



# CAPITAL STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS

*A Women-owned Business Enterprise*

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News, Updates & Features

January 10, 2023

## Oh the Places We've Been

A Reflection Of Our Journey

2022

2022 has been a year of navigating challenging waters, as we worked to assist our client communities through many changes. After several years of near constant uncertainty in the world, our team was able to jump into many new communities this year and provide our expertise as we all emerge into a new "normal". Our team's strength this past year, as it does every year, came from our conviction in the value of our work, and its impact on communities across New England.

**Without water communities would fail to thrive and life would cease to exist...**

The year began in familiar territory working with several communities with stormwater pollution prevention education as part of their Municipal Small Separate Sewer System (MS4) Permit. By sharing resources through the Central Massachusetts Regional Stormwater Coalition, The Plainville Department of Public Works, and the Westminster Department of Public Works Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter social media platforms, our team is constantly working to provide information and tips to consumers on how their activities impact stormwater. Whether it be winter deicing tips, lawn care, yard waste, pet waste, or septic system, we offer best management practices for residents, businesses, developers, and contractors to be the solution to stormwater pollution.

Along a similar vein, we provided support to the Towns of Plainville, Easton, Westminster, and the Dedham Westwood Water District with impacts related to water quality, temporary disruptions of service and provided support through water and wastewater infrastructure improvement projects. As each of these communities faced different challenges, our team was able to jump in and develop customized customer service plans to address each situation as it evolved. Our team implemented virtual communications hubs to streamline information and address the concerns of community stakeholders building trust through transparency. We are extremely proud that our support services provide an open line of communications, insights into the necessity for repairs, and provided support to the men and women on the frontlines performing the work to ensure safe drinking water.

## **Investing in community driven solutions...**

While many communities started the year trying to develop a plan for the influx of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, our team jumped in with Mayor Jared Nicholson days after he was sworn into office in the City of Lynn. Mayor Nicholson and the City Council initiated a robust and inclusive outreach plan across the city, to inform decisions for ARPA spending. Our team became immersed in the City of Lynn, knocking on doors and visiting with local businesses for several weeks to engage the community and gather their feedback. Almost immediately, we were able to tap into the city's passion and enthusiasm for what the future holds for residents and businesses alike.

ARPA presented a once in a lifetime opportunity for the city to invest approximately \$75 million dollars towards a variety of categories, all of which were affected by the pandemic. During our rigorous outreach efforts with Mayor Nicholson's office and the City Council, CSS was able to put on over 14 community forums and 3 project submittal workshops; and gathered additional feedback from over 1,600 completed surveys on where the city should invest ARPA funds. During the first phase of ARPA funding over 200 project submissions were received and the City allocated \$35.1 million dollars to community driven investments including parks, infrastructure, housing, early childhood education, upgrades to public buildings, public health initiatives, economic development projects, non-profits and workforce development planning.

Through inclusion, open dialogue, transparency and sustained engagement, a participatory culture was developed where community stakeholders both contributed to the process by sharing information about ARPA but also produced projects, ideas, and suggestions on how best to utilize funds to best benefit the City as a whole. The streamlined events in the first phase allowed for a smooth transition into the second phase offering community members a seat at the table for the second phase of investment that provided an additional \$22 million allocation into community driven investments into additional housing, infrastructure, public health, food security, non-profit, workforce development and city projects.

## **Experts leading the way to opportunities through grant funding...**

The expansion of our team with the additions of Blythe Robinson and Tim Goddard, increased our ability to serve communities in grant writing and management has spread our work across New England. CSS provides assistance for CARES, FEMA, ARPA, and other state and federal grants in a variety of capacities. Jennifer, Blythe, and Tim currently serve the cities of Gloucester and Lynn, as well as the towns of Acushnet, Barre, Bernardston, Conway, Concord, Dunstable, Fairhaven, Franklin, Grafton, Groton, Hanson, Holden, Hudson, Lunenburg, North Brookfield, North Attleboro, Oakham, Pepperell, Sherborn, Southborough, Stow, Sturbridge, and Townsend. Their steadfast commitment and experience in navigating compliance at the state and federal level have made them extremely useful to communities looking for the right opportunity for their projects. Our grant team's hands on experience in municipal government can assure watertight compliance to all requirements, no matter the grant.

## **Providing support at every level ...**

No industry is immune to staffing shortages, municipal government especially. Its no surprise that the pandemic saw a record wave of retirements from local government, leaving most communities without the critical staff needed for day-to-day operations...

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## Capital Strategic Solutions & Miyares and Harrington LLP Announce Dynamic Collaboration to Build Stronger Communities Together

Capital Strategic Solutions, LLC. (CSS) and Miyares and Harrington LLP are pleased to announce that we have entered into a dynamic collaboration offering cities and towns the support and tools that they need to build stronger more equitable communities. Our combined team of experienced municipal leaders and professionals will assist communities in rebuilding solid foundations and enhancing work environments for municipal employees.

Miyares and Harrington's legal services to public and private clients, combined with CSS's expertise in municipal government, will allow us to formulate and implement strategies that enhance a community's natural resources and rejuvenate the strength of its workforce while preserving a community's values. Our combined team can assist communities in all facets of municipal management and governance, providing incredibly valuable resources to cities and towns throughout Massachusetts.

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## Grant Watch





As we begin the new year, many grants have become available. Our grant team has assembled the following list to keep an eye out for.

## Federal Grant Opportunities

There are three federal grants which have recently been announced that offer significant funding to municipalities. The programs include energy improvements to K-12 schools, funding infrastructure for solid waste collection and recycling to improve collection and management, and a consumer recycling education and outreach grant program. All three have deadlines in mid-January.

- RENEW AMERICA'S SCHOOLS – ENERGY IMPROVEMENT – K – 12
- SOLID WASTE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RECYCLING
- CONSUMER RECYCLING EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Read more about these three federal grants on our website and meet our grant team!

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More](#)

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## State Grant Opportunities

As we begin the new year, a two State grants become available again to communities. The **Community One Stop for Growth | Mass.gov** program launched several years ago offers municipalities the opportunity to submit a single application for a project they are considering and work with the state to determine if one or more of the twelve grant programs can be harnessed to bring a project to fruition. Projects can range from economic development initiatives, housing and community development, and opportunities to address a site that may have development challenges. Small towns should not overlook the chance to apply for the rural and small town development fund. The application period opens this month for submissions in February and March, and the State will hold webinars to provide guidance on the process. Working in partnership with the State, full applications are due by early June, with awards announced in the fall.

The State has also announced the opening of the 911 System Development Grant. **Apply for the Development Grant | Mass.gov**. Communities who are considering forming a regional communications center, joining one already established,

or transitioning to another center are all eligible to apply for this grant. The State has prioritized regionalization of this service, making between \$8-\$40 million dollars available in FY24. Communities that have regionalized have benefitted from funding to establish and build modern centers that offer the most up-to-date technology, better coordination of public safety resources, and often at less cost than providing the service on their own. The State will hold a webinar on January 19<sup>th</sup> (register at [911Deptgrants@mass.gov](mailto:911Deptgrants@mass.gov)), with applications due on March 2, 2023.

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## Importance of Community Engagement Prior to a Vote

Town meeting is one of the truest forms of democracy, where community members come together to discuss, debate, and vote on matters that impact the quality of their daily lives. As communities gather for Town Meeting to enact local laws, pass budgets, and authorize spending, it is critical to the process that they understand the implications of voting for or against one article or another.



In today's environment, many community members have demanding schedules, which makes it difficult for them to be actively involved in governance at any level. Also, the way in which they receive information from various outlets often poses a challenge in differentiating between factual-information or misleading jargon purposely enacted to influence a vote. It is the responsibility of each administration to actively engage community members and provide them with consumable information about each of the articles, so they have a clear understanding on what they are voting for.

Cities and towns work throughout the year addressing operational challenges, reviewing capital plans to ensure that the information has evolved with the community's growth and strategic goals for maximum effectiveness and equity. These stewards of taxpayer dollars, perform a great amount of research, planning, and budgeting into the articles that are put forth for Town Meeting vote, but all too often critical articles are tabled or voted down because there is little community engagement, and the articles are misunderstood.

This does not just occur with Town Meeting; this can occur with Town Councils and Selectboards. When information is not presented in a way that it is understood or without solid factual-information – the articles can be either tabled or voted down...

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## Where to Find Us

*Find Us*

44TH MMA ANNUAL MEETING & TRADE SHOW WILL BE HELD IN-PERSON

JAN.

20

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HYNES CONVENTION CENTER

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MASSACHUSETTS RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION STATE CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW

MAR.

28

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FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON NORWOOD

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NEW ENGLAND WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION'S 2023 SPRING JOINT REGIONAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

APR.

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WORCESTER DCU CENTER

**44th MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show will be held in-person on January 20 and 21, 2023 – Hynes Convention Center and Sheraton Boston Hotel**

**2023 MRPA State Conference and Trade Show  
March 27 – 29, 2023  
New Location – Four Points by Sheraton Norwood**

**2023 Spring Joint Regional Conference & Exhibition  
April 5-6, 2023  
Worcester DCU Center, Worcester, MA**

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## Meet Our Creative Partner MediaBoss



Capital Strategic Solutions is proud to call MediaBoss one of our community partners in New England. We have had the pleasure of knowing and working with MediaBoss for many years now and we are ecstatic to tackle new challenges and projects with them in 2023. MediaBoss's ability to craft a narrative, no matter the project, is a testament to their skills as communicators and storytellers. They are able to reshape what may first appear as plain, into an honest and engaging experience. What makes them stand out is their consistency of approach, as every project, no matter the scale or subject, receives the same level of care and attention.

What can often make messaging difficult or convoluted when it comes to municipal government is the notion that this type of communication is inherently restricted in how it can be crafted. MediaBoss is able to work with the needs of municipalities while offering them multiple creative pathways that open up their opportunities for community engagement. By bringing the same approach to every client, no project is ever boxed in, so the clarity and effectiveness of the messaging is able to thrive. MediaBoss is able to meet everyone where they are and build a tailored, structural approach that builds off of strong storytelling, and a deep understanding of the marketplace.

Central Mass  
CONFERENCE  
FOR WOMEN

powered by *She's*  
Local

## Central Mass Conference For Women

Nichol Figueiredo is a proud board member for the Central Mass Mass Conference for Women. The Central Mass Conference for Women aims to inspire, connect, motivate and move women through every stage along their path. She's Local brings together women with a shared objective to support, connect and inspire one another, close to home.

Our mission is to create lasting experiences for women, close to home. Since 2016, our She's Local team of volunteers have created and sustained local conferences for women in six regions of New England. We average 300 attendees at each in-person event, skillfully bringing together speakers, vendors, entertainers, sponsors, attendees, business owners and community leaders. For the second time, we are bringing a high-quality, affordable, in-person and live virtual experience to local women on **June 8th 2023** at the **AC Hotel by Marriott, in Worcester, MA.**

Help build a strong community of women, encourage others, share your knowledge, build your brand! Get involved:

- **Attend the Conference**
- **Sponsor the Conference**
- **Be an Exhibitor**

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Information**



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