

Local Government Advisory Commission
February 12, 2013
Executive Council Chamber
State House, Boston

MMA President (2013) Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager, Needham – presiding
Lt. Governor Tim Murray - presiding

MASC members present: Mary Jo Rossetti, President; Ann Marie Cugno, President-Elect; Patrick Francomano, Vice President; Jake Oliviera, Secretary/Treasurer (G. Koocher and J. Handy also present)

Election of members of the Executive Committee – The executive committee consists of representative of the chairs of the main constituency groups at MMA and MASC. The President of MASC sits as a member of the Executive Committee.

Approval of Minutes of November 13. 2102.*

Presentation and Discussion of the Urgent Need to Invest in Transportation*

A discussion was held Rich Davey, Transportation Secretary. Note that this discussion has been an on-going one.

Discussion with the new Secretary of Administration and Finance

Glen Shor, the new Secretary of A&F made some brief introductory remarks. He specifically stated, “I will continue to build a stronger partnership with cities and towns ... and I hope to follow in the tradition of accessibility.”

Presentation and Discussion of the Governor’s Fiscal 2014 Budget*

Secretary Glen Shor gave an overview of the state budget at large as was previewed in the governor’s proposal for revenues and taxes. Shore noted that “The Governor and Lt. Governor have governed during an unprecedented fiscal/economic challenge. They have done everything they can to avoid cuts where possible.” He cited an “unprecedented level of Chapter 70 funding” in the governor’s proposal. He noted that, “Our state now enjoys the strongest credit rating in history.” For FY 2014, Shore stated, “We wish the economy were growing faster.” The governor’s FY14 budget uses a smaller amount of Rainy Day Funds than in FY13, but he also cited the state’s reserves as the second largest in the nation.

Sec. Shore spoke quite a bit re our “chronically underfunded transportation system.” He additionally stated, “I wouldn’t overlook the need to increase educational funding as well. We still have gaps that need correcting. We need to do more. We need to take steps to invest to grow.”

Questions/Comments for Secretary Short:

A representative from Hadley explained that his town would see an increase of Chapter 70 of \$264,000) - “We are behind on technology. This money will more than pay for help in this area.”

MASC (MJ Rossetti) – I presented comments from MASC on the proposed revenue package and FY 2014 budget. “According to the Governor’s plan, circuit breaker money will be sent directly to the municipality. Does this indicate that the funding would go directly to the school dept. or to the town/city?” -Sec. Shore and the Lt.

Governor deferred to Ms. Melissa King (DESE, State Aid Coordinator-School Finance in attendance). She was unclear of the answer, but promised to report back.

Note: Ms. King subsequently reported back to us that she had checked with DESE's Jay Sullivan who confirmed that there are no planned changes in current practice. As is the practice, Circuit Breaker payments go to the city/town treasurer and should be deposited in the Special Ed Reimbursement Fund that is available to the School Committee.

I also thanked the Lt. Governor and Governor for their courage in seeking more revenue to allow us to focus on early childhood education so that we can expand the number of full day kindergartens and pre-K education for students who do not have that opportunity. I also thanked them for the \$25 per student increase in basic Chapter 70 aid. I did, however, continue to express our desire for flexibility on spending. I also, once again, expressed the need for a full study of Chapter 70 adequacy and our strong support of an Adequacy Study as the best comprehensive approach to planning for an adequate state aid appropriation.

During this meeting I learned that MMA has 3 goals for the current year, one of which relates to the need of adequate funding for SPED.

As always, the above reflects my interpretations of portions of the meeting. It remains an honor to represent you.

Mary Jo Rossetti
MASC President

*See attachment for details