gill and Russell Stanford won four-year terms as precinct councillors.

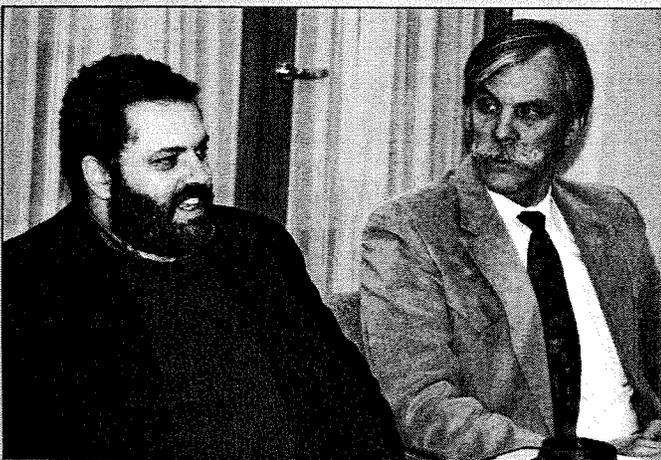
Six of the nine councillors were members of the Charter Commission that recom-

mended the form-of-government changes approved by town residents in May.

The Board of Selectmen will be disbanded at the end of the year. The board's chair, Martin O'Brien, ran unsuccessfully for the council president position.

Among the Town Council's first orders of business is the hiring of a town manager.

— Mitch Evich



Conservation attorney gives update

Seth Kaplan (left), senior attorney for the Conservation Law Foundation, addresses the MMA's Policy Committee on the Environment on Nov. 9. Kaplan discussed a number of issues of interest to the MMA, including water protection and conservation, transit, smart zoning, and renewable energy. At right is Millis Selectman Jeff Hardin.

NLC's Congress of Cities is Dec. 6-10

The National League of Cities' Annual Congress of Cities and Exposition will take place Dec. 6-10 in Charlotte, N.C.

This year's theme is: "America's Cities and Towns Teaming Up for Tomorrow." The five-day conference will include a panel discussion on Dec. 9 on intergovernmental relations and emergency preparedness during the recent hurricanes in the Gulf Coast. The panel, moderated by broadcast journalist Judy Woodruff, will include representatives from all three levels of government.

For more information, visit www.nlc.org. *

Cape Cod

Project promotes Wi-Fi networks

The Cape Cod Technology Council has obtained grant money for a project that eventually could lead to free, wireless Internet access for the public in many Cape communities.

The technology council, which received \$136,500 from the John Adams Innovation Institute, an arm of the nonprofit Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, has chosen Orleans as the starting point for the project. Plans call for establishing a wireless signal over as much of the town as possible, beginning with the central village as a means of making the mixed-use area more appealing to residents and businesses and encouraging entrepreneurship.

"Any time you can improve the underlying infrastructure of an area, more business is likely to follow," said Kyle Hinkle, executive director of the Orleans Chamber of Commerce. "Community Wi-Fi can become a big part of that bolstered infrastructure."

The Chamber of Commerce is playing a lead role in the project's planning and implementation. According to Hinkle, the money from the John Adams Institute will be used not just for setting up the Wi-Fi network in Orleans, but also for doing research into how people use it and what they want from it, and determining how the system could be easily duplicated in other Cape communities.

Orleans town officials support the endeavor, according to Town Planner George Meservey.

"We want local businesses to succeed," he said, "and if this helps bring people to downtown, that would be a good thing."

The fact that town governments would not be involved in managing the Wi-Fi networks could prove advantageous, Hinkle said, if Congress passes legislation making it more difficult for municipalities to provide Internet service.

"It appears that it's a public project [in Orleans], but it's not," she said. "Both the Chamber of Commerce and the Technology Council are private nonprofit organizations."

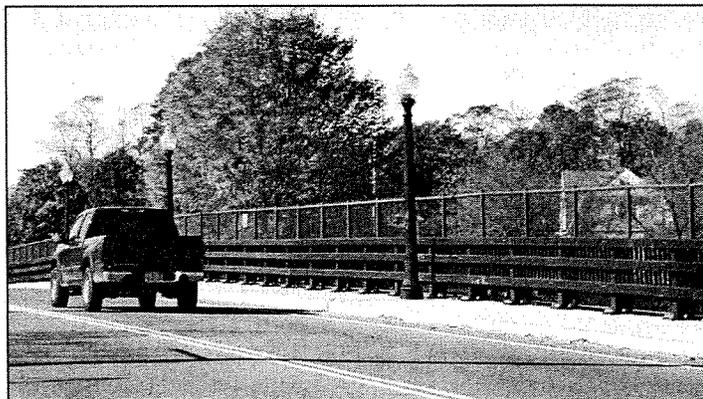
Acushnet

Road work paves way for downtown improvement

Acushnet has finished a key portion of a downtown improvement project. A ribbon-cutting ceremony on Oct. 31 commemorated the end of two years of work to rebuild a 1.2-mile stretch of South Main Street, including sidewalks and curbs.

The reconstruction of South Main Street, which is state owned, along with a related project involving Route 105, took two years to complete. But the planning for the project, which Selectman David Wojnar describes as "a good exercise [involving] municipalities working with state agencies," dates back seven years.

Wojnar, who is credited with spearheading the project, said that town officials received a grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development in 1998 that was used to establish a mini-master plan for the two square miles comprising downtown. With



A new bridge spanning the Acushnet River is part of a downtown improvement project in the town of Acushnet.

the help of Sen. Mark Montigny, then chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, funding was obtained for the street improvement projects as part of the 2000 transportation bond bill.

Other elements in the downtown project include a park that the town established alongside the Acushnet River and the state-funded replacement of a bridge that spans the river.

The project has been funded entirely either by the state or through the normal operating budgets of town departments such as public works, according to Wojnar.

When decisions were being made in 2000 and 2001, "I think we used good judgment and caution regarding where things were going with the economy," Wojnar said.

Framingham

Forum stresses importance of ESL

Access to English-as-a-second-language instruction is closely related to the ability of immigrants to contribute to the local economy, according to panelists in a forum on immigration organized by Framingham Selectmen Chair Katie Murphy.

The Oct. 31 event was

spurred in part by a report issued in June by MassINC and Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies. The report, "The Changing Face of Massachusetts," suggests a link between immigrants' English proficiency and the state's long-term competitive standing.

Framingham now has the largest population of Brazilian immigrants in the state, and more than one in five of the town's residents were born outside the United States. Amid the emergence of what Murphy describes as "a very small but vocal anti-illegal immigration segment," the town's leaders are seeking "to address the real issues while endeavoring to protect new citizens as well as the integrity of the community."

"I organized the forum so that I could learn," Murphy said. "Before we come up with solutions, we have to come up with facts."

Panelists included Congressman Edward Markey, the president of Massachusetts Bay Community College, and the general manager of the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Natick.

Markey encouraged area

COMMONWEALTH, continued on 15

Norwood Light says 'let there be VoIP'

The Norwood Municipal Light Department, one of the few municipal utilities in Massachusetts to offer cable and Internet service, in October became the first to introduce voice-over-Internet phone service.

The move puts Norwood in the midst of a young industry that offers phone service at rates significantly lower than what people are accustomed to paying. Vonage, a 4-year-old company that has emerged as the leader in the field, has peeled away hundreds of thousands of customers from conventional phone-service companies such as Verizon.

With Vonage and others beginning to sign up local customers, Norwood Light decided it was time to offer the service itself, says Darryl Hanson, the utility's broadband development

manager.

While the technology behind what is known as Voice over Internet Protocol, or VoIP, may seem obscure, Hanson says that what a company like Vonage does is relatively simple and inexpensive.

Rather than rolling out a whole new broadband network, Vonage needs only to apply switching technology to existing networks, including the one maintained by Norwood Light itself. The switches serve to route calls via the Internet to the same network grid used to connect people through conventional phone service.

With the broadband infrastructure in Norwood already in place, the only real cost to Norwood Light to enter the business are the switches it provides to customers free of charge. The switches represent a one-time per-customer expense

of \$65 to \$130, according to Hanson.

Norwood Light customers pay the same for unlimited calling within the United States and Canada – \$24.99 a month – as Vonage charges for similar service.

But Hanson says that Norwood Light residents who already subscribe to the town's cable service enjoy a technical advantage: Their calls are routed directly over the cable network to the town's own facility and from there on to the phone grid. By avoiding transmission over the Internet itself, as is typically necessary with VoIP, residents are spared the poor quality of service that can result at times of heavy Internet use.

"The other advantage we offer," Hanson says, "is that we're right here in town. People don't have to contact a call center out in Minnesota. We have trucks out

on the road that can help them with their problems."

Norwood Light began rolling out its service slowly in order to check for bugs, hooking up an average of just two or three customers a day. But interest in the service has been strong, Hanson says, with a backlog of more than 300 residents as of late October.

While more than 40 Massachusetts communities operate municipal electric utilities, only a small handful provide cable or Internet service. As Norwood General Manager John Carroll points out, launching services that compete with major telecom companies requires a good deal of in-house expertise.

"We have some very good technical people running our light department," Carroll says.

For more information, contact Darryl Hanson at (781) 948-1150.

Commonwealth

continued from page 14

business owners to contribute to a fund established in 1999 to pay for local English-as-a-second-language courses. Jamie Holmes, the Crowne Plaza Hotel manager, said that the hotel chain reimburses employees for the cost of ESL instruction and encourages them to seek career advancement.

Lowell

City official advises Ukrainian counterparts

T.J. McCarthy, Lowell's assistant city manager for operations, was among the municipal officials from the United States who spent a week in Ukraine in October, advising their Ukrainian

counterparts on economic development issues.

The trip represented the latest phase in a sister-city relationship between Lowell and the Ukrainian port city of Berdyansk. McCarthy and other Lowell officials first traveled to Berdyansk in 2002, not long after that city's leaders had paid a visit to Lowell. The Lowell delegation helped leaders in Berdyansk develop a strategic plan for modernizing government practices. The following year, McCarthy conducted training sessions in several Ukrainian cities.

In the recent seven-day visit, McCarthy and municipal officials from Texas,

South Carolina and Iowa met with Ukrainian mayors and deputy mayors to discuss strategies for helping to retool local industries and promote tourism.

Fourteen years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a good deal of the old command-style economy remains, McCarthy said, and "there is still a lot of central government hierarchy." The sister-city partnerships, which are funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and administered through the U.S.-Ukrainian Foundation, are designed in part to position Ukraine to compete in the broader European economy.

Middlesex Community College also has been involved with Berdyansk, a city roughly Lowell's size on the Sea of Azov in southern Ukraine. In May 2004, three faculty members from the community college traveled to Berdyansk to offer advice on workforce development issues.

McCarthy said he became involved in the sister-city initiative out of a desire to observe the transition from what was once a centralized, communist system.

"I think what people [in Ukraine] are learning about democracy is that it's really structured from the bottom and works its way up," he said. *

PEOPLE

Framingham Assistant Town Manager **Mark Purple** will serve as acting town manager following the departure of **George King**. King, who served as town manager for the past six years, begins work this month as assistant superintendent of the Nashoba Regional School District.

In Saugus, **Peter Rossetti** was elected to the Board of Selectmen on Nov. 8, finishing first among eight candidates seeking five seats. **Maureen Dever** was the only incumbent not to be re-elected.

Joseph Bettis and **Chad Wagenknecht** joined the Board of Selectmen in Savoy,

where a special election was held on Nov. 8 to fill two vacancies on the three-member board. Bettis and Wagenknecht replace **Peter Kelleher** and **Rita Pierce**, both of whom stepped down earlier in the year.

MMA legislative assistant **Christine Hevelone-Byler** completed the New York City marathon on Nov. 6 in a time of four hours, 48 minutes. It was Hevelone-Byler's first marathon.



Hevelone-Byler

Former Somerville Mayor

Gene Brune is being honored for his years of service on the boards of health care institutions since leaving the mayor's office in 1990. A new adolescent psychiatric facility at Somerville Hospital will be named in honor of Brune, who served as MMA president in 1983.

Lawrence School Superintendent **Wilfredo Laboy** has been named president of the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents. The national organization is an affiliate of

the American Association of School Administrators.

William "Willy" Colleary Jr., 65, the longtime police chief in Southborough, died of lung cancer on Nov. 15. Colleary, who retired in December 2003 after 17 years as police chief and more than 40 years as a member of the department, was regarded as an early proponent of community policing. In 1968 he was shot and wounded in the midst of Southborough's first-ever drug raid. *

Managers earn credentials

Wellfleet Town Administrator Timothy Smith and Eastham Town Administrator Sheila Vanderhoef have been named Credentialed Managers by the International City/County Management Association's executive board.

The managers participated in the ICMA's Voluntary Credentialing Program. The designation indicates that a member is qualified by a combination of education and experience, adherence to standards of integrity, and commitment to continuous learning and professional development. *

Tax relief

continued from page 4

crease the maximum amount of the exemption from \$750 to \$1,000 and allow cities and towns to assume a wage rate of as much as two times the state minimum wage rather than the simple minimum wage cap that is currently in place.

The committee bill would also allow elderly taxpayers who are blind to qualify for

more than one local exemption rather than only the highest. In addition, the bill would provide greater flexibility in installment payment agreements with local taxpayers and create a new program through the secretary of state's office to educate taxpayers about the availability of property tax relief. *

Cities across state choose mayors in Nov. elections

By John Ouellette

Cities across the state held elections on Nov. 8, choosing 37 mayors. Voters in Marlborough elected a new mayor a week earlier, on Nov. 1.

The following mayors were elected (* denotes incumbent):

Agawam: Richard Cohen*	Medford: Michael McGlynn*
Amesbury: Thatcher Kezer III	Melrose: Robert Dolan*
Attleboro: Kevin Dumas*	Methuen: William M. Manzi III
Beverly: William Scanlon Jr.*	New Bedford: Scott Lang
Boston: Thomas Menino*	Newburyport: John Moak
Brockton: James Harrington	Newton: David Cohen*
Chicopee: Michael Bissonnette	North Adams: John Barrett III*
Easthampton: Michael Tautznik*	Northampton: Mary Clare Higgins*
Everett: John Hanlon	Peabody: Michael Bonfanti*
Fall River: Edward Lambert Jr.*	Pittsfield: James Ruberto*
Fitchburg: Dan Mylott*	Quincy: William Phelan*
Gardner: Gerald St. Hilaire*	Salem: Kim Driscoll
Gloucester: John Bell*	Somerville: Joseph Curtatone*
Haverhill: James Fiorentini*	Springfield: Charles Ryan*
Holyoke: Michael J. Sullivan*	Taunton: Robert Nunes*
Lawrence: Michael Sullivan*	Westfield: Richard Sullivan*
Leominster: Dean Mazzarella*	West Springfield: Edward Gibson*
Lynn: Edward (Chip) Clancy Jr.*	Woburn: Thomas McLaughlin
Marlborough: Nancy Stevens	Worcester: Tim Murray*

Mayors in Cambridge and Lowell are chosen by the city councils in January.

The mayoral term in Greenfield runs until next June. Four-year mayoral terms in Malden, Revere, Waltham and Weymouth run until November 2007.

Five communities with a city form of government – Barnstable, Chelsea, Franklin, Southbridge and Watertown – do not have mayors. *

New councillors and aldermen elected

The MMA welcomes the following new councillors and aldermen, who were elected in November.

City Councils

Attleboro: William Bowles, James Hanley
Beverly: Miranda Gooding
Boston: Sam Yoon
Brockton: Timothy Cruise, Michelle Dubois, Christopher MacMillan, Paul Studenski, Robert Sullivan
Cambridge: Craig Kelley
Chelsea: Brian Hatleberg, Marilyn Vega-Torres
Easthampton: Joseph McCoy, Melissa Lawrence Zawadski
Fitchburg: David Clark, Thomas Conry Jr., Annie DeMartino, Ted Desalvatore, Dean Tran
Gardner: Joshua Cormier, Scott Graves
Gloucester: James Destino, Jason Grow, Jackie Hardy, Michael McLeod, Walter Peckham, Bruce Tobey
Haverhill: John Curtin, Krystine Hetel, David Swartz

Holyoke: Patricia Devine, Todd McGee, John O'Neill
Lawrence: Nilka Alvarez-Rodriguez, Nuncio DiMarca, Jorge Gonzales, Marie Gosselin, Grisel Silva
Leominster: Virginia Tocci
Lowell: George Ramirez
Lynn: Peter Capano, Paul Crowley, Darren Cyr
Malden: Paul DiPietro
Marlborough: Peter Juairé, Steven Levy
Medford: Frederick Dello Russo
Methuen: Robert Andrew, John Cronin, Larry Giordano, Philip Lahey, Joseph Leone, Deborah Quinn
Newburyport: Steven Hutcheson, Thomas Jones, Gary Roberts Jr.
North Adams: Christopher Tremblay
Northampton: Maureen Carney, David Narkewicz, David Murphy
Peabody: Arthur Athas
Pittsfield: Peter Marchetti, Michael Ward
Quincy: Michael McFarland, Brian McNamee
Salem: Paul Prevey
Springfield: Bruce Stebbins
Taunton: Debra Ann Botellio, Donald

Cleary, David Pottier
Waltham: Thomas Stanley
Westfield: John Liptak, Mary O'Connell, Richard Onofrey Jr., Jason Russell, Joseph Wynn
West Springfield: Brian Griffin, John Sweeney
Worcester: Gary Rosen, Joffrey Smith, Kate Toomey

Seaboyer, John Tramoutozzi, Francis Wright
Newton: Leslie Burg, Ben Weisbuch
Somerville: Rebekah Gewirtz
Woburn: Raymond Drapeau, James Dwyer, Richard Gately Jr., Darlene Mercer-Bruen

Common Council

Everett: Berardino D'Onfrio, Rosa DiFlorio, James Keane, Michael Mangan, Cynthia Sarnie

Town Councils

Amesbury: Henry Brennick, Robert Lavoie, Alison Lindstrom, Donna McClure, Michelle Thone
Barnstable: Frederick Chirigotis
Franklin: Michael LeBlanc, R. Scott Mason, Joseph McGann
Palmer: George Backus, Michael Magiera
Watertown: Stephen Corbett, John Donohue, Jonathan Hecht, John Lawn Jr., Clyde Younger
Weymouth: Jack Carey, Patrick O'Connor, Kevin Whitaker

Boards of Aldermen

Chicopee: Ronald BeLair, Shane Brooks
Melrose: David Buonopane, Ronald

Note: Elections in Methuen and Watertown included extremely close races in which recounts were requested. The winners of races in which the winner is not yet clear will be listed in a future issue of the Beacon. If you know of other first-time councillors or aldermen not listed here, please contact Mitch Evich at the MMA (mitch_evich@mma.org).

Members of the newly created Town Council in Winthrop are cited on page 13. *

Communities measure safety net

By Sue Baldauf

Human services professionals gathered in Bedford on Nov. 8 to explore the ability of communities to aid citizens in need.

"The Safety Net: How Does Your Community Measure Up?" was organized by the Local Officials Human Services Council, an affiliate of the MMA. Panelists were John Carlson, executive director of Self-Help Inc. in Brockton; Jim Greene, acting director of Boston's Emergency Shelter Commission; Christina Jordan, coordinator of Project Bread; and John Shirley, director of housing and homeless services at the Department of Transitional Assistance.

Carlson pointed out that in real dollars, the amount of fuel assistance a family in poverty can receive (\$765) is far less than it was a quarter-century ago. In 1980 the

maximum benefit was \$750 - at a time when oil was 59 cents a gallon.

Shirley discussed the Department of Transitional Assistance's focus on reducing homelessness through such programs as Residential Assistance for Families in Transition, which helps with overdue rent or utility bills or relocation from a shelter. Shirley emphasized the need for the DTA to build partnerships with cities and towns. There is fear now, he said, that high energy costs will make it impossible for some families to pay their rent this winter.

Jordan reported that calls to Project Bread's hotline have increased by 59 percent in the last year. She said that making it easier for people to gain access to federal food programs such as food stamps and school breakfast is an important

means of helping families. Targeted outreach, according to Jordan, resulted in 30,000 families entering the food stamp program in the last two months.

Greene, acting director of Boston's Emergency Shelter Commission, said the decrease in funding for the Department of Housing and Community Development, as well as a lack of emergency shelter beds, contributes to the current housing crisis. He said a lack of programs to help prison inmates make the transition to normal life also adds to the pressure on emergency housing.

"The Safety Net: How Does Your Community Measure Up?" will be one of 27 workshops held during the MMA's Annual Meeting in Boston Jan. 13 and 14.

Sue Baldauf is director of Bedford Youth & Family Services.

Meeting space wanted

Does your municipality have a public meeting space that would be appropriate for an MMA event? With more than 30 meetings each year, the MMA uses several different types of function space around the state. The use of municipally owned meeting rooms greatly improves the organization's ability to sponsor affordable educational events in a variety of places.

To offer your town or city's municipal function space, please call MMA Communications and Membership Director Pat Mikes, or e-mail her at pmikes@mma.org. *



MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION 2006 Annual Meeting & Trade Show

Sheraton Boston Hotel January 12, 13, 14, 2006

HOTEL ROOM RESERVATION FORM

The Sheraton Boston Hotel is the host hotel for the 2006 MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show. The Friday and Saturday night banquets will be held at the Sheraton, as well as Friday morning's opening session.

Located in Boston's Back Bay neighborhood, the Sheraton Boston is easily accessible from the Mass. Pike and public transportation. Just steps away from the hotel, guests will find world-class restaurants, the Prudential Center Mall, and Newbury Street. The hotel is connected to the Hynes Convention Center, allowing easy access to conference activities. The hotel features new plush-top mattresses and Boston's largest indoor/outdoor pool.

The MMA has negotiated special room rates at the Sheraton for all Annual Meeting participants. Use this form to register directly with the hotel, not the MMA. The following conditions apply:

- All reservations will be honored on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to availability.
 - Room reservations must be made by Dec. 22, 2005, to be eligible for the special MMA rates.
 - A deposit of one night's accommodation plus tax (12.45%) for each room reserved must accompany each reservation.
 - Cancellations must be made at least 72 hours prior to your stated arrival time in order to have your deposit refunded.
 - If you do not arrive on your stated arrival date, you will lose your deposit and the hotel will cancel the rest of your reservation.
 - Hotel check-in is after 3 p.m.; check-out is by noon. Baggage storage space is available if you arrive before check-in time.
- Please use a separate Hotel Reservation Form for each room you wish to reserve.

I wish to reserve one room for (check one):

- Single occupancy – \$129 plus tax
- Double occupancy – \$139 plus tax
- Additional person – \$40 plus tax

For the following night(s) (check as many as apply):

- Thursday, January 12
- Friday, January 13
- Saturday, January 14

Rate will be honored 3 days prior to and after meeting dates based on availability.

- I would like to receive hospitality suite rental and catering information.
- I desire a handicapped-accessible room.
- I prefer a non-smoking room.

- First night deposit enclosed.
- Charge my credit card.
- I will use this to settle my account Yes No

Credit Card type:

- AMEX Visa MC Diner's Discover

Credit Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

Cardholder's Signature _____

I have enclosed a deposit of (circle one) \$129 / \$139 plus tax (12.45%) payable to Sheraton Boston Hotel.

Name (please print) _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

City/Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Sharing room with _____

Arrival Date _____ Arrival Time _____ Departure Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

- Please confirm my reservation.

For your special MMA room rate, please mail this form with deposit to:
Sheraton Boston Hotel, 39 Dalton St., Boston, MA 02199

Phone: (800) 325-3535

Fax: (617) 236-6095

If you have needs that require special accommodations, please call the hotel reservations desk directly.



MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION 2006 Annual Meeting & Trade Show

January 13 & 14, 2006

Hynes Convention Center and Sheraton Boston Hotel, Boston

PROGRAM REGISTRATION FORM

Please fill out form completely.

Name (please print or type)

Title

Municipality, organization or other affiliation

First name or nickname for badge

Guest's name (include first name or nickname for badge)
Please note: "Personal guest" registration category is not for use by
co-workers or associates within your community.

Billing address

City or town State ZIP code

Daytime phone number Fax number

E-mail address

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF:

- Association of Town Finance Committees
- Massachusetts Mayors' Association
- Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association
- Massachusetts Municipal Management Association
- Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association
- Massachusetts Selectmen's Association
- Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts

Please check one:

ADVANCE REGISTRATION (Register by December 10, 2005)

Two-Day Program

Member.....\$140 Nonmember.....\$250

One-Day Program

Member.....\$110 Nonmember.....\$180

Please choose one: Friday only Saturday only

LATE REGISTRATION (After December 10, 2005)

Two-Day Program

Member.....\$175 Nonmember.....\$315

One-Day Program

Member.....\$130 Nonmember.....\$220

Please choose one: Friday only Saturday only

Amount due for registration (subtotal) \$ _____

EVENTS

of Tickets

_____ Friday Dinner @ \$39 per person \$ _____

_____ Saturday Dinner @ \$45 per person \$ _____

_____ Women Elected Municipal
Officials lunch (Friday) @ \$25 per person \$ _____

Amount due for events (subtotal) \$ _____

_____ Payment enclosed

_____ Please invoice (add \$5 invoice charge) \$ _____

TOTAL DUE \$ _____

(Make check or money order payable to Massachusetts Municipal Association.)

Your registration fee includes admission to the keynote address, all workshops, your member group business meeting, the trade show, opening and presidents' receptions. Two weeks prior to the meeting you will receive a confirmation of your registration, directions and parking instructions, and other pertinent information.

Refunds will be made in full for registration or meal tickets ONLY if you notify the MMA by a letter postmarked no later than December 12, 2005. Please use municipal letterhead to request a refund.

Hotel reservations must be made directly with the Sheraton Boston Hotel at (800) 325-3535.

Please complete this form and mail it to:

Annual Meeting, Massachusetts Municipal Association

60 Temple Place, Boston, Massachusetts 02111

or fax to (617) 695-1314

For up-to-date info, see www.mma.org

(617) 426-7272

(800) 882-1498

For Office Use Only: Amount: _____ Check #: _____ Date: _____

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Grant Writer

MassDevelopment

This position will assist the VP Grants Administration to develop resources, research funding sources, write proposals to a variety of organizations, prepare contract proposals and may administer major contracts. Perform a variety of tasks to support development activities. Qualifications for the position include three-four years' successful experience in grant writing and in preparing proposals for professional services, with a bachelor's degree or higher in public administration, regional planning, or communications; possess excellent writing, research and graphic skills; possess strong organization skills, ability to work independently with minimal supervision and part of a team; be proficient in Excel, Word, Outlook and scheduling software. This position is located at our Devens office, off Route 2, just west of Route 495. Send resume to Sarah Petkiewicz, Human Resource Assistant, MassDevelopment Finance Agency, 160 Federal St., 7th floor, Boston, MA 02110.

Finance Director

Town of Newbury

The town of Newbury seeks qualified applicants for the position of Finance Director to plan, organize and direct all financial activities of the town in conformance with M.G.L. and the town's bylaws. Candidates should possess at least a bachelor's degree in finance, accounting, or a directly related field; five-seven years of progressively responsible experience in a public sector financial management position working with budgets of at least \$15 million; strong working knowledge of state and municipal finance laws and regulations and excellent oral, written and interpersonal communications skills. Detailed job description available upon request (e-mail: selectmen@townofnewbury.org). Send letter of interest, resume including salary history and expectations and references to Finance Director Search Committee, Town Hall, 25 High Road, Newbury, MA 01951.

Planner (Part-time)

Town of Millville

The town of Millville is seeking a part-time planner to provide professional assistance and support to the planning board. The position will require office hours on one to two days a week and attendance at evening meetings one to two times a month. Duties will include reviewing applications and plan submissions, responding to requests for information, assisting the planning board with periodic updates of policies and regulations, and facilitating the establishment of a Master Plan committee. Candidates should have a degree in planning, plan review experience, knowledge of Massachusetts General Laws, and two to three years' planning experience. The position is 10 hrs/wk, compensation is \$10,000 annually. Send resume and letter of interest by Dec. 31 to Millville Planning Board, Longfellow Municipal Center, PO Box 703, Millville, MA 01529.

Town Clerk

Town of Lynnfield

The town of Lynnfield is seeking applicants for the position of Town Clerk. Administrative and supervisory work related to the direction of election activities, the keeping of official municipal records, the issuing of various licenses and official documents, the recording and certification of Town Meeting proceedings, and all other related work as required. Excellent customer service and communications skills required. For a job description and information call (781) 334-3180 or send an e-mail to: townadmsec@town.lynnfield.ma.us. Submit resume and cover letter to William J. Gustus, Town Administrator, 55 Summer St., Lynnfield, MA 01940. Resumes are due by Dec. 16. AA/EOE

Town Accountant

Town of Norton

The town of Norton (pop. 19,013) is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Town Accountant. The TA will be responsible for the efficient and accurate operation of the accounting department and maintaining/controlling the expenditures and financial records pertaining to all town appropriations. The position requires knowledge of UMAS and GASB regulations. Minimum requirements: degree in finance, accounting, or related field;

Classified advertising rates and information

The Beacon accepts classified ads from units of government, public agencies, and individuals.

Classified advertising categories are: Employment Opportunities, Requests for Proposals, Situations Wanted, Services, and Items for Sale.

Only one job opening, request for proposals, or item for sale can be listed per ad. The MMA cannot assume responsibility for information or claims made in any advertisement.

Employment advertising rates

Employment classified ad rates include publication in The Beacon and on the MMA's Web site (www.mma.org), though a discount is available for those who request placement of an ad only in The Beacon or on the Web.

Member rates: \$95 for first 100 words; \$45 for each additional block of up to 50 words (Rate for one format only [print or Web]: \$70 for first 100 words, \$35 for each additional block of up to 50 words)

Nonmember rates: \$145 for first 100 words; \$70 for each additional block of up to 50 words (Rate for one format only [print or Web]: \$105 for first 100 words, \$55 for each additional block of up to 50 words)

Other classified advertising rates (no Web placement)

Member rates: \$70 for first 100 words; \$35 for each additional block of up to 50 words

Nonmember rates: \$105 for first 100 words; \$55 for each additional block of up to 50 words

Web ad guarantee

The MMA will publish employment ads sent electronically – by e-mail or via our on-line form – on its Web site within two business days of when they are received. Ads sent by mail or fax will be posted within three business days of when they are received. For more information about Web advertising, see www.mma.org/jobs.

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.

The following is the upcoming schedule:

January Beacon

Ad deadline: December 8

Publication date: December 30

February Beacon

Ad deadline: January 17

Publication date: February 1

March Beacon

Ad deadline: February 14

Publication date: March 1

Placing an ad

If possible, ads should be e-mailed, preferably with the text placed in the body of the e-mail message, to beacon_ads@mma.org. Otherwise, they may be faxed to (617) 695-1314 or mailed to the MMA.

For more information, call Jason Imbesi 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/jobs for details.

three to five years of progressively responsible municipal accounting experience; and demonstrated proficiency in information systems operations. Salary commensurate with experience. Full job description available in Selectmen's Office. Please submit cover letter, resume, and three references to Board of Selectmen, Norton Municipal Center, 70 East Main St., Norton, MA 02766 by 3:30 p.m. on Dec. 21. AA/EOE

Zoning Administrator

Town of Brookline

Work under the administrative direction of the Director of Planning and Community Development, and in consultation with the Building Commissioner and other town authorities, this newly established position carries out independent and complex professional, administrative, regulatory, technical and supervisory work supporting the Zoning Board of Appeals. Compre-

hensive knowledge of the quasi-judicial function and authority of the Board of Appeals, zoning principles and practices, The Zoning Enabling Act, Ch. 40A, permit management and tracking programs, zoning compliance and enforcement methods, plan review processes and procedures, and site planning design review, building and construction. Must demonstrate skills in conflict resolution, written and verbal communication, and managing complex processes. ZBA meets at least two nights a month. Bachelor's degree in planning, engineering, architecture or related field and five years' experience with the administration of zoning and building regulations. Comparable service with a Board of Appeals or similar regulatory body. Valid Mass. driver's license. Master's degree preferred. \$63,000-\$72,000 plus generous benefits.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Public Works Director/Town Engineer

Town of Sandwich

The town of Sandwich, Mass., seeks a full-time Director of Public Works/Town Engineer to perform highly responsible administrative and supervisory work in planning, directing and managing the operations of the highway, parks, sanitation and engineering divisions. The Director oversees and coordinates management of public works personnel, finances, and budgets and reviews all major design and construction work projects. Position includes frequent and professional interaction with the public and requires strong verbal and oral communication skills. Candidate must possess a bachelor's degree in civil engineering or related field and a minimum of five years of progressively responsible experience in municipal public works construction/supervision. Must be a registered professional engineer in the Commonwealth of Mass. and have comprehensive knowledge of public works methods and techniques. Salary range: \$63,352-\$79,190 with excellent benefits. Submit letter of interest and resume in triplicate by Dec. 30 to Director of Public Works/TE Search, 130 Main St., Sandwich, MA 02563. EOE

Planning and Development Director

Town of Sandwich

The town of Sandwich, Mass., is seeking a full-time Director of Planning and Development. Director oversees an extensive program of current and comprehensive planning while working closely and cooperatively with other town departments and elected and appointed officials. The successful candidate must have vision and leadership ability administering an action-oriented planning and economic development program. Strong written, oral communication and interpersonal skills are essential. Thorough knowledge of planning and development principals and techniques required. Bachelor's degree in regional planning or related field with a minimum five years' progressively responsible experience in planning and/or economic development required; or any equivalent combination of education and experience. Salary range: \$50,560-63,200 with excellent benefits. Send letter of interest and re-

sume in triplicate by Dec. 30 to Director of Planning and Development Search, 130 Main St., Town Hall, Sandwich, MA 02563. AA/EOE

Planning and Community Development Director

Town of Brookline

The town of Brookline, Mass., seeks an innovative planning professional with demonstrated leadership experience for the position of Director of Planning and Community Development. This is a senior department head position reporting directly to the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen. Candidates should have master's degree in planning or related field and at least 10 years of progressively responsible experience in municipal planning and community development, including affordable housing, economic development, open space planning. AICP preferred. Position involves extensive interaction with boards, commissions, community groups, citizens and town staff. Salary: \$94,694-\$111,474 plus generous benefits, including family eligibility for Brookline Public Schools. Resume and letter of interest by Jan. 6 to Town of Brookline, Human Resources, 3rd Floor, 333 Washington St., Brookline, MA 02445. For more information, go to: www.townofbrooklinemass.com. AA/ADA/EOE

SERVICES

Interim Management Services

Interim Management Services provides experienced and qualified personnel on a temporary basis for the following positions: town manager/administrator, treasurer/collector, assessor, accountant, public works managers and other municipal positions. All associates have experience in Massachusetts and are prepared to begin work on short notice. For further details, call Interim Management Services, Edgar Gadbois or Ed McCann at (781) 545-6214.

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 and classification, performance appraisal and merit systems, job evaluations, salary and benefits surveys, job descriptions, personnel policies and handbooks, staffing and organizational management studies, personnel bylaws/ordinances, recruitment and selection, HR audits and assessments, HR training services, and special projects. Please contact Sandy Stapczynski, President, Human Resources Services, Inc., 9 Bartlett St., Suite 186, Andover, MA 01810; phone: (978) 474-0200; fax: (978) 475-7925; e-mail: hrrsconsulting@comcast.net. SOMWBA-certified woman-owned business enterprise (WBE).

Alternate Dispute Resolution

Grievance and interest arbitration, fact-finding, mediation, internal investigations and hearings officer. Everett J. Marder, Esq. - licensed to practice law in Mass., N.H., Vt.; 20 years' experience in labor law; retired Colonel US Army Military Police; former school board chair and school administrator; certified by American Arbitration Association, Mass. Board of Conciliation and Arbitration, and NHPERLB. Phone: (603) 359-7544; emarder@interdial.net.

Municipal Accounting, Treasury and Payroll Software

City & Town Municipal Accounting, Treasury and Payroll software is the most comprehensive Windows-based program available to cities and towns today. This software is a complete package capable of organizing your municipality's books and records in one easy program. It features extensive budgeting, reporting, payroll, check writing, bank statement reconciliation, treasurer cash management, vendor and payroll warrant processing and many other accounting features. City & Town starts at \$12,000 (all modules, complete systems) installed and operating, up to four users. For more information or to arrange for a demonstration, call Scott M. Sawyer, CPA, at (413) 774-6811 or e-mail: smsacct@msn.com.

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 in-

clude management, staffing, organizational and operations studies of every local government function, as well as feasibility studies, classification and pay, 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 Susannah Leigh, Manager, at (781) 839-7393. We are located at 1050 Winter St., Suite 1000, Waltham, MA 02451. AA/EOE

Municipal PC and PDA Software

GeoTMS (Geographic Total Municipal Solution) from DesLauriers Municipal Solutions, Inc. introduces PDA field software. Record building permit and building code inspections, fire code and health code inspections at the job site using a Pocket PC. Issue and print violations on the spot. Conduct inspections at any address, anywhere and anytime. Check permit status in the field. GeoTMS is a modular award-winning software package serving building, fire, health, conservation, zoning board, planning, and licensing departments. For a free demonstration and more information, call (888) 443-6867 or visit: www.GeoTMS.com.

Legal Counsel Services

Experienced legal counsel available to assist municipalities and City Solicitors/Town Counsel in the defense of civil rights, discrimination and general liability claims, as well as representation in the specialized areas of eminent domain, public construction, local taxation and tax collection/Land Court foreclosure practice. Our extensive practice before administrative agencies, including the MCAD, ATB and DEP and at all levels of state and federal courts combined with years of experience representing municipalities and municipal officials in a broad range of legal matters enable us to provide highly skilled, yet cost effective, legal services. Call Douglas Louison or Patrick Costello at Merrick, Louison & Costello (617) 439-0305 when specialized counsel services are required. Address: 67 Batterymarch St., Boston, MA 02110; e-mail: dlouison@merricklc.com or pcostello@merricklc.com.

SERVICES, continued on 22

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Continued from page 21

Financial and Administrative Consulting

Financial Advisory Associates Inc. (FAA) is a financial and administrative consulting practice serving municipalities, school districts, retirement boards and other governmental clients. We cover all aspects of municipal finance. We provide long-term and interim financial management positions, strategic planning, training, financial executive searches and long-range budgeting and capital planning. Municipalities and districts providing water and sewage systems utilize our rate study services. Retirement systems rely on us during staffing shortages, for training, for systems redesign and rehabilitation and for other special projects. School districts have come to depend on us for enrollment and demographic studies and capital planning. FAA has extensive experience assisting communities involved with regional school district decision-making. For further information, visit our Web site at: www.faa-inc.com or contact Michael Daley, President, Financial Advisory Associates Inc., 258 Main St., Buzzards Bay, MA 02532; (508) 759-0700; e-mail: mdaley@faa-inc.com.

GIS Mapping Services

Chas. H. Sells, Inc. of Charlton, Mass. has provided aerial photography, GPS land survey, digital orthophotography and/or digital mapping for GIS and tax mapping programs to over 35 New England municipalities. The largest mapping firm in the region, we specialize in large scale (1"= 40' and 1"= 100') planimetric and topographic mapping, and digital orthos. Looking at GIS and the desire to have accurate mapping information? Please call us to discuss your project. We will also assist you with plans for developing municipal wide GIS implementations, including budgets. In addition, SELLS also provides quality mapping to support the planning and design of roads, bridges, water/sewer/CSO, brownfields development, bike/pedestrian paths, parks, etc. We can expand on an existing GIS base mapping with custom needs assessments for interested departments. Stock photography is now available for your mapping needs - 500-plus sq. mi. here in Massachusetts.

Please call Mike Doyle at (508) 248-1970 or e-mail at: mndoyle@chashesells.com. Web: www.chashesells.com.

Legal Services

Deutsch Williams Brooks DeRensis & Holland, P.C. is available to provide legal 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, civil rights and school committee matters. Contact Elizabeth Valerio or Peter Berry for labor matters, employment matters and school law issues or Paul DeRensis for other public law issues at (617) 951-2300.

Town Counsel Services

Pickett, Miyares & Harrington is dedicated to practicing law in the public interest and concentrates its practice in local government, land use, environmental and related areas of law. We provide a full range of municipal legal services, including consultation, advice, negotiation and litigation services in all courts of the commonwealth, as well as federal courts, and in adjudicatory proceedings before administrative agencies such as the Department of Environmental Protection, the Housing Appeals Committee, the Appellate Tax Board, the Energy Facility Siting Board, and the Division of Administrative Law Appeals. We devote a substantial portion of our attention to preventative maintenance and believe that proper legal advice helps to prevent problems before they arise. We are available to our municipal clients at all times, day and night, seven days a week, to answer questions that require immediate attention. We place great importance on giving personal, direct and responsive legal counsel to the municipalities that we serve. We offer small-firm rates, years of municipal law experience, the personal service of the firm's partners, diligent attention to our clients' interests, and consistently good humor. For an initial consultation, contact Judith Pickett, J. Raymond Miyares or Thomas Harrington at (617) 923-0880.

Public Management Consultants

MMA Consulting Group Inc. provides consulting services to cities, towns and other public agencies. We specialize in public safety/emergency response (po-

lice, fire, EMS), human resources (classification, compensation, recruitment, assessment centers, oral panels, policies and practices), public works (management and rate studies), organizational design, interlocal cooperation, financial management, and special projects. For information, contact Mark Morse, President, MMA Consulting Group Inc., 41 West St., Boston, MA 02111; (617) 426-8049; mmacg@aol.com.

Town Counsel Services

Kopelman and Paige is a municipal law firm. With offices in Boston, Worcester, Northampton and Pittsfield, we serve as town counsel to more than 120 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 municipal trial matters. We have specialists in all areas of municipal law and maintain an environmental-land-use law department that is on the cutting edge of planning, zoning and conservation. Kopelman and Paige 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 of experience keeps our cost per opinion to a minimum and enables us to service our clients quickly and efficiently, consistent with our commitment to excellence. For additional information on the legal services that Kopelman and Paige provides, please call Leonard Kopelman at (617) 556-0007, or toll-free at (800) 548-3522.

Municipal Management Consulting

Bennett Yarger Associates is a national public management consulting firm specializing in comprehensive policy and technical assistance to cities and towns. We have served more than half of the commonwealth's communities, as well as state agencies that affect local government. Our professional reputation is based on the proven ability to work in complex governmental settings free from the constraints imposed by conflicting local and state pressures. Specifically, our services include form-of-government studies, charters, special acts, fi-

nancial management including retrenchment planning and implementation, public works issues, regional consolidation of services, human resources ranging from executive recruitment to affirmative action, public safety issues, classification and compensation plans, human services, land use, growth management, and fair housing. For assistance, including a no-obligation visit to discuss your needs in detail, please call Dick Bennett at (781) 545-7616, ext. 12; fax: (781) 545-8565; Bennett Yarger Associates, 23 Doctors Hill Drive, Scituate, MA 02066.

Municipal Consulting Services

Groux & Associates is a Massachusetts-based municipal consulting firm specializing in charter studies for charter commissions; reorganization plans; executive recruitment for key municipal positions; and interim management assignments. Groux & Associates has extensive experience in northeastern states including New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts. Available for on-site, no obligation visits to review your needs and our services. Contact: Thomas J. Groux, Groux and Associates, PO Box 395, North Chatham, MA 02650. Phone or fax (508) 945-3160. E-mail: tgroux@cape.com.

Municipal Financial Management, Fund Accounting and Tax Collection Software

VADAR Systems, a Massachusetts-based corporation, is a highly specialized, national municipal software company, providing custom developed, PC-based, Windows-based, graphical financial management and tax collection systems to municipal, county and state governments throughout the United States. VADAR develops and supports specific product lines devoted to financial management applications, multiple fund accounting, property tax billing, utility billing and motor vehicle excise billing and collections. VADAR provides customized software applications to meet each client's individualized local and state requirements. For additional information about VADAR's state-of-the-art software suite, call us toll free at (877) 823-2700, or visit us on the Web (www.vadarsystems.com).

Tax Title Legal Services

Kopelman and Paige provides a full range of legal services for municipal treasurers and collectors

CLASSIFIEDS

in the tax title and Land Court practice areas. Our experienced tax title attorneys draft collection letters and payment agreements; prepare all instruments relative to tax takings and tax sales; draft all pleadings for Land Court foreclosure proceedings; and provide full representation of the town in Land Court actions. We encourage the exhaustion of all administrative collection procedures before commencing litigation. We have extensive experience in the Land Court, which is located only five minutes from our Boston office. The breadth of our experience and volume of work we perform in the tax-title area enables us to provide prompt, cost-effective service. For additional information on our tax-title services, please call Leonard Kopelman at (617) 556-0007, or toll-free at (800) 548-3522.

Government Management Consulting

The Government Consulting Group Inc. works with leaders in government and education to meet constituent expectations within declining resources. Our specialties include organization performance management, performance measurement, human resources administration (including classification and compensation, performance review and recruitment), interagency cooperation and shared services, information technology reviews, financial plans and analyses, organization and operations audits including

infrastructure management, VATS implementation (Value Added Transition System), operations cost reduction analysis, and interim town/city management services. We have established and maintained partnerships with clients throughout New England for more than 11 years. Contact Jared Clark, Government Consulting Group, Inc., 24B Hawthorne Village, Franklin, MA 02038-2696. Phone: (508) 533-7119; e-mail: jsaclarck@govt-consulting-group.com; Web site: www.govt-consulting-group.com.

Municipal Counsel Services

Brackett & Lucas is an established municipal law firm providing expert legal services to a variety of public sector clients. Gary S. Brackett is the former city solicitor of Worcester and former town counsel of Watertown. He has served as president of the Massachusetts City Solicitors and Town Counsel Association and as chairman of the Municipal Law Committee of the Massachusetts Bar Association. Elaine M. Lucas is the former chief of litigation for the city of Worcester. She served as the chair of the Municipal Law Section of the Worcester County Bar Association. The partners have more than 30 years of experience representing cities and towns. With its wide range of municipal law experience, including litigation, land use, contracts and finance, the firm is able to serve its clients in a

highly efficient and economical manner. For more information, please call Gary Brackett at (508) 799-9739, or write to 19 Cedar St., Worcester, MA 01609.

GIS Services

Why pay \$7,000 to put your GIS on the Web? Full Circle Technologies' quality service will put your town's GIS on the Web at a cost you can afford, with our new annual pricing. See VectorEyes for yourself at www.full-circletech.com and check out our client testimonials. Why pay \$17,000 to create your GIS? Our comprehensive GIS services and application solutions make complicated GIS projects easy to implement and use, at highly attractive prices. Full Circle Technologies, Inc., 6 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108; Phone: Stan Karlin at (617) 367-3553.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Consultant Services

Town of Medfield

The town of Medfield, through its Zoning Board of Appeals, is soliciting proposals from qualified individuals and/or firms to assist local boards and officials in their review of the Medfield

Woods Comprehensive Permit Application and the subsequent development of recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals. To provide a coordinated and comprehensive review of this application the qualified individual and/or firm must demonstrate the necessary expertise to address traffic impacts, environmental resources, and architectural and land use planning. Funds for this review will be provided to the town by the applicant based on an accepted fee proposal from qualified individuals or firms responding to this proposal. All firms/individuals interested in providing these professional services may request a copy of the Request for Proposals from Norma Cronin, Board of Appeals, 459 Main St., Medfield, MA 02052, (508) 359-8505, ext. 645, or ncronin@medfield.net. All proposals are due on Monday, Dec. 12, at 2 p.m. Six copies of the proposal must be submitted to Norma Cronin by this date and time. All submissions must be clearly labeled "MEDFIELD WOODS PROPOSAL" on the exterior of the envelope. A separate fee proposal must be received at the same time in a separate, sealed envelope marked "MEDFIELD WOODS FEE PROPOSAL." Late proposals will not be accepted.

Mailing labels available

The MMA sells mailing labels to members and nonmembers for one-time use. Labels are self-adhesive and can be categorized by name, professional title, community or zip code. For more information, call MMA Database Coordinator Michael Pingpank at (617) 426-7272. *

Energy

continued from page 1

nately, the money needed to fix them is not readily available.

The federal government, the U.S. Department of Energy, and 30 other states currently use performance contracting to finance energy-efficient purchases.

The characteristics of performance contracting are:

1. The building owner makes no initial investment.
2. Energy and operating savings are guaranteed by the contractor to be at least enough to fund the project,

including finance charges.

3. Technical and financial risks are assumed by the contractor, not the building owner.

Performance contracting would allow communities to move forward immediately with projects that reduce energy consumption at a time when costs are skyrocketing.

Reps. Brian Dempsey and Rachel Kaprielian and Sen. Michael Morrissey were chief proponents of the bill.

- David Baier

BULLETIN BOARD

SEEKING INFORMATION

SELECTMEN POLICIES - The town of Chelmsford seeks information from other communities that have a selectmen's policy manual available for review. Please send information to Kellie Hebert, assistant to the town manager, at khebert@townofchelmsford.us or Chelmsford Town Offices, 50

Billerica Road, Chelmsford, MA 01824, or call (978) 250-5202. (12/05)

Local officials may submit items for publication in the Bulletin Board, either Seeking Information or Offering Information, free of charge. Please limit submissions to 50 words. Send them to Jason Imbesi at the MMA (60 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111; fax: (617) 695-1314; e-mail: bullboard@mma.org).

CALENDAR

DECEMBER

1 Association of Town Finance Committees, Governing Board dinner, 6-9 p.m., Bergson 1790 House, Westborough. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

6-10 NLC's Annual Congress of Cities and Exposition, Charlotte, N.C. Visit: www.nlc.org

9 Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association, program meeting, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Wayside Inn, Sudbury. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Ellen Stoolmacher

9 Local Officials Human Services Council, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m., MMA office, Boston. Contact: LOHSC President Bob Martin, (508) 580-7867

14 Massachusetts Mayors' Association, holiday dinner, 6-9 p.m., Boston. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

15 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, monthly meeting, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., White Cliffs, Northborough. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

JANUARY

13-14 MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show, Hynes Convention Center and Sheraton Hotel, Boston. Largest annual gathering of local officials in Massachusetts, featuring workshops, a Trade Show, seminars, business meetings, guest speakers, receptions, award presentations and other activities. Contacts: Marisa Lutz regarding Annual Meeting, Karen LaPointe regarding the Trade Show, both at the MMA

FEBRUARY

8 Massachusetts Selectmen's Association, executive committee, 3-6 p.m., location to be announced. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Ellen Stoolmacher

14 MMA Board of Directors, 9:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m., location to be announced, Boston. Followed by Local Government Advisory Commission meeting, 1-2 p.m., State House, Boston. Contact: MMA executive director's office

14 Massachusetts Municipal Councillors' Association, executive committee, 2:15-3:45 p.m., State House, Boston. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator

16 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, monthly meeting, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., location to be announced. Contact: MMA Senior Member Services Coordinator Denise Baker

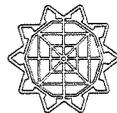
MARCH

3 Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association, program meeting, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., location to be announced. Contact: MMA Member Services Coordinator Ellen Stoolmacher

16 Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, monthly meeting, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., location to be announced. 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 John Ouellette, editor, MMA, 60 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111; fax: (617) 695-1314; e-mail: editor@mma.org.

For more information on MMA events, visit www.mma.org or call (800) 882-1498



The Beacon

Massachusetts Municipal Association
Sixty Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111

PERIODICALS



*****CAR-RT LOT**CD15
MR. GREGORY NIEMYSKI
PLANNING BOARD CHAIR
TOWN OF ACTON
472 MAIN ST
ACTON MA 01720-3952

Please check the address label on this newsletter. If any part of the address is incorrect, please cross it out, type or print the correction, and send the old label plus the correction to the MMA, Attention: Database Coordinator, 60 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111.