

Press Release
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Mayors Meet with State's Public Safety and Budget Chiefs

Mayor William M. Manzi this week met with two key members of Governor Deval Patrick's cabinet, joining with mayors from across the state at a meeting of the Massachusetts Mayors' Association, a member group of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, to discuss the need for a stronger and more dependable fiscal partnership with the state, and the importance of investing in public safety strategies and programs that meet local needs. The session was held in Lowell at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium.

On Wednesday, March 28, Mayor Manzi joined with Leslie Kirwan, the Secretary of Administration and Finance, and Kevin Burke, the Public Safety Secretary to talk about the challenges facing Methuen and the immediate need to relieve the fiscal stresses on city budgets and for the state to provide the tools that cities need to ensure adequate police, fire and emergency response services.

"We have so many areas of common concern as we seek to secure a greater share of state revenues for local aid and to insure the safety and security of our citizens," said Mayor Manzi. "I look forward to working with Secretary Kirwan, Secretary Burke and the Patrick Administration to address the needs of our city, and to improve the quality of life for all of Massachusetts citizens."

The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) also provided an update and analysis on the state budget and local aid recommendations, an update on the Governor's Municipal Partnership Act, which would empower cities and towns to reduce their reliance on residential property taxes by allowing modest local option taxing authority on meals and lodging, and close tax loopholes that permit telecommunications companies to avoid paying their fair share of local property taxes.

Mayor Joseph Curtatone of Somerville, the President of the Massachusetts Mayors' Association, cited increasing local aid and passing the Governor's Municipal Partnership Act as the top priorities this year, indicating that he would carry that message to the State House in meetings with legislative leadership. "In addition to fighting for more local aid and a stronger partnership with state leaders, we must stand up for our taxpayers by bringing our message to Beacon Hill," Curtatone said.

"Cities will only make progress this year if Legislators and the Governor agree to give communities the authority and the resources they need to fund essential services, balance their budgets, and bring property tax relief to local taxpayers," said MMA Executive Director Geoffrey C. Beckwith.

During the meeting, the Mayors also took action on an important consumer protection issue by establishing a task force of local leaders to protect the vital role of cities and towns in negotiating local license agreements with telecommunications companies that offer cable and video services. Mayors and municipal officials throughout the state are opposed to special interest legislation filed by Verizon that would eliminate the ability of cities and towns to protect consumers and guarantee that all citizens benefit from enhanced competition. The special Task Force on Telecommunications Franchising will aid the MMA and local officials in their efforts to protect existing local consumer protection powers.

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