



THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COALITION 2014 YEAR IN REVIEW



CPA ADVOCACY: KEEPING THE STATE CPA TRUST FUND STRONG

Building on six years of intensive legislative advocacy work, The Coalition was able to close out 2014 by again achieving a top priority goal – ensuring additional funding for the CPA Trust Fund. The state legislature demonstrated its strong support for the CPA program by approving a second transfer of \$25 million from the state's FY14 budget surplus to the Community Preservation Trust Fund (CPA Trust Fund).

However, budget pressures over the summer led to a smaller than expected budget surplus and \$11.4 million was available to transfer to the CPA Trust Fund. Still, the November 2014 CPA Trust Fund distribution of \$36 million translated to a 31.4% first round state match for all 155 eligible CPA communities, the second highest base match rate since 2008. The \$11.4 million in state budget surplus funds provided an especially welcome infusion for the CPA Trust Fund, which suffered steep declines in collections at the Registries of Deeds over the course of the year. Looking forward, the Coalition is already working with the state legislature to renew the \$25 million contribution from the state's budget surplus in 2015, while identifying a dedicated funding source that can sustain the program for the future.

The Coalition continued to monitor and take action on a small number of State House bills that, if passed, would be harmful to CPA or to the interests of CPA communities. Thankfully, our CPA educational efforts over the years have dramatically reduced the number of such bills, and we are encouraged that legislators see how much CPA is benefiting communities statewide.

In a related activity, in January, the Coalition hosted the 3rd Annual Kuehn Awards Presentation Ceremony in the State House's Great Hall of Flags. This celebratory event honored ten Community Preservation heroes for their hard work on community preservation activities locally, and provided an opportunity to include legislators in recognizing the program's achievements. We were pleased and honored to have Bob DeLeo, Speaker of the House, deliver the keynote address, joining longtime CPA advocates Representative Stephen Kulik and Senator Cynthia Stone Creem. Legislators were updated afterwards in visits from constituents attending the program.

CPA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND COMMUNICATION

Making CPA project reporting more accessible, efficient and effective

Each year CPA communities must input new CPA projects and update older projects through the state's online reporting tool (the "CP-3 database") in order to receive their CPA Trust Fund distribution. In 2014, the Coalition worked with the state to improve the outdated and difficult-to-use CP-3 reporting platform. Based on community feedback solicited by the Coalition in a survey, Coalition staff assisted in the redesign of the reporting system, with the dual goals of increasing user friendliness and capturing more accurate information to strengthen the program in future years. In August and September, Coalition staff assisted dozens of CPC members and municipal officials with issues related to the roll-out of the new system. Although many aspects of the CP-3 reporting system clearly worked better, our follow-up user survey showed that additional fixes are needed. To that effect, Coalition staff have begun working with state agency staff on improvements to the system for next year.

Sustained support and technical assistance to CPCs statewide

The Coalition continued to field daily technical assistance calls and emails from CPA communities across the state. From project eligibility questions, to legislative clarification, to budgeting issues and warrant article development and review, the Coalition responded to more than 3,100 technical assistance emails and answered hundreds of additional phone

inquiries from member communities across the state. Over the course of the year, the Coalition also teamed up with staff from its partner organizations on a number of CPA educational efforts across the state. Coalition staff worked to train Stacia Caplanson, Preservation Massachusetts' new Western Massachusetts Historic Preservation Circuit Rider, on CPA. Work to plan a 2015 statewide historic preservation conference and develop an historic preservation best practices manual for local CPCs is also underway. In the affordable housing arena, the Coalition partnered with the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance (MAHA) on a series of 4 affordable housing workshops for North Shore CPCs.

Email Newsletters and Online Outreach

The Coalition's *CPA Update* email newsletter continued to provide valuable information for CPA communities throughout 2014. In addition, Special Bulletin emails allowed the Coalition to communicate especially important or time-sensitive CPA news to local CPCs on a timely basis. The Coalition also continued to take advantage of the Webinar format, conducting four online, educational 'virtual' presentations on using bonds to finance CPA projects for interested participants across the state.

CPA ADOPTION

Three new communities adopted the CPA in 2014: Arlington, Boxborough, and New Bedford. The Coalition provided campaign advice and assistance to these three, as well as to the five other communities that attempted to adopt CPA in November 2014, but failed. The Coalition is actively assisting several additional communities as they explore CPA, and we anticipate that these efforts may result in a number of fall 2015 CPA elections.

CPA REGIONAL AND LOCAL PRESENTATIONS

The Coalition gave several regional presentations across the state, bringing together multiple CPCs in Maynard, Lenox, Ashland, and Martha's Vineyard. These sessions allowed board members and staff from neighboring CPA communities to learn about recent developments with the CPA program and gain a refresher on elements of the Act. Communities also benefited from meeting CPC members from neighboring communities, discussing possibilities for regional projects, and exchanging ideas for best practices.

Coalition staff also spent much of the year traveling to individual CPA communities statewide, to give in-person update presentations or conduct training sessions for new CPA communities. In addition to the regional sessions, the Coalition presented to more than a dozen communities in 2014.

COALITION OPERATIONS

The Coalition completed another year on firm financial footing (see our budget report at right). We are deeply grateful for the support of our member communities, which allows us to continue statewide efforts on behalf of the CPA.

FISCAL YEAR 2014: COALITION FINANCIAL REPORT	
REVENUE	
Foundation Grants	\$39,600
Community Members & Misc.	\$308,500
Total Revenue	\$348,100
EXPENSES	
Personnel Costs	\$206,910
Benefits & Personnel Overhead	\$58,870
Advocacy Costs	\$12,000
Professional Services	\$3,830
Travel and Meeting Costs	\$6,820
Rent and Office Costs	\$25,470
Legal, Financial, Admin. & Misc.	\$28,710
Total Expenses	\$342,610

