

**FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF THE SIGNIFICANT ISSUES RESPONDED TO BY WPVQ-FM, ALONG WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PROGRAMMING TREATMENT OF THOSE ISSUES FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2024 THROUGH MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2024. THE LISTING IS BY NO MEANS EXHAUSTIVE. THE ORDER IN WHICH THE ISSUES APPEAR DOES NOT REFLECT ANY PRIORITY OR SIGNIFICANCE.**

**Quarterly Issues: WPVQ-FM Q1 2024**

**WPVQ-FM airs a weekly show called “Beyond the Headlines.” This is a news and public affairs program that takes a deeper look into the news and issues of that week, and how they affect the local community. The 30 minute show runs Sunday mornings at 6:00am.**

1/7/24 – The second year of the 2-year legislative session began yesterday. Senator Paul Mark tells us about his priorities as we enter the second half of her first session as a Senator - and first up is housing. Public hearing on the Housing Bond Bill on January 18th, which anyone from the public can sign up to speak and attend virtually. Also, the Massachusetts House has passed a version of a sweeping reform of the state's gun control laws, but the Senate is still working on their version. Many police chiefs in rural towns have objected to provisions of the bill, as Senator Mark explains in this segment, as he tries to work their concerns into the Senate version. Senator Jo Comerford tells us how the state is handling the emergency shelter crisis and the influx of new arrivals to this state. Jo Comerford has introduced a bill in the Massachusetts legislature known as the Blue Envelope Bill that would establish a program to give drivers with autism a blue envelope meant to make interactions with police officers easier, and she tells us about it in this segment.

1/14/24 - Given that tax revenue this year , are public schools and transit systems still going to get their fair share? The Fair Share Amendment was expected to bring in close to \$2 billion for public education and transportation. In this segment Representative Patricia Duffy talks about why those funds are guaranteed to go towards their intended purpose, even as other areas of the budget get cut, and gives us a general breakdown of what will be funded with the surcharge on millionaires' incomes. Governor Maura Healey announced this week that she will be cutting \$375 million from the state budget to make up for lower than anticipated tax revenue this fiscal year. State representative from Holyoke Patricia Duffy shares her take on the situation with Bill Newman. It's been almost four years of living with the coronavirus, and many people think that the pandemic is over. There's a new variant spreading right now that's causing a surge in cases. Here's what immunologist for Baystate Health Jonathan Bayuk has to say about the latest variant and masking.

1/21/24 - One of Roxanne Wedegartner's last acts as mayor of Greenfield was giving substantial raises to Police Chief Robert Haigh, and deputy Chief William Gordon. While she was mayor, the chief was found guilty of racial discrimination against a former officer, a verdict the city is in the

process of appealing. The mayor has stood by the chief despite this controversy, and in this segment explains her rationale for granting the raises. Last week Massachusetts legislators passed their first bill of 2024. Once it's signed by the Governor, "An Act to Prevent Abuse and Exploitation," will make changes to how state law defines "abuse" and reconsiders how to criminalize the sharing of explicit images by adults and minors. State representative Natalie Blais tells us about this bill and why she supported it. Also, there are only two states in the U.S. that don't have dedicated disaster relief funds, and Massachusetts is one of them. State representative Natalie Blais and Senator Jo Comerford have introduced a bill that would establish a fund to provide relief to municipal governments, property owners, businesses, and other organizations after natural, or manmade, disasters. Representative Blais tells us about it.

1/28/24 - So what does Massachusetts really need to be "competitive?" Some people think it means attracting more businesses to move their headquarters to Massachusetts with tax incentives and a robust business climate, while others think that making Massachusetts more affordable for everyone, including newly arrived migrants, is a key way to make the state more competitive. Or, maybe it's both. In this segment, Representative Lindsay Sabadosa reacts to the Governor's State of the Commonwealth speech, and discusses how making Massachusetts more affordable for individuals and businesses is the key to a thriving economy. Also, Massachusetts Teachers Association president Max Page talks about the Governor's State of the Commonwealth address, and her notable admission of any mention of the Fair Share Amendment, which the union had worked hard to see pass. Governor Healey touted many positive investments made last year thanks to the constitutional amendment that added an additional tax on 4% on income over \$1 million, without mentioning the Millionaire's tax by name. Max Page talks about this and more on the State of the Commonwealth address.

2/4/24 - Massachusetts Teachers Association president Max Page talks about the Governor's State of the Commonwealth address, and her notable admission of any mention of the Fair Share Amendment, which the union had worked hard to see pass. Governor Healey touted many positive investments made last year thanks to the constitutional amendment that added an additional tax on 4% on income over \$1 million, without mentioning the Millionaire's tax by name. Max Page talks about this and more on the State of the Commonwealth address. Also, Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll shares her thoughts on the bond bill after the Governor. And, director of the Greenfield homeless shelter, Keleigh Ben-Ezra, provides an update on the shelter.

2/11/24 - Rural and medium-sized schools across the Commonwealth have been struggling to adequately fund their schools for many years now. Part of that has to do with the Chapter 70 funding formula, which determines how much state aid each school district receives. It also has to do with cities and towns left in the "middle" when it comes to the Student Opportunity Act. Senator Jo Comerford explains why so many school districts aren't receiving enough state aid. Also, State tax revenue is coming in lower than anticipated, throwing the Governor's budget into chaos in the second half of the 2024 fiscal year. In this segment Senator Paul Mark talks about the "mystery" of the revenue shortfall, what he thinks is behind it, and how the Governor has been working to fill gaps in the budget. And, The Boston globe recently release an investigation into all the unspent dollars awarded to municipalities as part of the nationwide opioid lawsuit settlements. ongoing lawsuits brought against the major pharmaceutical companies found to be liable for fueling opioid addiction nationwide. that is supposed to be helping communities recover from the opioid addiction crisis.

2/18/24 - Small towns are struggling to keep up with the cost of maintaining their dirt roads. Dudleyville Road in Leverett is closed and while the road is only a mile and a half long, but it could cost the town as much as \$4 million to make all the necessary repairs to the culverts and washouts. With price tags like that, State representative Natalie Blais says that small towns cannot be expected to pay for it all by themselves. In this segment she tells us about the conundrum of Dudleyville Road and the bill Rep Blais introduced to ease the burden on towns like Leverett. Also, Natalie Blais shares her thoughts on state tax revenue coming in lower than anticipated, and how residents of western Massachusetts can make their voices heard in the next budget hearing process. And, we aired comments from Police Chief Robert Haigh's retirement announcement.

2/24/24 - The legal question of whether the city can amend an order to accept an EPA grant, which was contingent on the city implementing a new single-stream recycling system, took center stage at last night's city council meeting. City councilor Katherine Golub explains what she learned, and why it was seemingly okay for the city to change the order. Also, the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education Jeffrey Riley is resigning. President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association Max Page tells us what this could mean for public schools across the state, and particularly those under state receivership. And, Black History month is underway, and state legislators are still considering a bill that would form a commission to study the idea of reparations. Generations of slavery and racism in America has resulted in a starkly unequal distribution of wealth, between black and white communities. To attempt to right those wrongs, legislators are beginning to think more seriously about the idea of giving money to black communities that disproportionately suffer from poverty and discrimination. Northampton's state representative Lindsay Sabadosa is one of the legislators pushing for a bill that would establish a Commission to study it.

3/3/24 - February 29 marked the 320<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Deerfield Massacre, when French soldiers and Native Americans invaded the settler town of Deerfield, killing 47 people and kidnapping more than 100. This Sunday, author James Swanson will present on his new book on "The Deerfield Massacre" at the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association. He gives us a glimpse of that talk here. Also, Inequality in our schools, between our communities, across the country, and all over the world negatively impacts children. Public schools serve as an equalizer, making sure that all students have access to an education, a lunch to eat, and other support systems outside the home. But in a time of extraordinary wealth inequality, some of the poorest students are still struggling immensely. Greenfield Recorder columnist and professor of education Doug Selwyn analyzes the problem in this segment.

3/10/24 - , Senator Jo Comerford chaired a day-long budget hearing at Greenfield Community College focused on school funding. She tells us about one major theme that emerged during the hearing, from all across the state: our public schools need more help. The Chapter 70 funding system is misaligned and broken, leaving many less populous municipalities with very little funding as their student populations decrease, but operational costs only go up. Also, Senator Jo Comerford tells us about her support for ending the high-stakes testing requirement that high schoolers pass the MCAS before graduating. And, Just before her final day in office, former Greenfield mayor Roxanne Wedegartner signed a memorandum of understanding with former police chief Robert Haigh and Deputy police chief William Gordon granting them substantial raises. The Shoestring reported that Mayor Roxanne Wedegartner had tried to allocate \$60,000

from federal ARPA funds to pay for the raises. In this segment, the Shoestring's investigative editor Dusty Christensen tells us about what else he found out.

3/17/24 - The new CEO of Tapestry Health talks about how the addiction crisis is worse than ever because of a drug supply tainted with substances like fentanyl and Xylazine. She tells us what Tapestry has been doing to respond to the crisis. Also, Representative Patricia Duffy tells us about the various "omnibus" bills working their way through the legislature right now and the western Massachusetts delegation. And, Governor Maura Healey announced that her administration would pardon all misdemeanor convictions for marijuana convictions her comments at a press conference on Wednesday morning.

3/24/24/ - no show

3/31/24 - Kelly Turley works for the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless and testified in favor of the state providing more support for people facing housing instability. She wants to see Massachusetts restore the emergency rental aid program known as RAFT to its pandemic-era cap of \$10,000 and remove requirement that households receive a Notice to Quit form their landlord to qualify for aid. Also, Denise Bannister, Emergency Management Director for the town of Williamsburg testified before the Joint Committee on Ways and Means this week to urge legislators to fully fund an initiative to establish a designated state fund for emergency response. After flooding devastated Williamsburg this summer and fall, two bridges were shut down, which inhibited first responders' ability to help residents. Then, the local residents were stuck with the bill. Senator Jo Comerford and Representative Natalie Blais's bill that would establish an Emergency Response Fund in Massachusetts to help communities rebound from disasters. And, Representative Domb talks about the need for more funding in western Massachusetts for road repair, schools, and healthcare workers.