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VOL.1 NO.329-37

SOMERVILLE/MEDFORD MASS.

Tuesday April 1st, 2025

\$75.8 MILLION FOR STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENTS FOR



Continued to page 16

Shelter Masquerade as the Warming Shelter on Prescott St at the Cummings Elementary School



Continued to page 5

NO NEW TAXES ON PRESCRIPTION DRUGS



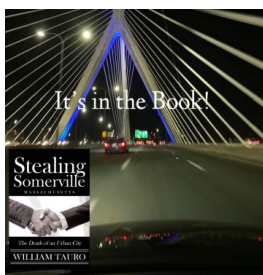
Continued to page 17



NEWS TALK OUT
LOUD/SPEAK UP



Somerville Police
Real Life Somerville
Police Stories Page



MOUNT VERNON RESTAURANT

We are open for indoor dining along with take out. Our business hours are Sunday through Wednesday 11:30am to 8:30pm and Thursday through Saturday 11:30am to 9:30pm. Our full menu along with our daily specials and catering menu is available.
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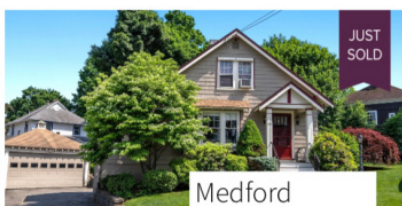
MARKET ACTIVITY

WE HAVE BEEN BUSY...

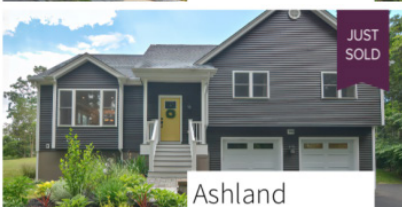
BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY | Commonwealth
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Medford



Ashland



Westwood

We have been busy, but never too busy for you! These four properties were sold in one month! If you see something you would like to know more about, have any questions or are thinking about buying or selling a property, please don't hesitate to send us an email or give us call!

Helen Praysman Broker Associate REALTOR®
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Patricia Ng Broker Associate
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Please make all checks payable to: **MHS Varsity Softball**

Please send both forms and payment to:

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 489 Winthrop Street
 Medford, MA 02155

If you have any questions email us at MHSVarsitySoftball22@gmail.com
 MHS Varsity Softball is a non-profit organization in affiliation with Medford High School, our tax ID is listed below for your records.
 Tax ID 04-6001400

Artwork / Logos must be submitted to MHSVarsitySoftball22@gmail.com
 Deadline for artwork / logos is March 7th for full season exposure, any late submission banners will be hung starting tournament weekend.



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Somerville/Medford Remembering Martha Rose “Rosie” (Coffey) Wilson



Obituary
Martha Rose “Rosie” (Coffey) Wilson, passed away on March 26, 2025. She was 93. Born in Boston, she was the daughter of the late John J. and Harriet (Hardy) Coffey.

A lifelong Somerville

resident, Martha loved her city. She graduated from St. Clement High School and in earlier years worked as a bookkeeper for the Faulkner Brothers, Inc. The beloved wife of the late Henry C. Wilson, Jr., they were married in St. Clement Church in 1952 and celebrated 53 years together before Henry’s passing in 2005. Especially devoted to family and faith, Martha was an active parishioner of St. Clement Parish and a member of the Catholic Daughters for many years. She will be remembered as a fiercely independent woman, sometimes stub-

born, but above all for her loving and caring ways for her family.

The devoted mother of Robert C. Wilson, Mark H. Wilson and his wife Lu-Ann, all of Texas, Kevin M. Wilson and his wife Stephanie of East Sandwich, and the late David J. Wilson and his surviving wife Teri of California. Cherished grandmother of Sabrina, Brian, Sean, Nicole, Shannon, Chloe and Henry, great-grandmother of Ryleigh, Connor, Aubrie, Sadie, Karson, Kaelynn and Cayden Jayce “CJ”. Dear sister of the late Katherine “Kay” Coffey,

Bertha Casey, Harriet, John and William Coffey. Also survived by many cherished nieces and nephews.

Calling Hours will be held in the George L. Doherty Funeral Home, 855 Broadway (Powder House Sq.) Somerville on Friday morning, March 28th 8:30AM – 10:30AM followed by a Funeral Mass celebrated in St. Raphael Church, Medford at 11AM. Relatives and friends invited to attend.

For family and friends who are unable to be there in person, Martha’s

Funeral Mass will be livestreamed through the parish Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SaintRaphaelParishMedford/>

Services will conclude with burial at Woodlawn Cemetery, Everett.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Martha’s memory can be made to the Sawtelle Hospice House, 320 Haverhill St, Reading, MA 01867.

SAFETY PLAN FOR EMERGENCY SHELTERS (S 16)

The Senate 38-0, approved an amendment that would require the governor to create, implement and enforce a safety plan for the state’s emergency shelter system.

“The commonwealth owes it to the families in our emergency shelter

program and to the cities and towns that host them to have a comprehensive plan in place to ensure safety and security for all,” said amendment sponsor Sen. Michael Moore (D-Millbury). “After a handful of recent high-profile security failures in our shelters, this amendment

would direct the governor’s office to examine rules that create unnecessary risks while setting and maintaining a high standard for safety.”

(A “Yes” vote is for the amendment.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes



ALLOW REMOTE ACCESS TO PUBLIC MEETINGS (H 62)

By Bob Katzen
Gov. Maura Healey signed into law legislation that would extend, until June 2027, the current law that allows cities and towns to offer remote participation at public meetings. The option, first adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent state of emergency, was due to expire on March 31. The extension applies to public bodies and representative town meetings.

“This law allows everyone,

no matter where they are in our state, to engage in important discussions that affect their lives and makes it easier for everyone to have their voices heard in our government,” said Gov. Healey. “We don’t want anyone to be held back from attending public meetings because they don’t have a ride or childcare or because they have a disability.”

“As a former mayor, I’ve seen firsthand how local government works better

when we have strong public participation,” said Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll. “Lowering barriers for people to get involved in public meetings will help ensure that local services meet the needs of the community while also inspiring new ideas and making sure people get their questions answered.”

“One of the lessons we learned from the pandemic was that using technology for public meetings expands access and

civic participation across government,” said House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy). “With this extension, we are removing barriers to participation and residents will continue to be able to be active participants in governmental decisions remotely.”

“I have heard loud and clear from my colleagues, and the communities we represent, that hybrid meetings have increased access, engagement and transparency in local

government,” said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland). “There is no reason that a family obligation, a car breakdown, a disability or any other life circumstance should get in the way of making your voice heard on an issue you care about in your community.”

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Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line:Homeless Shelter Masquerade as the Warming Shelter on Prescott St at the Cummings Elementary School



Dear Billy T and Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line,

Dear Billy,

I am writing this as a considered resident of Somerville. I would like to remain anonymous regarding my concerns.

Originally when I heard that there was going to be a Warming Shelter on Prescott St at the Cummings Elementary School, I was concerned. I didn't think it was the best place for one because of the residential neighborhood and all the kids walking to the high school, but I never voiced my concerns. Since it has opened, the warming shelter has become a nightmare.

I have discovered that the Homeless Coalition is giving parking passes to homeless people to park on street. Because of that there has been an average of 7-10 extra cars parked on the street every day. No one is supposed to hang out when the shelter is closed, but many people are right outside

all day, around the school and playground area. One student while walking to school was harassed, prompting the police to be called. I have seen mothers with kids not letting their kids play on the playground because there are multiple people in the playground area and clothes strewn about everywhere.

Homeless Coalition giving parking passes to homeless people to park on street.

No security.

Shelter opens at 5pm & closes at 8am. Homeless people hanging out ALL DAY, around the school & playground area.

Trash, clothes, alcohol bottles, cigarettes left at warming shelter entrance & playground area.

Smoking weed & drinking in playground & warming shelter entrance.

Fire, police & ambulance have been to the Cummings Elementary school; In 3 months over 12 times.

Homeless harassing kids while they are walking to the high school.

Allowing people with large aggressive dogs into warming shelter. Dogs have muzzles & bark a lot.

People are smoking cigarettes outside the warming shelter entrance.

I have seen mothers with kids not letting their kids play in the playground because there are homeless people in playground area, clothes everywhere.

Below please see my documented notes. I also have pictures & videos of this nonsense.

12/18/2024 7 people hanging out in front of warming shelter entrance 7:15am

12/30/2024 police to Cummings Elementary School 4:15am

12/30/2024 white small truck removing waste from playground area with hoses 8:55am

1/1/2025 fire truck, police & ambulance to Cummings Elementary School 12:47am

1/2/2025 white large waste truck drives into playground area, removing waste from trailer bathroom in playground area 8:34am

1/4/2025 fire truck, police & ambulance to Cummings Elementary School 6:10pm

1/6/2025 fire truck, police & ambulance to Cummings Elementary School 9:30pm

1/6/2025 1 homeless mail organizing his clothes, playground area 9:19am

1/7/2025 bags of clothes left in playground area 10:35am

1/8/2025 bloody rags on street in front of warming shelter entrance 9:10am

1/8/2025 smoking cigarettes warming shelter entrance area 6:19pm

1/17/2025 city of Somerville employee cleaning street 9:03am

1/20/2025 1 homeless person walking to shelter with a Louis Vuitton purse 4:23pm

1/21/2025 2 homeless people hanging out warming shelter entrance area, dropped off in an uber 11:56am

1/30/2025 4 homeless people hanging out in playground area 9:08am

1/31/2025 3 people hanging out in the playground area with luggage

1/31/2025 homeless person driving to the shelter white Nissan 4:23pm

2/4/2025 Luggage left at the playground area unoccupied 9:45am

2/5/2025 8 people & 2 dogs gathered in playground with luggage 8:35am

2/15/2025 fire truck, police & ambulance to Cummings Elementary School 7:44pm

2/15/2025 fire truck, police & ambulance to Cummings Elementary School 9:27pm

2/20/2025 random trash can filled with trash left on street in front of warming shelter on Prescott St 12:10pm

2/20/2025 drying clothes on fence outside warming shelter entrance 12:10pm

2/22/2025 trash in front of warming shelter entrance 8:18am

2/22/2025 smoking weed & drinking 2:27pm

2/24/2025 1 homeless mail organizing his clothes, playground area 8:53am

2/26/2025 fire truck, police & ambulance 5:50pm

3/11/2025 Smoking weed & drinking at entrance to warming shelter

3/11/2025 fire truck & police to Cummings Elementary School 7:36AM

3/16/2025 fire truck & police to Cummings Elementary School 6:52AM

3/16/2025 alcohol bottles large & small along street, bushes in the playground area, storm drains on the school premise 9:37am

3/16/2025 cigarette butts everywhere, hundreds of them; warming shelter entrance, bushes & playground area 9:37am

3/17/2025 debris/trash on path from Prescott St to School St 10:01am

3/18/2025 3 people smoking weed 4:22pm

3/25/2025 people drinking alcohol & smoking weed 3:40pm

3/25/2025 Security, I think, sitting right in front of people drinking & smoking weed. sits in a dark color TESLA license plate VE25AS

3/25/2025 luggage left in playground unoccupied 9:12am

3/27/2025 3 people smoking weed 1:41pm

PLEASE HELP CONCERNED RESIDENT!

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Somerville Street Sweeping, Yard Waste Pickup, and Hazardous Waste Drop-off Begin in April



SOMERVILLE– Spring has sprung, and with it, essential seasonal services for our residents. Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, the Somerville Parking Department, and the Department of Public Works want to remind everyone of important upcoming services.

Street Sweeping to Resume April 1

Regular street sweeping schedules officially resume

Tuesday, April 1, and will continue through December 31, 2025. This essential public works program not only keeps our city cleaner, but reduces the risk of flooding and icing due to clogged storm drains.

Residents and community members can check street signs to know when parking is unavailable due to sweeping. A recurring pattern was chosen in order to allow residents to plan ahead.

On designated street sweeping days, vehicles must be moved from the side of the street being swept, as noted on signs posted on each street. For more information regarding street sweeping procedures, visit parksomerville.com or call 311 (617-666-3311).

The penalty for not complying with street sweeping parking regulations is a \$50 fine. Community members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the street sweeping schedule in areas where they park. The best way to do this is to read the signs on the street when you park. To learn more, visit somervillema.gov/sweeping.

Yard Waste Pickup Begins April 14

Yard waste pickup begins Monday, April 14, and runs through December 12. During collection week, yard waste should be put out with your trash and recycling on your normal pickup day and be in either a paper bag or a trash barrel with a “Yard Waste Only” sticker. Tree branches

should be tied into 3ft x 3ft bundles. To learn more, visit somervillema.gov/yardwaste.

Dispose of Household Hazardous Waste April Through November

Somerville residents can drop-off household hazardous waste on the second Saturday of each month, April through November, from 9 a.m. to noon at the DPW yard (1 Franey Rd.). Accepted materials include motor oil, aerosol paint, household cleaning chemicals, rechargeable batteries, and more. Proof of residency is required. For more information and how to prep materials, visit somervillema.gov/recycling.

Sign Up for Reminders

You can use the Somerville Waste Wizard below to find out your next street sweep, yard waste pickup, or upcoming household hazardous waste drop-off. Sign up to receive complimentary street sweeping notifications via a method of your choice by selecting “Sign Up for Reminders” at somervillema.gov/departments/sweeping

For street sweeping, please remember that this is a courtesy service that may experience technical problems; it remains the drivers’ responsibility to follow the posted signs and move their vehicle on time.

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By Bob Katzen

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unnecessary risks while setting and maintaining a high standard for safety.”

(A “Yes” vote is for the amendment.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

MEDFORD VFW POST 1012 HAS A NEW COMMANDER

Congratulations to The Medford VFW on its new Installation of Commander Steve McLaughlin as he takes charge.

Best of luck and we can’t wait to see all the good things that you will bring to the VFW under your guidance and leadership!

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State of A Tavola:

A Tavola’s outdoor patio dining is open for business! Take-out and delivery is also available! (with-in a small radius of A Tavola).

A special menu and special hours will be posted on our website as well as our social media channels. Please stay tuned

for any and all details.

As always our gift cards will be available through our website, over the phone and in person. Starting Tuesday, for every gift card purchase over \$100, we will add an additional \$20 gift card as a way to thank you for your support.

If there is anything in particular you would like to see from us or if you need help preparing food at home for your families please reach out and we will do

our best to help. Whether it be recipe ideas with random things you might have purchased or if you run out of something that you need that we can help with please don’t hesitate to ask.

A Tavola Restaurant Winchester outdoor patio dining is open for business & takeout orders: (781)729-1040 34 Church St Winchester

Thank you for your continued support.



Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line: School Department Playing Games With My Livelihood

Dear Billy T and Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line,

I'm a lunch aide in Somerville. I used to work every day now they put me on call me on call for no reason. They're not telling me why I haven't worked for three weeks. They haven't call me but I tried to call them.

I leave a voicemail and no one call me back. I'm sick to my stomach I don't even sleep at night over this situation. This is crazy and I'm depressed for not going to work everyday. If you can do anything about this and when I talk, they say don't call me we will tell you when we have something.

Please help me out if you can do anything I really appreciate it and when I email them they don't emailed me back.

Thank you

A depressed school department employee

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HONOR ABIGAIL ADAMS AND ELIZABETH FREEMAN

By Bob Katzen

Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland) announced that busts of women's rights leader and first lady Abigail Adams, as well as freedom fighter Elizabeth Freeman, the first enslaved woman to successfully sue for her freedom in the U.S., will be commissioned and placed in the Massachusetts Senate Chamber. Adams and Freeman will be the first permanent busts depicting women in the Massachusetts Statehouse.

"Whether by accident or design, the contributions of women who have shaped our commonwealth and nation have too long been absent from Statehouse art," said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland). "Today we raise up Abigail Adams and Elizabeth Freeman as trailblazers and leaders who should rightfully be honored in the Senate Chamber. Their presence will help us send a clear message to every woman who walks our halls: you belong here."

"Representation is not meant to be a crumb," said Sen. Julian Cyr (D-Cape and Islands), Chair of the Senate Art Committee. "The decision to place busts of two women in the Senate chamber is a meaningful testament to the extraordinary contributions of scores of women to our commonwealth. This marks an important step in our ongoing work to recognize the women and individuals who have shaped Massachusetts but have too often been overlooked in our history books."

Elizabeth Freeman, born into slavery in New York around 1744, became the first African American woman to successfully sue for her freedom in Massachusetts. Inspired by the promise of liberty in the Massachusetts Constitution, her 1781 case, Brom and Bett v. Ashley, helped establish that slavery was incompatible with the state's founding principles. After gaining her freedom, Freeman became a respected healer and midwife, later securing her place in history as a

trailblazer for civil rights.

Abigail Adams, known for urging the Founding Fathers to "remember the ladies," was an early advocate for women's rights and education. As a trusted advisor to her husband, President John Adams, she managed their household and finances while influencing political discourse through her letters.

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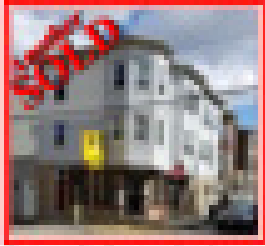


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142 Elm Street, Somerville
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31 Beacon Street, Somerville
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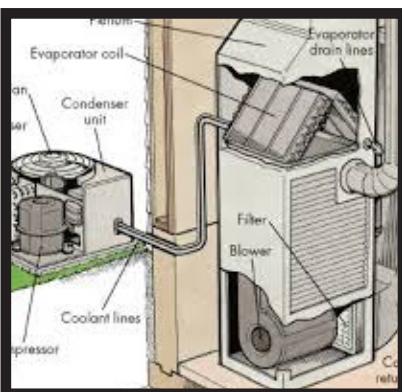
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The Somerville/Medford News Weekly

Here's your weekly News Talk Shout Out dosage continued from page 2



Heres Your Weekly Dosage of Somerville News Weeklys Newstalk Shoutout/Speakup Loud

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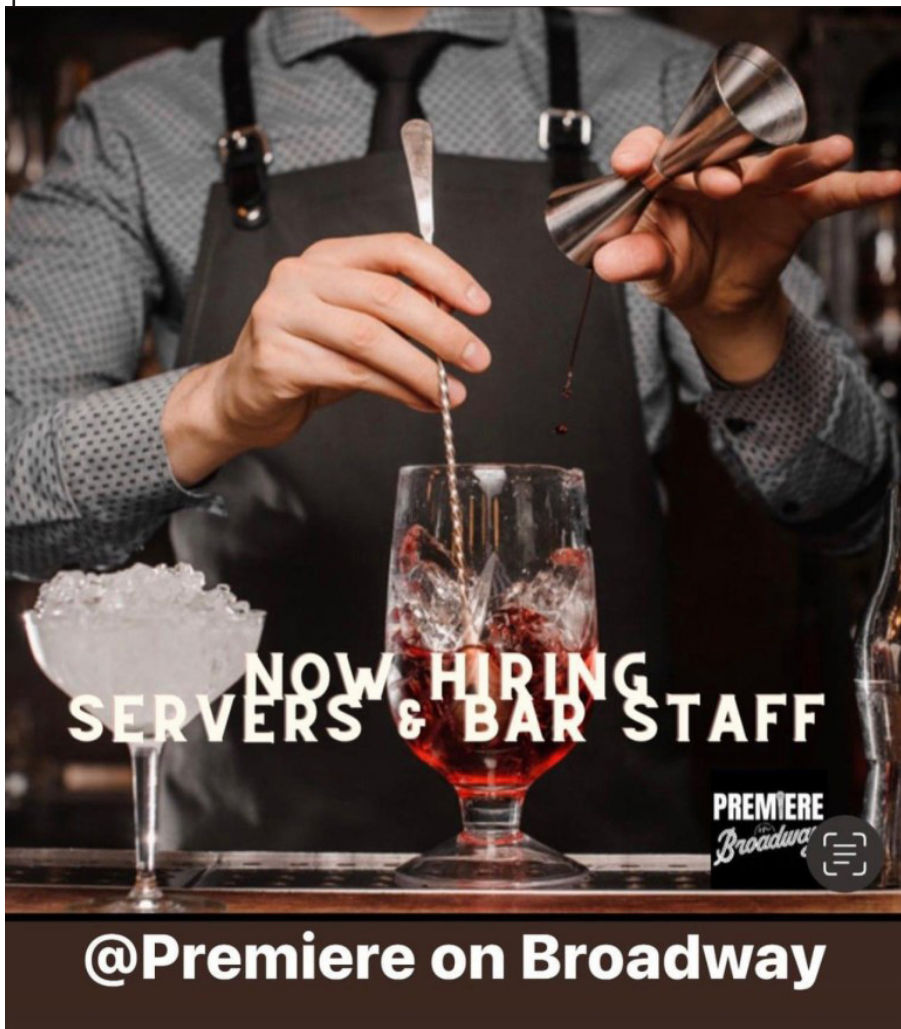
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INCREASE THE NUMBER OF JUVENILE JUSTICES (H 1929)

By Bob Katzen

Rep. Francisco Paulino (D-Methuen) filed legislation to address the shortage of justices in the Massachusetts Juvenile Court Department by increasing the number from 42 to 80.

"No child should have to wait months or years for justice," said Paulino. "This bill will help us reduce the backlog, provide timely interventions for at-risk youth and save the commonwealth millions by reducing long-term foster care and detention costs."

Paulino noted that Massachusetts juvenile courts now handle a broader range of complex cases than when the current cap was enacted decades ago, including child protection, mental health, truancy and emergency custody. He said that thousands of cases are impacted annually by judicial delays, with serious consequences for vulnerable children and families.

Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan Adds Former Belmont Chief of Police Richard McLaughlin to Her Team

WOBURN – Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan announced that she has added experienced law enforcement leader Richard McLaughlin to her team to serve as Law Enforcement Liaison working with police departments to improve training, increase transparency and strengthen the collaborative work of the District Attorney's Office with local police departments.

"Former Chief McLaughlin brings a wealth of knowledge to this position. Our local police serve a vital role, not only in our criminal cases and investigations, but in the preventative programs we run in the communities," said District Attorney Ryan. "In this Office we strive to work with our police departments to provide officers with training on the latest emerging technologies and best practices, whether it be using forensic genetic genealogy to investigate a decades old case or ensuring officers know updates made to criminal law and procedures. In this new role Richard McLaughlin's reputation as a trusted leader, motivator, and team builder, will help us to achieve these goals."

McLaughlin's duties will include leading conversations around emerging law enforcement practices; working with the police discovery team to analyze discovery issues; and increasing communication with police personnel throughout the County.

Richard McLaughlin brings over 25 years of experience leading security and police operations for metro-suburban towns. Most recently he served as the Chief of Police for the town of Belmont. He was previously a Police Captain and Community Services Division Commander with the Arlington Police Department. McLaughlin is retired from the United States Air Force Reserve Unit and the United States Navy Seabees. He holds a Master of Arts in Criminal Justice from Anna Maria College and a Bachelor of Science from Northeastern University.



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Mayor Ballantyne Invites Community to Somerville's Third Annual Civic Day Celebration



Join family-friendly activities and games to learn about local government & services on Saturday, April 5

SOMERVILLE – Mayor Katjana Ballantyne invites community members to

attend the city's spring Civic Day celebration on Saturday, April 5, from noon to 4 p.m. at City Hall (93 Highland Ave.) and on the City Hall concourse.

Now in its third year, Civic Day aims to provide community members of all ages with fun, interactive opportunities to celebrate democracy and learn about City government, programs, services, and ways to get involved.

Visitors can join in a

variety of family-friendly activities planned by City departments, including:

Selecting a home a pollinator plant plug for your home garden.

Casting your vote in Cycle 2 of Somerville's Participatory Budgeting process.

Posing for a photo on a Somerville Police motorcycle.

Taking a tour of City Hall.

Navigating a hazard house and learn about fire safety

with Somerville Fire Department.

Enjoying local food and music performed by Somerville High School ensembles.

The City Hall concourse will be closed to vehicular traffic. Temporary handicap parking will be available along Highland Avenue near the concourse. In the event of inclement weather, all outdoor activities will be moved inside to Somerville High School (81 Highland Ave.)

Multilingual staff from the SomerViva: Office of Immigrant Affairs will be present to offer language support for residents who may need assistance connecting with city departments.

For more information, please contact Kristine McNulty at kmcnulty@somervillema.gov or visit somervillema.gov/civicday



Somerville Police Department Weekly Crime Log

Shots Fired
25015844: On 3/23/25 at approximately 9:56 PM, Somerville Police responded to Hathorn St for a report of shots fired for five rounds. Upon arrival, officers located four shell casings on Hathorn St. There were no victims reported.

Commercial Breaking and Entering

25016064: On 3/25/25 at approximately 3:10 AM,

Somerville Police responded to a business on Highland Ave for report of a B&E. Upon arrival, officers observed the front window smashed with a brick. It appeared various products and money were stolen.

Commercial Breaking and Entering

25016120: On 3/25/25 at approximately 10:32 AM, Somerville Police responded to a business on in Assembly Row for

report of a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the reporting party who stated two individuals broke in and stole money from the register.

Other Crimes:

- 3 MV Thefts
- 2 Car Breaks
- 1 Package Theft
- 2 MV Vandalisms



Crime Log

3/18/25 – 3/24/25

[HTTPS://WWW.SOMERVILLEPD.COM/PUBLIC-SAFETY-NEWS](https://www.somervillepd.com/public-safety-news)

Somerville PorchFest 2025: Important Safety & Event Updates

SOMERVILLE– The Somerville Arts Council is excited to announce PorchFest 2025, the citywide live music event, is returning on Saturday, May 10, from 12 to 6 p.m. (rain date: Sunday, May 11).

To ensure a safe, enjoyable, and well-organized experience for all, this year's event will feature new safety measures and structural updates designed to enhance the day for both performers and residents. All information is available on somervillearts council.org/porchfest

Key Updates & Changes for 2025:

Application Process & Deadline: Deadline to submit an application is Thursday, April 10, at 11:59 p.m. Applying does not guarantee participation.

Event Map to Be Issued Early: A map of the bands and their locations will be available several weeks before the event to make it easier for residents, businesses, and participants to plan ahead.

Street Limitations: Streets and locations identified

by the Somerville Fire and Engineering Departments as being part of a key safety route will not be able to host performances. These safety routes have been identified to ensure safe pedestrian and traffic flow as well as emergency vehicle travel. Residents on safety routes are encouraged to partner with neighbors on a nearby designated street.

Block Party Submissions: Block parties must also apply through Citizen Serve to request a block party permit. Applications will be open March 10 – April 10 and will be reviewed based on the street safety restrictions noted above.

Emergency Management Plan: The Mayor's Office has convened an Emergency Management Team to oversee a central command station on Porchfest. This team includes the Police Chief, Fire Chief, DPW, Emergency Management Department, and Arts Council.

Ambassador Volunteer Program: Volunteers will be stationed throughout event zones to assist visitors, direct people to porta-potty locations, monitor safety,

and serve as points of contact.

Official PorchFest Badges: Approved porches will receive an official PorchFest badge that must be displayed on the day of the event. Ambassadors will help ensure compliance.

Additional Information:

Schedule: Performances will take place in three two-hour zones across the city:
West of Willow Street: 12–2 p.m.
Willow to Central Street: 2–4 p.m.
East of Central Street: 4–6 p.m.

Event Guidelines & Rules: To keep PorchFest safe and enjoyable for all, please follow these rules:
Be respectful of porch hosts, neighbors, and residents—do not loiter on non-PorchFest properties
Public alcohol consumption is prohibited
Use public transportation to reduce traffic and parking congestion
Stay on sidewalks to allow cars to pass safely
Use designated porta-potties
Tip the bands (cash or digital) to

support local musicians

The updates to Porchfest's safety and organization were shaped with help from the Porchfest Committee, composed of five members of the Somerville community including a business owner, a resident, a musician, a Department of Public Works representative, and a member of the Arts Council staff.

"PorchFest is one of Somerville's most popular events, and to keep it going strong, we've made some important safety and sustainability updates," said SAC Director Gregory Jenkins. "We're limiting performances on key emergency routes and refining the application process to ensure the event stays safe and accessible for everyone. These changes will help PorchFest thrive for years to come, and we need the community's support to make it happen. I also want to thank the PorchFest Committee for their help creating these recommendations, and everyone who helps bring this amazing event to life."

History of Porchfest
In 2011, the Somerville Arts Council launched PorchFest, a citywide community music

event that invites residents to celebrate local musicians by hosting mini-concerts on their porches and stoops, or driveways and yards. Think of it like Somerville Open Studios, but for musicians. Rather than a traditional festival, PorchFest brings neighbors together to share and enjoy live music ringing out from porches across the city.



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ADVERTISED: MARCH 25, 2025
APRIL 1, 2025
APRIL 8, 2025
EFFECTIVE: APRIL 16, 2025

Suzanne Rinfret, Director

Somerville/Medford News Weekly 3/25/25 , 4/0/25 , 4/08/25



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Voting Now Open for Somerville's Second Cycle of Participatory Budgeting



Residents Ages 12+ Can Vote on How to Spend \$1 Million on Community Projects. Voting Closes Wednesday, April 30

SOMERVILLE – Mayor Katjana Ballantyne invites all Somerville residents ages 12 and older to vote in the City's second cycle of Participatory Budgeting. Voting is open

now through April 30 and residents will help decide how to invest \$1 million in community-generated projects to improve Somerville.

Participatory Budgeting is about putting decision-making power directly in the hands of our community, and unsurprisingly, our residents have stepped up once again with vision and passion," said Mayor Ballantyne. "I'm energized not only by the ideas themselves, but by the continued dedication of our budget delegates and City staff, who worked so thoughtfully to shape this year's ballot. I encourage every eligible resident to vote and help make their favorite proposals a reality."

Residents submitted over 700 ideas for Cycle 2. A team of volunteer

budget delegates then worked closely with City staff to evaluate and refine the ideas based on feasibility, cost, impact, and community need. The final ballot features 20 project proposals across themes like pedestrian safety, youth programming, environmental resilience, public art, civic engagement, and more.

2025 Participatory Budgeting Ballot Highlights To learn more about each proposal, including cost and location, visit somervillema.gov/pb. Highlights include:

- Safe Crossings for Kids – Traffic calming around schools and playgrounds
- More Bluebikes Stations – Three new stations with bikes in high-

- need areas
- Public Community Compost Pilot – Accessible, rodent-safe compost drop-offs
- SomerStories Murals – Community-centered murals celebrating local stories
- Bus Access for All – Upgrading bus stops to be ADA-accessible
- Voting in the 'Ville – New designs for "I Voted" stickers, plus civic engagement outreach
- Bike Network Guarantee – One mile of separated bike lanes aligned with the City's Bicycle Network Plan
- Boost Somerville's Nutrition Security Network – Expanded cold storage and food distribution
- Pollinator Gardens – Native flora planted across parks to support pollinators
- Outsmart Somerville Rats! – More

SMART boxes and rodent education efforts

How to Vote Somerville residents can rank their top five favorite ideas. The projects with the most votes will be funded until the \$1 million is allocated. Results will be announced later this spring, and project implementation will begin shortly thereafter. Vote Online: Visit somervillema.gov/pb or scan the QR code on Participatory Budgeting materials. Vote by Phone: Call 311 (or 617-666-3311) Vote In Person: Fill out a paper ballot at any Somerville Public Library branch or at City Hall.

One Somerville, Every Child: Mayor Ballantyne Invites Somerville to Celebrate Explore the 'Week of the Young Child'



April 5, 2024 through April 11, 2025 Somerville community is invited to join in celebration with music, food and children's activities and learn more about Somerville's community-wide approach to supporting early childhood.

SOMERVILLE – Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, Superintendent Rubén Carmona,

and Somerville's early childhood community invite Somerville caregivers, children, and educators to celebrate the Week of the Young Child from April 5 to 11, 2025.

The Week of the Young Child was designated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families.

This week of celebrations will include programming and activities across the city, family-friendly specials in local restaurants, and will culminate in a community-wide celebration on Thursday, April 10, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on the Somerville High School concourse (81 Highland Avenue). The event will include family-friendly music, food, and activities.

"In Somerville, we believe every child deserves the strongest possible start, which only happens when an entire community works together," said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. "Week of the Young Child is a joyful reminder of what we can accomplish when families, educators, and city and community partners come together to support our youngest residents."

The city's collective approach to meeting the needs of young children has been supported by the First Five Steering Committee. This committee is composed of representatives from the City of Somerville, the Somerville Public Schools, and community partners.

"Week of the Young Child is a great way to celebrate the long history of early childhood work in Somerville,"

said Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Rubén Carmona. "In Somerville Public Schools, we're committed to making sure our youngest learners have access to high quality learning opportunities and to providing inclusive, multilingual programming and wrap-around services for families and we are grateful for strong partnerships between the Public Schools, the city, and multiple community partners."

City of Somerville Youth and Family Supports The One Somerville, Every Child umbrella tagline reflects Somerville's commitment to equity and its collective approach to supporting all children and youth in our city.

Among the successes of the multilingual cross-sector work to support early childhood development from prenatal

to school entry are: SomerBaby; Home Visiting; Playgroups; Developmental Screening; the Child Care Access and Affordability Program; Somerville Hub Connect; wraparound services; and the establishment of the Somerville Partnership for Young Children focused on expanding access to high-quality preschool in the city.

Our newest addition to support this goal is the establishment of a multi-tiered system of supports to ensure all partners in our mixed delivery system have the supports needed to ensure all young learners can thrive. The First Five Steering Committee facilitates the alignment of all these services.

For more information regarding any of the above programs or initiatives listed please visit the Somerville Hub Connect.

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\$75.8 MILLION FOR STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENTS FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

By Bob Katzen

The Healey Administration will be distributing an additional \$75.8 million in student loan repayment awards to more than 1,700 behavioral health and primary care providers throughout the state as part of the MA Repay Program. Recipients include primary care physicians, family nurse practitioners, physician assistants, psychiatrists, psychologists,

social workers, inpatient mental health workers, substance use disorder treatment professionals and school-based mental health providers.

The MA Repay Program is designed to help address the critical shortage of health care professionals in the Bay State. By offering significant financial relief in the form of student loan repayment, the program incentivizes

primary care and behavioral health providers, to remain in the field and continue their work in underserved areas across the state. In exchange for a service commitment of four to five years, eligible professionals can receive loan repayment awards ranging from \$12,500 to \$300,000.

“This is a major investment in Massachusetts’ health care workforce,”

said Gov. Healey. “By helping to reduce student debt for our dedicated professionals, we are ensuring that we have a strong, diverse and skilled workforce ready to provide quality care for Massachusetts residents.”

“By investing in our behavioral health and primary care providers, we are investing in the health and well-being of communities across Massachu-

setts,” said Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll. “This program will help ensure that residents receive the care they need, when they need it, and that our incredible health care professionals can succeed in the field they love.”

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NO NEW TAXES ON PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

By Bob Katzen

The House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy) said the House will not include in its budget proposal Gov. Healey's plan to add new taxes on prescription drugs. Mariano told pharmaceutical leaders at MassBio's "State of Possible" conference that the House would drop this tax idea that Healey included

in her \$62 billion annual budget bill in January. He also indicated to reporters after his speech that the House would likely not pursue Healey's idea to apply the state's sales tax to candy.

Healey's budget sought a new tax on prescription drug manufacturers for excessive price increases. The Healey administration

estimated it could generate \$60 million for the state. Her bill would also reestablish a pharmacy assessment on prescription drugs sold in Massachusetts, where pharmacies would be charged 6 percent per prescription or \$2, whichever is less. The estimated \$145 million generated from the new charge would have paid for the costly MassHealth

program.

"I'm not a doctor ... but I subscribe to the Hippocratic Oath," said Mariano. "I do no harm, first. That's why in our House budget coming out, we won't include any taxes on prescription drugs in our budget. That means no arbitrary taxes tied to a drug's list price, or on our consumers filling prescrip-

tions. We're concerned about competitiveness and people residing and staying in Massachusetts, and adding two dollars to a prescription just based on the fact that you have to have a prescription — it was not something we wanted to do. It's the wrong message."



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 The outpour of support of donations that have been coming in of much needed supplies of foods, hygienic items and warm clothing from the generous people of Somerville is overwhelming.
 Its up to all of us to help when we can to make a difference in the lives of others especially in those of the

homeless and less fortunate.
 A "Somerville Blessing Boxes" Facebook page has been established keep everyone updated on donations and the Blessing Boxes inventory status. Please feel free to join the page and follow all the good that is being done everyday by the good people of Somerville.
 One blessing box is located at Statue Park in Davis Square and the other is located at Union Square, Plaza in Union Square.
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<input type="checkbox"/> Wool beanie (hat)	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-purpose wipes
<input type="checkbox"/> Smart wool socks	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapstick
<input type="checkbox"/> Gloves	<input type="checkbox"/> Facial wipes
<input type="checkbox"/> Scarf	<input type="checkbox"/> Moisturizer
FOOD & DRINK	<input type="checkbox"/> Comb
<input type="checkbox"/> Quality instant coffee	<input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush & tooth paste
<input type="checkbox"/> Tea	<input type="checkbox"/> Grooming kit
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy drink	SURVIVAL
<input type="checkbox"/> Beef jerky	<input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit
<input type="checkbox"/> Dried fruit	<input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle with built in filter
<input type="checkbox"/> Fruit leathers	<input type="checkbox"/> Heat-pack
<input type="checkbox"/> Trail mix	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-purpose tool
<input type="checkbox"/> Nuts	TREATS:
<input type="checkbox"/> Granola bars	<input type="checkbox"/> Chocolates
<input type="checkbox"/> Protein powder packets	<input type="checkbox"/> Fruit snacks
<input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant gift cards	<input type="checkbox"/> Cookie snack packs
HELP THEM CONNECT	<input type="checkbox"/> Candy (individually wrapped)
<input type="checkbox"/> Journal & pen	<input type="checkbox"/> Mints
<input type="checkbox"/> Stationary	<input type="checkbox"/> Chewing gum
<input type="checkbox"/> Stamps	SPLURGE:
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-paid phone card	<input type="checkbox"/> Starbucks gift card
	<input type="checkbox"/> Compact reusable bag

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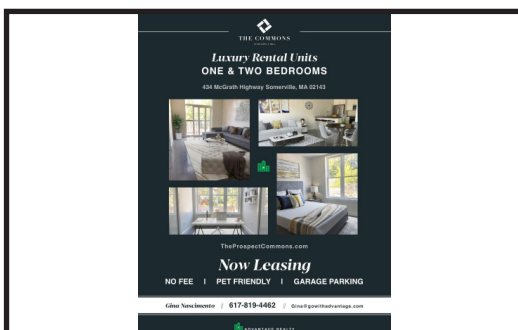
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REAL ID

By Bob Katzen

The Registry of Motor Vehicles reminds Bay State residents that beginning on May 7, 2025, people traveling by plane domestically or entering certain federal facilities will need

a Registry-issued REAL ID-compliant driver's license or ID, or a valid passport.

The Registry strongly encourages everyone seeking a REAL ID-compliant license or ID card to go on-

line at Mass.Gov/REALID to learn what documents are needed for a required in-person appointment. Appointments to upgrade to REAL ID are available now, and several RMV service centers offer Saturday appointments. Cus-

tomers who already have a compliant credential may renew online as long as they have not had a name change.

"May 7th is almost here, and we remind everyone to check your wallets and

make sure you and your family members have the credentials that you need, depending on your travel plans," said Registrar of Motor Vehicles Colleen Ogilvie. "We want to make sure everyone is cleared for takeoff."

This Week's QUOTABLE QUOTES on Beacon Hill



By Bob Katzen

"Thank you to #ICE and @EROBoston for removing dangerous #criminal #illegalaliens off the streets of #Massachusetts. @MassGovernor Healey and Beacon Hill Democrats are directly responsible for enabling these crimes through their sanctuary state policies."

—Rep. Marc Lombardo (R-Billerica) via X

"I don't know what the

fixation is, to be quite honest. We're a very safe state. We're not a sanctuary state. Local, state and federal law enforcement continue to work with and partner with one another." —Gov. Maura Healey on Trump Administration border czar Tom Homan.

"Restoring the line item funding to \$35 million is crucial to supporting Massachusetts residents living with HIV and preventing new diagnoses. This funding ensures continued access to essential services, including HIV/

STI screening, PrEP and PEP access, Syringe Service Programs and peer support for those living with the virus." —Katie Weixler, Deputy director of the Prevention Division at Victory Programs urging lawmakers to restore \$3 million that was cut last year for HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C testing and prevention.

"We have 19,000 veterans on the Cape ... and what's important to me is if that third spot, maybe we can get it closer to the Cape. Because, honestly, it's all

about taking care of my area and making sure — you know, our veterans have done so much and asked for so little. So, I think it's something that's just so poignant and so necessary that we bring something down towards the southern part of Mass."

—Rep. Kip Diggs (D Barnstable) on the idea of building a third long-term care home for veterans, in addition to the current ones in Holyoke and Chelsea.

"We join in solidarity

with all supporters of free speech and immigrant rights in denouncing federal immigration authorities' detention of Remeysa Ozturk, a graduate student at Tufts and a member of SEIU Local 509. The detention of Ms. Ozturk is part of Homeland Security's despicable effort to stifle speech by immigrants who express views that Donald Trump and his surrogates simply don't like." —Dave Foley, President of the SEIU MA State Council.

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Somerville Class of 2025 Invited to Apply for Municipal Scholarship Opportunity



Seven scholarships available to Somerville residents currently graduating in the Class of 2025

Application Period closes March 31, 2025

SOMERVILLE- Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the City of

Somerville Municipal Scholarship Committee are reminding Somerville residents graduating high school in 2025 to apply now for seven municipal scholarship opportunities. Selected applicants will receive \$1,000 to help with post-secondary education expenses.

To qualify for consideration, students must be in high school, a resident of the City of Somerville at the time the financial aid is awarded, and be accepted to an accredited post-secondary institution.

To apply, students can complete

a profile and answer three short essay questions here: somervillema.gov/somerville-municipal-scholarship-2025 or call 311 (617-666-3311) for more information.

Somerville/Medford Remembering Debra Maciel

Obituary
Maciel, Debra - Of Somerville, passed away suddenly at home on Saturday, March 22, 2025. She was 63 years young.

Born and raised in Cambridge, she was the beloved daughter of Edgar

S. Maciel and Leona M. (LoveJoy) Maciel. Debra's infectious laugh and loveable personality will be missed.

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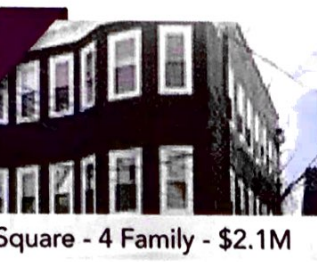
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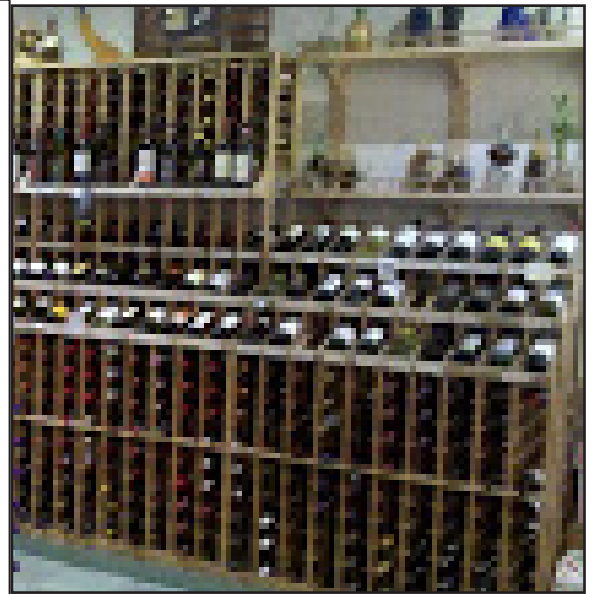


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