



GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL CALENDAR OF BUSINESS
TUESDAY, May 24, 2022
7:00 PM
SAWYER FREE LIBRARY*
2 DALE AVENUE, GLOUCESTER MA
COUNCIL MEETING #2022-010

Revised

Consistent with chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted by remote participation. The public may not physically attend this meeting but every effort will be made to allow the public to view and listen to the meeting in real-time and participate when necessary.

***PLEASE NOTE: Only the City Council will be in person at this meeting. The meeting cannot be attended in person by the public at this time. To attend the meeting, please click the Zoom link to join the webinar.**

Join from Computer, Smart Device: <https://gloucester-ma-gov.zoom.us/j/82054382175>

Join via Phone: 1-301-715-8592 or 1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 820 5438 2175

Please visit <http://gloucester-ma.gov/remote-public-meetings> for instructions and guidance on how to join a remote meeting

UNANIMOUS CONSENT CALENDAR

ACTION

- **COMMUNICATIONS/INVITATIONS**

1. Invitation from the Gloucester Fire Department Relief Association to the Firefighter's Memorial Services on June 12, 2022 (Info Only)
2. City Council to weigh in on the Massachusetts Municipal Association's recommendations on proposed Senate Bills for the FY23 State Budget (FCV 5/26/2022)



GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL CALENDAR OF BUSINESS
TUESDAY, May 24, 2022
7:00 PM
SAWYER FREE LIBRARY*
2 DALE AVENUE, GLOUCESTER MA
COUNCIL MEETING #2022-010

Consistent with chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted by remote participation. The public may not physically attend this meeting but every effort will be made to allow the public to view and listen to the meeting in real-time and participate when necessary.

***PLEASE NOTE: Only the City Council will be in person at this meeting. The meeting cannot be attended in person by the public at this time. To attend the meeting, please click the Zoom link to join the webinar.**

Join from Computer, Smart Device: <https://gloucester-ma-gov.zoom.us/j/82054382175>

Join via Phone: 1-301-715-8592 or 1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 820 5438 2175

Please visit <http://gloucester-ma.gov/remote-public-meetings> for instructions and guidance on how to join a remote meeting

UNANIMOUS CONSENT CALENDAR

ACTION

• **COMMUNICATIONS/INVITATIONS**

1. Invitation from the Gloucester Fire Department Relief Association to the Firefighter's Memorial Services on June 12, 2022 (Info Only)

Relief Association
Of The
GLOUCESTER FIRE DEPARTMENT

CITY CLERK
GLOUCESTER, MA

2022 MAY 23 AM 8:49

May 23, 2022

City of Gloucester
City Clerk
9 Dale Avenue
Gloucester, Ma. 01930

Dear City Clerk,

The Relief Association of the Gloucester Fire Department cordially invites you, Mayor Verga, members of the Gloucester City Council, and all other city administrators to the Firefighter's Memorial services on Sunday June 12, 2022.

If you would like to march, please meet at the Department of Public Works entrance on Poplar Street on June 12, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. for the procession to Cherry Hill Cemetery. Following the ceremony will be a coalition at 11 Rust Island Road (route 128, exit12).

In the event of rain or inclement weather please meet at Central Fire Station, 8 School Street, Gloucester at the same time.

Sincerely Yours,

Joseph Johnson
President
Relief Association



PLEASE SUPPORT AND BUILD ON THE IMPRESSIVE INVESTMENTS IN S. 4

May 18, 2022

Dear Senator,

We are writing to express our deep appreciation for the many provisions in the Senate Ways & Means Committee budget proposal (S. 4) that benefit and support cities and towns across the Commonwealth, and we welcome the opportunity to offer comments and insights on proposed amendments that will be before you next week, during your deliberations on the fiscal 2023 state budget.

We thank President Spilka, Chair Rodrigues, and the members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee for their commitment to cities and towns by increasing local aid in several key accounts, including doubling the increase in Unrestricted General Government Aid, doubling Chapter 70 minimum aid, increasing the charter school mitigation payments, and significantly investing in Payments-in-Lieu-of-Taxes for state-owned land. These are extremely important investments, and demonstrate leadership and a powerful commitment to all municipalities.

For several months, the MMA and local officials have advocated for an increase in Unrestricted General Government Aid to better reflect the state's increase in tax collections and allow communities to address their tight budget challenges. The Senate Ways & Means Committee has acted on this concern, and is proposing a \$63 million increase (5.4%), doubling the \$31.5 million (2.7%) increase originally included in the Governor's budget. The MMA applauds this vital increase in unrestricted municipal aid.

In addition to the significant increase in Unrestricted General Government Aid, S. 4 includes an increase in Chapter 70 public education aid for minimum-aid districts, doubling the amount per pupil from \$30 to \$60. The Senate Ways & Means proposal also increases the Payments-in-Lieu-of-Taxes account by \$10 million, an increase of 29%, giving municipalities with large amounts of state-owned land a much-needed boost.

In this letter, we are asking you to consider a number of amendments that would build on the outstanding Senate Ways & Means proposal, as well as some non-appropriation provisions that would maintain local government operations.

Please Support These Key Appropriations and Municipal Operations Amendments:

Amendment #647 (Regional School Transportation 100% Reimbursement) – Please support an increase to the Regional School Transportation account (7035-0006), which is critical

to rural and smaller communities. Amendment #647, filed by Senator Gobi, would fund 100% of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's fiscal 2023 projected claims at \$97 million.

Amendment #1114 (Remote Meeting Extensions) – Please support Amendment #1114, filed by Senator Brownsberger, to extend provisions allowing for remote participation in open public meetings, as well as remote notarization, and remote town meetings, among others, from July 15, 2022, to December 15, 2023. Massachusetts is in the middle of another rise in COVID transmissions, and extending the option for remote meetings will provide resiliency for government operations during a time of ongoing uncertainty and public health concern. This is a highly time-sensitive measure, and it makes perfect sense to include it in legislation that will get to the Governor's Desk before the current extension expires on July 15.

Amendment #743 (Rural School Aid) and #704 (Regionalization Grant Program) – Please support Amendment #743 filed by Senator Hinds to fund the Rural School Aid account (7010-0005) at \$20 million, providing rural school assistance grants, with priority given to proposals that support schools and districts that have experienced significant enrollment losses, and Amendment #704, filed by Senator Gobi, which provides \$500,000 for school district regionalization grants to regional school districts, or school districts considering forming a regional school district or regionalizing services.

Amendment #127 (Early Voting Reimbursement) – Please support an appropriation to reimburse municipalities for the costs of implementing early voting for state elections. Amendment #127, filed by Senator Finegold, includes a \$6 million appropriation to fund this state mandate.

Amendments #630 and #631 (Chapter 70 Minimum Aid) – We deeply appreciate the Senate Ways & Means proposal to double per-pupil minimum aid to \$60 per student, and recognize that this is great progress for the 135 districts that are minimum-aid-only. As you know, the MMA has consistently advocated for \$100 per-pupil minimum aid, and thus we certainly support consideration of Amendments #630 and #631, filed by Senator Tarr, which would increase Chapter 70 minimum aid to \$75 per pupil and \$100 per pupil, respectively.

Amendment #663 (MSBA Commission) – Please support Amendment #663, filed by Senator Finegold, which would create a special commission to study the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The commission would review and make recommendations concerning reimbursement rates for construction, as well as other areas of concern, in order to maximize this important resource for cities and towns.

Amendment #332 (Local Opt-In for Permanent Outdoor Dining) – Please support this amendment to give municipalities the option to permanently extend outdoor dining options. Filed by Senator Tarr, Amendment #332 would allow restaurants to apply for local approval to expand outdoor table service.

Amendment #803 (Cybersecurity Commission) – Please support Amendment #803, filed by Senator Moore, establishing a cybersecurity review commission. Municipalities remain vulnerable to cyberattacks and are seeking the guidance and best practices advice that would result from this commission. Including a municipal representative would add a local perspective to the state’s interagency deliberations.

Amendment #834 (Community Preservation Act Surplus Funding) – Please support Amendment #834, filed by Senator Comerford, which directs the Comptroller to transfer \$20 million to the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund, prior to sending the net surplus for fiscal 2022 to the Commonwealth’s stabilization fund. The number of CPA communities has reached 187, and this amendment would increase the state’s match from approximately 35% to 43%, about the same state match percentage as last year.

Amendment #856 (Flexibility in Municipal Broadband Spending) – Please support Amendment #856, filed by Senator Hinds, which would allow funds appropriated for closing the digital divide to be granted to municipalities seeking relief from debt incurred for the construction of broadband networks. These communities were forced to step in when the private carriers ignored their regions and left their households and businesses behind in the broadband buildout, adding costly burdens on local taxpayers.

Amendments #942 and #951 (Shannon Grants) – Please support Amendment #942 and Amendment #951, filed by Senator DiDomenico and Senator Edwards, respectively, to increase funding for the Shannon Grant program (8100-0111). This anti-gang grant program helps cities and towns respond to and suppress gang-related activities.

Finally, the MMA has strong concerns regarding Amendment #810, relative to retiree cost-of-living-adjustments, or COLAs. The amendment would authorize local and regional pension boards to award a COLA adjustment of up to 5.9% to retirees in fiscal 2023, above the current 3% cap. This would very likely increase the local unfunded pension liability, and drive up costs for taxpayers. Most communities in the state participate in regional pension systems, and do not have direct decision-making authority regarding adoption of a higher COLA, and we are aware of no system that has incorporated higher COLAs into their unfunded pension liability calculations. Adoption of a higher COLA, even if limited to one year, would permanently increase the pension obligations for all participating communities, requiring increased annual appropriations to fund the cost. We recommend that you reach out to your chief municipal officials to determine what the financial impact would be in the cities and towns in your district; it is likely to be significant.

SUMMARY

Again, we would like to express our deep gratitude to President Spilka, Chair Rodrigues, and the members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee for presenting a fiscal blueprint that makes vital and timely investments in cities and towns across the state, particularly in the area of Unrestricted General Government Aid, Chapter 70 minimum aid, and PILOT. This is a critical

time for Massachusetts, and local government leaders deeply appreciate your strong partnership with all 351 cities and towns.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to have your office contact me, MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman at dkoffman@mma.org, or MMA Senior Legislative Analyst Jackie Lavender Bird at jlavenderbird@mma.org at any time.

Thank you very much for your support, dedication and commitment to the cities and towns of Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Beckwith". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Geoffrey C. Beckwith
Executive Director & CEO