



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Common Cause Massachusetts to Present e-Government Award to 181 Municipalities, Releases Municipal Transparency Report

BOSTON – Common Cause Massachusetts released the findings of its annual survey of municipal websites today and will present its 2010 e-Government Award to 180 cities and towns next Tuesday, March 16th at 11 am in hearing room A-1 at the State House. The survey and ceremony coincide with the national initiative known as “Sunshine Week” in which media outlets and others address issues of governmental transparency.

Municipalities who post their governing body’s minutes and an agenda, their budget, their bylaws, and, if applicable, their town meeting warrant and results will receive the 2010 e-Government Award and are listed below.

Those who additionally post a year’s archive of minutes and agendas, their calendar, their zoning bylaws, their school committee’s minutes and agenda, and the minutes and agenda for another board or committee will receive the award with distinction and are bolded.

*Acton, Agawam, Amesbury, Amherst, Andover, Arlington, Ashburnham, Ashby, Ashland, Attleboro, Avon, Ayer, **Barnstable, Becket, Bedford, Bellingham, Belmont, Billerica, Bolton, Boston, Bourne, Boxborough, Boylston, Braintree, Brewster, Brockton, Brookline, Burlington, Cambridge, Carlisle, Charlton, Chatham, Chelmsford, Chelsea, Chicopee, Chilmark, Cohasset, Concord, Dartmouth, Dedham, Dennis, Douglas, Dover, Dracut, Dudley, Dunstable, Duxbury, East Longmeadow, Eastham, Easton, Edgartown, Egremont, Essex, Everett, Falmouth, Fitchburg, Foxborough, Framingham, Franklin, Freetown, Gardner, Georgetown, Gill, Gloucester, Grafton, Great Barrington, Groton, Halifax, Hamilton, Harvard, Harwich, Haverhill, Hingham, Holden, Holliston, Holyoke, Hopkinton, Hubbardston, Hudson, Ipswich, Kingston, Lakeville, Lancaster, Lenox, Leominster, Lexington, Littleton, Longmeadow, Lowell, Lunenburg, Malden, Mansfield, Marblehead, Marlborough, Marshfield, Maynard, Medfield, Medway, Melrose, Methuen, Millbury, Milton, Montague, Monterey, Nantucket, Needham, New Bedford, Newburyport, Newton, North Adams, North Andover, North Brookfield, North Reading, Northampton, Northbridge, Northborough, Northfield, Oak Bluffs, Orange, Orleans, Otis, Paxton, Peabody, Pembroke,***

Pepperell, Plympton, Princeton, Reading, Rockland, Rockport, Salem, Salisbury, Sandwich, Saugus, Scituate, Seekonk, Sharon, Sheffield, Shrewsbury, Somerville, South Hadley, Southampton, Southborough, Southwick, Spencer, Springfield, Sterling, Stow, Sudbury, Sunderland, Sutton, Taunton, Topsfield, Truro, Upton, Uxbridge, Walpole, Waltham, Wareham, Warwick, Watertown, Wayland, Wellesley, Wellfleet, Wenham, West Boylston, West Springfield, Westborough, Westford, Westminster, Weston, Westwood, Weymouth, Wilbraham, Williamstown, Wilmington, Winchester, Woburn, Worcester, Wrentham, Yarmouth.

“We are pleased to be able to honor over half of Massachusetts cities and towns this year,” said Common Cause Massachusetts’ Executive Director Pam Wilmot. “Many communities rose to the challenge and significantly improved their websites over the past year. By making it easier to obtain important information online, citizens will be empowered to actively participate in their local governments.”

Common Cause Massachusetts launched this project in 2006. At that time, only 24 communities met the campaign’s minimum standards and posted essential governance records. This year, 91 will receive the basic award, and 90 will receive the award with distinction, making 181 communities in total, seven-and-a-half times more than the original 24.

In addition to the awards presented, Common Cause released a full survey of the Internet presence of all 351 cities and towns. 25 communities, many of them small towns, had no website at all. 23 municipalities have websites but none of the documents posted. 20 communities came very close to earning an award and only had one document missing.

For more information, go to www.commoncause.org/egov10.

ABOUT COMMON CAUSE

Common Cause Massachusetts is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, government watchdog, dedicated to citizen participation in an open, honest, and accountable government. An independent, member-supported organization, Common Cause has more than 200,000 members nationwide and 10,000 in Massachusetts.

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CAMPAIGN FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT e-GOVERNMENT AWARD CRITERIA

CRITERIA FOR e-GOVERNMENT AWARD

- Agenda for a governing body (board of selectmen, town council, city council, board of aldermen, etc.) meeting held or scheduled within the two (2) weeks previous to or two (2) weeks after the review period. It must contain a list of items to be discussed, not just, date, time and location of a meeting.
- Minutes for a governing body meeting occurring any time during the two (2) months prior to the review period.
- Budget information for the current fiscal year (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010). It must be *at least* a detailed operating budget, which can be a separate document or contained in another record such as a finance committee report to the town meeting, a mayor's report to the city council, the town meeting warrant, the town meeting results, or the town's annual report.
- Complete general bylaws, code, or ordinances (with or without zoning bylaws).
- Town meeting warrant for any annual or special town meeting occurring in the previous 12 months or a warrant for the next scheduled town meeting. Warrant articles can be included in the town meeting results.
- Town meeting results for any town meeting occurring within the past 12 months. Results can be in any format as long as the decision or vote on each article is indicated. For example, acceptable formats include a copy of the warrant with notations under each article as to whether the article passed, with or without a vote tally; a spreadsheet with a row for each article, a short description of the article, and a vote tally; and actual minutes with a description of who spoke, who made motions, and what the vote was.

CRITERIA FOR e-GOVERNMENT AWARD *WITH DISTINCTION* (Only applies if municipality's website meets the basic criteria.)

- A year's history of past governing board minutes.
- A year's history of past governing board agendas.
- Zoning by-laws.
- A community calendar which includes meetings of local government committees and boards.
- Agendas for school committee (if none, the regional school committee) or a link to a separate website that contains the school committee meeting agendas for a meeting held or scheduled within the two (2) weeks previous to or two (2) weeks after the review period. It must contain list of items to be discussed, not just date, time and location of a meeting.
- Minutes for school committee (if none, the regional school committee) or a link to a separate website that contains the school committee meeting minutes for a meeting occurring anytime during the two (2) months prior to the review period.
- Agenda for at least one other town or city committee or board for a meeting held or scheduled within the two (2) weeks previous to or two (2) weeks after the review period. It must contain list of items to be discussed, not just date, time and location of a meeting.
- Minutes for at least one other town or city committee or board for the most recent meeting occurring anytime during the two (2) months prior to the review period.