

City and Town

Amy Pitter, Commissioner • Robert G. Nunes, Deputy Commissioner & Director of Municipal Affairs



A Publication of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services

Thank You, Robert T. Martin

This edition of *City and Town* is dedicated to and celebrates the life of Robert T. Martin who passed away on January 13, 2012. Bob worked as property tax appraiser in the Division of Local Services for over 23 years beginning in 1988. He is particularly known for his quiet style, good humor, professionalism and expertise in the assessing field.

As a certification advisor, Bob made sure that the local assessors' proposed values represented full and fair cash value in their respective communities. Westborough's Chief Assessor, Linda Swadel, said that she and Bob would sometimes "argue like an old married couple," but in all her dealings with him over the years he was reasonable, fair and honest. She said it was a pleasure working with him and he will be missed. Priscilla Hogan, Milford's assessor, notes that Bob was a kind, gentle and very sensitive man and was always great to work with.

Bob even had a room named after him! Maureen Hafner, director of assessing in Sudbury relayed a story from a number of years ago when the town rearranged its office space. One of the rooms, albeit small, held a desk and shelving for deeds. They thought it was a nice space for Bob Martin during their certification reviews. Jokingly, they started calling it "Bob's Room" and, for whatever reason, the name stuck. Maureen said, "It saddens me that the room now has become a memorial to a friend and mentor. Bob Martin, our quiet giant, is sadly missed in Sudbury."

Tom Sweeney, a retired Bureau of Local Assessment certification advisor who worked with Bob in our Worcester office, noted that Bob didn't say too much but when he did "everyone listened and learned." Deb Joyce the Worcester office administrative assistant also said how much she had learned from him. Jennifer Silvia is one of our newer advisors and she said that she will miss his "unique sense of humor and invaluable advice."

Lest anyone get the wrong idea, Bureau Chief Marilyn Browne said Bob was also a tough appraiser who demanded high quality work from the assessors he oversaw so that the local property taxpayers would be treated fairly. Joanne Graziano, Bob's supervisor, said that she used Bob's reports as a model for other appraisers. Deputy Bureau Chief Brenda Cameron said that Bob was "methodical, thoughtful and very knowledgeable." So much so that in 2007 he was the recipient of the Division of Local Services' Deputy Commissioner's Citation for Outstanding Performance. Bob jokingly said he could not take his award home for fear that he would be seen as stealing state property. It was that quiet dry sense of humor that endeared him to us.

He leaves his wife Christine, daughters Jessica, Collins, Morgan and son Brennan.

Thank you, Bob. We all miss you.

FY2013 Budget Numbers Released

By February, the holiday season is a distant memory and the new year has begun in earnest. Attention turns from fruitcake to playoff football (Go Pats!). In state and municipal government, we experience our own transition as

the focus shifts from the setting of tax rates to the state budget process.

On Friday, January 20th, I had the pleasure of joining Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray, Executive Office of Administration and Finance (ANF) Secretary Jay Gonzalez and Department of Revenue (DOR) Commissioner Amy Pitter at the annual Massachusetts Municipal Association meeting in Boston. With local officials and municipal staff attending from across the Commonwealth, Lt. Gov. Murray previewed local aid numbers highlighted by the \$145M increase in Chapter 70 funding. Secretary Gonzalez outlined the scale and scope of spending cuts, savings and new efficiencies and Commissioner Pitter detailed the \$22M DOR will achieve from enhanced tax enforcement initiatives. In the afternoon, I served as moderator for a workshop with Secretary Gonzalez and Commissioner Pitter entitled, "State and Local Economic and Budget Outlook." There we noted that in FY12, the Division of Local Services through its municipal databank has distributed \$2,233,587,078 (Chapter 70: \$1,871,084,237) in the first two quarters in aid to cities, towns and school districts to date and that it will distribute in excess of \$5 Billion over the course of this fiscal year.

A few days later on Wednesday, January 25, 2012, Governor Deval Patrick filed his Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) budget recommendation, a balanced and fiscally responsible plan that reflects the Governor's unprecedented commitment to education, health care, creating jobs and other key priorities that support long-term job growth and prosperity and will continue to accelerate the Commonwealth's economic recovery. The Governor's FY13 budget recommendation proposes state spending of \$32.3 billion, or a 2.98 percent increase from the current year estimated spending levels. This year-on-year spending growth of \$935.9 million is significantly less than originally projected because of significant program reductions, positions eliminations and reforms.

In keeping with the Patrick-Murray Administration's commitment to cities and towns, the FY13 budget proposes more than \$5.2 billion for local aid, including \$4.1 billion for K-12 Chapter 70 education aid - a \$145 million increase in state funding to municipalities over FY12, and the highest level of K-12 Chapter 70 aid in history. The increase in K-12 Chapter 70 aid will fully fund all school districts at foundation levels and ensure that all school districts will receive equal or greater funding than in FY12. Maintaining a strong investment in education is a crucial component of the Patrick-Murray Administration's efforts to close the achievement gap and to make Massachusetts a global leader in education. Here's a further breakdown:

FY 2013 Local Aid funding includes:

- Unrestricted General Government Aid \$833.9 million (with the same provision for an additional payment of \$65 million should sufficient surplus funds be available for FY12 surplus);
- Chapter 90 Local Road Program \$200 million;
- Special Education Circuit Breaker \$213 million;
- 100% Veterans Homeless Shelter Reimbursement Rate;
- State Owned Land (PILOT) \$26.3 million;
- Regional School Transportation \$43.5 million;
- Charter School Reimbursement \$71.5 million;
- School Food Services Program \$5.4 million;
- Municipal Library Aid \$6.8 million; and
- Regional Library Local Aid \$9.1 million.

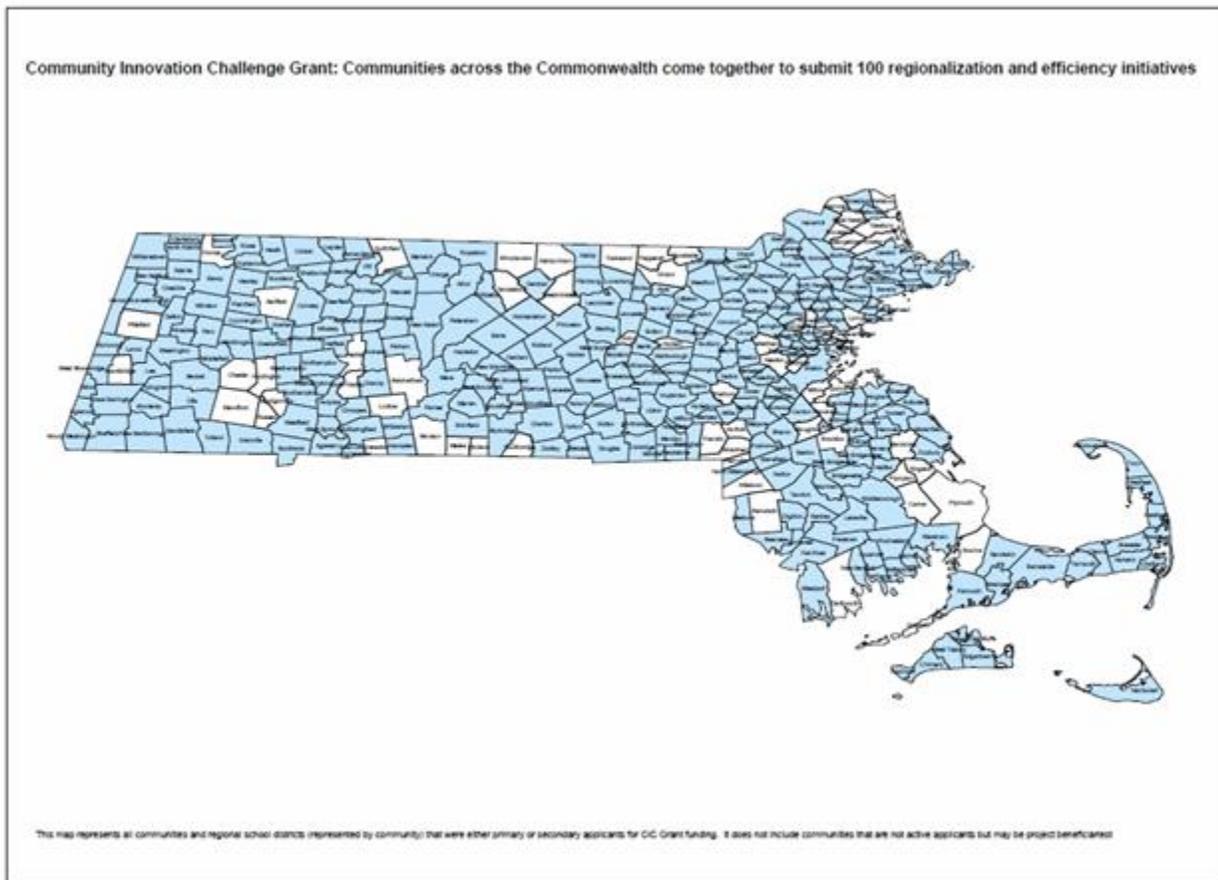
To view FY2013 Cherry Sheets, please click [here](#).

To learn more about the details of the budget and to follow the process, please click [here](#).

Robert G. Nunes
Deputy Commissioner & Director of Municipal Affairs

100 Applications Received for Community Innovation Challenge Grants **Executive Office of Administration and Finance**

By the January 17th deadline, the Executive Office of Administration and Finance received 100 applications for the Community Innovation Challenge grant program. This exciting program provides incentives to municipal entities interested in innovating the way they provide local government services. Below is a map detailing the 285 municipalities from all regions of the state participating in grant proposals, either as primary or secondary applicants or members of a regional school district. Applications are now going through the review process and recipients will be announced at the end of February.



Final FY2013 Levy Limit Instructions **DLS Bureau of Accounts**

The Division of Local Services has posted preliminary FY2013 levy limit worksheets and instructions can be found [here](#). This information should assist local officials in developing their community's FY2013 budget.

The worksheets include final data from FY2012 which provides the basis for the FY2013 calculation. The instructions detail how the FY2013 worksheet is completed.

All local officials and other interested parties are welcome to view this info.

February Municipal Calendar

February 1: Taxpayer Deadline for Payment of 3rd Quarterly Tax Bill Without Interest

According to M.G.L. Ch. 59, Sec. 57C, this is the deadline for receipt of the 3rd Quarter actual tax payment without interest, unless the actual tax bills were mailed after December 31. If mailed after December 31, the actual tax is due as a single installment on May 1, or 30 days after the bills were mailed, whichever is later.

February 1: Taxpayer Quarterly Tax Bills — Application Deadline for Property Tax Abatement

According to M.G.L. Ch. 59, Sec. 59, applications for abatements are due on Feb. 1 unless actual tax bills were mailed after December 31. In that case they are due May 1, or 30 days after mailing, whichever is later.

February 15: Treasurer 2nd Quarter Reconciliation of Cash

February 28: Finance Committee Continue Budget Review and Develop Recommendations

This date will vary depending on dates of town meeting.

City & Town is published by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services (DLS) and is designed to address matters of interest to local officials.

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