

Massachusetts House of Representatives

Bill Summary

Bill #: S.1432 / H.2265

Title: An Act providing for pre-service training for members of local boards and commissions.

Sponsor: Sen. Julian Cyr, Rep. Christopher Flanagan

Committee: Municipalities and Regional Government

Hearing Date:

Prior History: S.1287 / H.2047 (2023-2024) OTP

Current Law: MGL Chapter 17 governs the state Department of Public Health and establishes their powers and duties.

Chapter 21A governs the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, their powers and duties.

Section 3 of Chapter 23B lists the powers and duties of the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Section 8C of Chapter 40 authorizes the establishment of local conservation commissions and lists their powers and duties.

Section 12 of Chapter 40A authorizes the creation of zoning boards of appeal and sets forth how members are chosen and the procedure for adoption of rules.

Section 81A of Chapter 41 governs the establishment and membership of local planning boards.

Section 26 of Chapter 111 governs boards of health in cities and towns, their membership; appointment; removal; compensation.

Summary: Section 1 of this bill adds a new section requiring the Department of Public Health to conduct annual education and training programs for new members of local boards of health. The department would consult with the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) to develop the program and may contract with the Massachusetts Association of Boards of Health to run the program. The legislation states that the education and training would be free to board members and offered in various locations and online. It does not specify the source of funding for the education and training program.

Section 2 adds a new section requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to establish, conduct and maintain an annual education and training program for new members of local conservation commissions. The department would consult with the MMA to develop the program and would

be authorized to contract with the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions to run the education and training program, which would be free of charge to commission members and be offered throughout the state and also online.

Section 3 amends the law governing the Department of Housing and Community Development, by adding language in the section on powers and duties whereby the department shall establish, conduct and maintain an annual education and training program for new members of planning boards and zoning boards of appeals. The department would be required to consult with the MMA regarding the development of the program and may contract with the Massachusetts Citizen Planning Training Collaborative at UMass to provide the education and training, which would be free to board members and available in various locations and online.

Section 4 adds language to the law governing conservation commissions by requiring members to complete the training program prior to their service on the commission.

Section 5 amends the Zoning Act (Chapter 40A) by adding new language requiring members of zoning boards of appeal to complete training programs sponsored or conducted by the Department of Housing and Community Development before they may serve on the board.

Section 6 amends the law governing local planning boards by adding a requirement that planning board members complete a Department training program before they may serve as a member of the local board.

Section 7 adds a similar training requirement for local boards of health by amending Chapter 111, Section 26.

Notes:

Similar to H.3553 of 2023-2024. This bill involves education and training programs for members of local boards of public health, members of local conservation commissions, and members of planning boards and zoning boards of appeals while H.3553 only included an education and training program for members of planning boards and zoning boards of appeals.