

Local Government Advisory Commission
June 12, 2012
Executive Council Chamber
State House, Boston
1:00-2:00 p.m.

Minutes of May 8th meeting were approved.

State Revenue and Budget Update – Secretary J. Gonzales

“The news continues to be good. Thirty one thousand jobs were added in April. Tax revenues through May represent a \$858 million increase (2.5% growth) vs. the previous year at this point. However, we did expect higher growth. We are very close to our goal, and that’s good. We continue to be very tightly in balance. June is a big month during which income taxes will be a key indicator. We will know by July....it should play a big factor.”

Comments:

Natick – We are generally in support of more funding for mandates (i.e. \$4.17 in Chapter 70 as recommended by the Senate; and \$71.5 million charter school reimbursement). We are very supportive of fully funding special education circuit breaker and for a rate freeze for SPED outside placement providers which are critical cost controls.

Success of the Solar Industry in Mass.

Massachusetts is second in the nation (to CA) for installation of solar energy. Grassroots effort to assist communities in how to go about solar installations is offered by Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

Comments:

MMA opposes mandatory ‘one size fits all’ pilot.

Chapter 90 and Transportation Funding Update

Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll, notes, “There is a deep level of frustration this year.”

Lt. Governor Murray responds, “This is a priority.....I’m hopeful that the Chairs of Transportation Committee will get this out soon. We will keep pushing and prodding.”

Discussion of Pending Economic Development Legislation

The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development is currently analyzing a Bill before the Senate that would authorize issuing contracts under one program which would help expedite the work. “MassWorks” will be accepting applications from 8/27 to 9/10/1. MMA spoke of the importance of community and local control of redevelopment of infrastructure. Regarding the Permit Extension Act (2010), “anticipate another two year extension” (i.e. will allow projects to go through on prior approved permits in these difficult economic times).

Comments:

Quincy – (Regarding “MassWorks” and “Icubed”) Praised these two programs for their assistance in a very large project ongoing in Quincy (downtown redevelopment).

Reading – Concern of permit extension, i.e. extending local government permits from 5-7 years.

Andover – Re 43D (expedited permitting) – “We should be concerned of anything that erodes the local control.”

Success of Municipal Health Insurance Reform One Year Later

Gardner Mayor comments that he was thrilled to be able to put his savings in his public school system this year.

There will not be a meeting in July. Next scheduled meeting will be in September.

Before adjourning, I requested that the next meeting’s agenda include discussion of the impact of student mobility on education (follow-up to Ed Reform Bill of 2010). This request was granted. (NOTE: the report is attached to the compendium of LGAC meeting summaries, above.)

As always, the above reflects my interpretations of today’s meeting. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours in service,
Mary Jo Rossetti