

MEMORANDUM – OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

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TO: Select Board

FROM: Jennifer Warren-Dymment, Town Manager

RE: Weekly Report

DATE: December 16, 2025

CC: Department Heads; file



General Updates

Consensus Revenue Hearing:

Today the FY27 state budget process began with the annual consensus revenue hearing, when the Department of Revenue and other fiscal experts will discuss the prospects for the economy and state revenue over the second half of the current fiscal year and for the upcoming year. Following the hearing, legislative leaders and the administration will reach an agreement on a tax revenue forecast for fiscal 2027 that will be used in the governor's budget recommendation (known as House 2), which is due to be filed in January, and the House and Senate budget plans, customarily released in April and May, respectively. The hearing is important for municipal officials due to the timely insights into the direction of the economy and anticipated state revenue available to critical municipal and school aid programs.

Massachusetts Municipal Association Recommendations:

Earlier this year the MMA released "A Perfect Storm: Cities and Towns Face Historic Fiscal Pressures". This report found that a convergence of forces are forcing Massachusetts cities and towns to make increasingly devastating cuts to essential services for residents. As a result of all these factors and more, municipalities have been keeping budgets balanced by cutting or reducing essential services, which impacts schools, libraries, roads, public safety, and an overall shrinking of community vibrancy.

Last week, the MMA released a package of policy recommendations that would "stabilize municipal finances and public services, restore and strengthen the state-local partnership, and provide additional flexibility for local leaders to manage their budgets."

The recommendations include:

- A major infusion of Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) to make up for the local aid from the Commonwealth that cities and towns lost during the Great Recession of 2008-2010.
 - 18 years after those reductions, UGGA has just returned to fiscal 2008 levels in

the most recent (fiscal 2026) state budget, NOT adjusting for inflation.

- The MMA is calling for a \$351 million UGGA increase to restore the state partnership to pre-recession levels — “the most direct and immediate way to strengthen the foundation of municipal government.”
- Ensuring all other local aid programs remain fully funded going forward: Chapter 70, the special education “circuit breaker,” other school-related accounts, payments to cities and towns for non-taxable state property within their borders (forests, parks, schools, etc.) and more.
- Provide cities and towns: 1) more flexibility for raising local revenues, and 2) more options for raising local-option taxes and cutting costs, as proposed in Governor Healey’s Municipal Empowerment Act:
 - Prop 2 ½: Keep the overall framework, but let local voters choose, if they wish, to implement gradual, multi-year overrides ... or replace today’s 2.5 percent annual levy limit increase, temporarily or permanently, with a higher fixed cap like the CPI
 - More local flexibility on reclassification and shifting tax load between commercial/industrial and residential/personal property, including making it easier to enact tax exemptions for seniors, veterans, and others
 - Some new or increased local-option taxes, including a slightly higher local hotel/motel tax and meals tax, a local-option surcharge on motor vehicle excise tax bills, and a local-option tax on real-estate transfers to fund affordable housing
 - More incentives for regionalizing services and reducing municipal government costs, in line with the Governor’s Municipal Empowerment Act

Annual Staff Holiday Potluck and Yankee Swap:

Town offices will be closed from 12-2 on Wednesday, December 17th for the Annual staff holiday potluck and Yankee swap. We are looking forward to some festive sweaters and holiday fun.

Recruitment

Current recruitments:

- Conservation Agent- 36 hours per week
- Staff Librarian, Young Adult- 30 hours per week
- Finance Director- 40 hours per week
- Payroll and Benefits- 36 hours per week
- Recreation Director- 19 hours per week
- Dietary Aide- 9 hours per week
- Outreach Coordinator- Job Description under review

Board and Committee Vacancies

Appointed

- Agricultural Commission- 1 vacancy
- Architectural Preservation District Commission- 1 vacancy

- Cultural Council- 2 vacancies
- Green Communities (Associate)- 2 vacancies
- Historical Commission- 1 vacancy
- Parks Commission- 1 vacancy
- Personnel Board- 5 vacancies
- PACC- 1 vacancy
- Zoning Board of Appeal (Associate Member)- 1 vacancy
- Lunenburg's Representative to the First Middlesex Small Town's Collaborative- 1 vacancy

Elected

- Planning Board- 1 vacancy
- Sewer Commission- 1 vacancy
- Trust Fund Commission- 1 vacancy