



The Research Bureau



2019

ANNUAL REPORT
*OF THE RESEARCH
BUREAU*

Moving Forward Together



At Berkshire Bank, we're focused on moving forward together and building a bank culture ready to compete in the 21st Century. Our common purpose in this work is to financially empower our communities to help everyone realize life's exciting moments. Our strategy is to be a bank of and for the community. We recognize that all too often banks have been seen as an obstacle rather than a partner—we want to change that. We are doing our part to invest in our communities because we know that banks can't succeed unless we help to grow wealth across the board. Berkshire Bank has been committed to serving the communities in which we operate for over 170 years. The neighborhoods we work with have changed greatly over this time. We want to ensure that as demographics shift and our communities become more diverse that we're nimble and adaptive. For us, this means creating programs and services that are inclusive, address the needs of our neighbors, and make sure all of our customers feel like we are attuned to their unique financial needs.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Richard Marotta'.

Richard Marotta,
Berkshire Bank CEO



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Dear Friends of The Research Bureau,

THE WORCESTER REGIONAL

RESEARCH BUREAU is celebrating 34 years of conducting independent, non-partisan research and analysis of public policy issues to promote informed public debate and decision-making in Greater Worcester. The Research Bureau has long been, and will continue to be, a reliable source of research and information on the issues affecting Central Massachusetts communities. We identify issues of concern, investigate the impacts, and educate the public and decision makers to ensure that the region has informed and research-based policy.

In this 34th year, The Research Bureau underwent only our third executive transition. While The Research Bureau thrived under the leadership of former Executive Director Timothy J. McGourthy, these significant moments of change present opportunities. Opportunities to take stock of our assets, to capitalize on our strengths, and overcome our challenges while continuing to evolve. The Research Bureau benefits from many assets: a clear mission, an accomplished history, strong finances, efficient operations, a committed Executive Committee, an influential Board of Directors, and stalwart supporters from every sector.

We also benefit from our community commitment to a healthy civic life through active citizenry and engaged employers and institutions, leading to informed and visionary policy. We have a strong foundation of data, research, and analysis on a wide range of issues, with collaborations and support from across constituencies. We seek to capitalize on these strengths and maximize our impact to continue to broaden our reach, informing the public discussion and educating public officials on all levels. The Research Bureau will approach our challenges with purpose and intention, informed by active volunteer leadership and thoughtful strategic planning.

Worcester, as a former industrial center, is in the midst of its own transition to a knowledge-based economy. Hundreds of millions of dollars of investment is underway, transforming our downtown and bringing new vitality to our neighborhoods. Life sciences has long been one of Worcester's brightest opportunities, from the 1965 decision to host the University of Massachusetts Medical School to the opening of the Massachusetts Biotechnology Research Park in 1987. As The Research Bureau will embrace the opportunities presented by our transitions, Greater Worcester will need

to continue to embrace its own opportunities in the ongoing transition of the life sciences to bio-manufacturing. Our region has an important role to continue to play in the growth of human understanding and as incubators for new ideas and innovations in life science and beyond. When these opportunities are capitalized upon, they will have a significant multiplying effect resulting in an even stronger regional economy.

The Research Bureau is strong because of the strength of the community at large, visionary leadership from our Executive Committee and Board of Directors, our deep and longstanding support from employers, institutions, and individuals, and commitment to our mission. As supporters, your commitment to good government and informed public policy ensures that The Research Bureau has a vital role to play in Greater Worcester now and for many years in the future. Your participation, expertise, and support is critical to our continued success and achievement of our mission. Because of the strength of our staff, supporters, and visionary volunteer leaders, we remain a trusted resource for research and analysis of complex issues affecting our communities. We also thank the many intellectual partners who inform our work, helping us to dive deep into the issues, and collaborate on important community initiatives. All of you are a significant asset for the community and a huge strength for the region, and simply put, the Bureau wouldn't have such a significant record of accomplishment without you.

We urge you to look towards the back of this report at the long list of corporations, philanthropies, and individuals who support the Worcester Regional Research Bureau. These supporters have made clear their commitment to informed public debate and effective government for everyone's benefit, and deserve our thanks and appreciation. In particular, we would like to recognize the contributions of Commerce Bank, a division of Berkshire Bank, which has served as our Presenting Sponsor for many years. We also want to highlight AbbVie and UMass Medical School who serve as this year's Leadership Sponsors. Their generosity is essential for The Research Bureau to continue our work as a leading voice on municipal public policy. We would also like to single out the ongoing contributions behind the scenes of Greenberg, Rosenblatt, Kull & Bitsoli, P.C. and PENTA Communications, Inc. For many years, they have provided the Bureau with essential and unparalleled pro bono assistance in

accounting and marketing services. Your contributions to our organization are indicative of your dedication to the continued success of the Greater Worcester region.

We thank the entire media community, with special thanks to our media sponsor the *Telegram & Gazette*. Healthy civic life and thoughtful and informed discourse depends upon strong media. We thank you for turning to The Research Bureau's publications and forums as a resource to inform your reporting on issues facing communities across Massachusetts and beyond. Thousands of people rely on you for their information and we thank you for valuing the Bureau's work. Last, but certainly not least, we thank The Research Bureau's distinguished staff, past and present, for contributing to a long-standing tradition of informing public debate and decision-making in Greater Worcester. We commend you all for your dedication to the field of public policy research and your contributions to informed and visionary decision-making.

As we celebrate our past year and look forward to new opportunities, challenges, and everything in between, we thank all of you for your partnership and your friendship. The future of The Research Bureau and Greater Worcester is bright because of all of you.



ABRAHAM W. HADDAD, D.M.D.
Chairman of the Board



PAUL F. MATTHEWS
Executive Director



2019

THE WORCESTER REGIONAL RESEARCH BUREAU

is a trusted voice on a variety of critical issues facing Greater Worcester. We provide the needed information and perceptive analysis to the challenges and opportunities that our community faces in 2019 and the years to come. Our long-form reports, Bureau Briefs and Francis A. Harrington Forums identify the issues, analyze the data, recommend best practices, and disseminate the results. For this objective, non-partisan research and analysis, The Research Bureau is positioned as a well-respected institution in Worcester and beyond.

Recurring Reports

Consistency and reliability are the hallmarks of a great organization. The Research Bureau is both. We delivered new installments in series the community has come to depend on over the years. The fifth edition of ***The Worcester Almanac*** provided statistics and data on every measurable facet of the community, mixing information from the national census with local facts and figures. This resource has been well-used by local media, other organizations, and the community at large. ***Breaking Down the Budget*** condenses complex and hard-to-understand financial information from the City into a document the average citizen can use to gauge the priorities of their government. The 2019 edition of this report was especially important as the construction of a municipally-owned baseball stadium impacts Worcester's debt, spending concerns, and financial health. In an effort to maintain momentum on the Worcester Public Schools strategic planning process the Research Bureau led last year, a report on ***Chapter 70 reform*** was released, providing a local perspective to an issue receiving increasing statewide attention as more people come to grips with the underfunding of public education in the Commonwealth. The 31st ***Thomas S. Green Public Service Awards*** drew a large crowd to honor unsung heroes of local government, in Worcester and surrounding towns, who are not usually recognized in other awards ceremonies. The Research Bureau also maintained its position as the facilitator of the premier ***municipal candidate debates*** for local government in partnership with the *Telegram & Gazette* and the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce with assistance from venue partner Mechanics Hall, hosting events for races for Mayor, At-large City Council, District City Council, and School Committee.

The departure of Executive Director Timothy J. McGourthy at the beginning of the year did not stop the output of reports, briefs, and events due to the commitment and hard work of Research Bureau staff and volunteer leadership. After a thorough six-month search process that drew interest from numerous candidates, the Research Bureau was proud to welcome new executive director Paul F. Matthews.

While The Research Bureau focuses on public policy broadly, new work done over the course of 2019 can be grouped into a few areas of emphasis.

Transportation

The Implications of a Fare-Free WRTA took a deep look into the finances of the Worcester Regional Transit Authority, analyzed ridership trends, and used data and research to determine the feasibility of eliminating fares, and showing the potential beneficial impact. The Research Bureau challenged the conventional wisdom that raising fares is necessary for the financial health of a transit system by showing that the most recent fare hike actually decreased farebox revenue, and that fares accounted for less than 15 percent of the WRTA's revenue. The report combined financial data, ridership statistics, evidence from other cities, and existing research on transit policy to recommend prioritizing ridership by finding alternate revenue streams for roughly \$3 million in farebox revenue. This report sparked significant debate and has received frequent and ongoing media coverage. A group of transit advocates and community partners have used The Research Bureau's work as a starting point for a strategic campaign to further explore recommendations in the report.

The Research Bureau also explored using mass appeal and levity to focus public attention on transportation policy with the second season of "***Buck Bus***," a rolling game show that takes place on WRTA buses. Partnering with Niche Hospitality and the WRTA, the Research Bureau developed trivia questions about Worcester demographics, history, and characteristics, and gave bus riders the chance to win restaurant gift cards as contestants on this popular video program.



Economic Development

The Research Bureau addressed popular demand with ***Opportunity Zones in Worcester: Characteristics of Worcester's Designated Areas***. Information on these new federally-designated areas was scarce, but investor interest was high, so The Research Bureau produced dossiers on the six census tracts in question, using mapping technology and demographic information to paint a comprehensive picture of the zones. The report was used as the informational hand-out at a standing-room only Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce event that brought in national experts to explain the concept to a local audience.

Realizing the importance of infrastructure and informed decision-making to the local economy, the Research Bureau hosted ***Smart Cities: Building a Nexus Between Technology and Urban Infrastructure***, a forum that brought in experts from Boston to discuss the concept with decision-makers from Worcester, including the City Manager and his team. Shortly afterward, the City announced the launch of an Office of Urban Innovation that would address many of the goals espoused in the forum. The Research Bureau also explored the impact of and need for affordable housing in a brief on the ***Worcester Housing Authority***, examining the current state of public housing in the city and moves that should be made to improve the situation. In order to ensure that Worcester receives the full and correct amount of federal money it deserves based on population, The Research Bureau participates in the city's Complete Count Committee for the upcoming 2020 federal census, identifying ways to ensure as many residents as possible answer the upcoming questionnaire. The resulting data is used as the basis for most Research Bureau reports and for the federal government to guide funding and policies.

Municipal Operations

In ***Choosing a Better Voting System: The Argument for Ranked Choice Voting in Worcester and Beyond***, The Research Bureau examined how residents choose their elected leaders, and found that there may be better ways than the current plurality voting system used in City Council and School Committee races. This timely report came as other municipalities, the state of Maine, and candidates for President of the United States discussed or implemented the voting reform, and the Worcester-centric report drew praise from national advocacy groups for its thoroughness.

In an effort to assist in efforts to improve regional health outcomes, The Research Bureau maintained its involvement with the Community Health Improvement Plan, serving on targeted committees providing assistance to the city's efforts to create a healthier city. The Research Bureau also published a new edition of ***March Municipal Madness***, allowing residents to fill out a tournament-style bracket of municipal priorities, which drew media interest, boosted the Research Bureau's profile among new audiences, and raised awareness of the issues facing the city.

REPORTS AND BRIEFS

SINCE OUR LAST ANNUAL REPORT, THE RESEARCH BUREAU PREPARED THE FOLLOWING REPORTS AND BRIEFS



- » **Bureau Brief:** Worcester Housing Authority
- » Opportunity Zones in Worcester: Characteristics of Worcester's Designated Areas
- » Choosing a Better Voting System: The Argument for Ranked Choice Voting in Worcester and Beyond
- » Worcester Almanac: 2019
- » **Bureau Brief:** Chapter 70 Reform
- » The Implications of a Fare-Free WRTA
- » Questions for the 2019 Candidates for City Council and School Committee in Worcester
- » Breaking Down the Budget: Questions to Consider, City of Worcester & Worcester Public Schools FY2019

FORUMS AND EVENTS

SINCE OUR LAST ANNUAL REPORT, THE RESEARCH BUREAU HELD THE FOLLOWING FORUMS AND EVENTS



- » 33rd Annual Meeting featuring President Kerry Healey
- » Smart Cities: Building a Nexus Between Technology and Urban Infrastructure
- » 2019 Thomas S. Green Awards
- » Buck Bus
- » Municipal Debates: School Committee, District Council, At-Large Council, and Mayor





March 27, 2019

BOARD MEETING AT THE BEECHWOOD HOTEL

Guest Speaker: Douglas Brown

President, UMass Memorial Community Hospitals and Chief Administrative Officer, UMass Memorial Health Care

Topic: UMass Memorial's Anchor Mission and Renewed Community Investment Related to Sourcing, Hiring, and Investing.

June 4, 2019

BOARD MEETING AT GATEWAY PARK

Guest Speaker: Carlos Santiago

Commissioner of Higher Education for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Topic: Proposed Legislation and Regulations addressing the Financial Oversight of Massachusetts Institutions of Higher Education.





33RD

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE RESEARCH BUREAU

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2018
DCU CENTER | WORCESTER, MA

WITH FEATURED SPEAKER:
Dr. Kerry Healey





FAIRMAN C. COWAN MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP AWARD



Philip and Gale Morgan

Titans of Worcester industry, Philip and Gale Morgan have linked and held firm countless aspects of the region's business, higher education, and cultural communities. Their involvement and insight have led many a Worcester organization to new heights, and their personal commitment to The Research Bureau through friendship, leadership, and generosity has been without match.

The Morgans received the award at the Research Bureau's 33rd Annual Meeting on December 11, 2018, at the DCU Center.

ANNUAL MEETING SPEAKERS



- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>2019 DR. FRANCIS COLLINS, Director,
National Institutes of Health (NIH)</p> <p>2018 DR. KERRY HEALEY, President,
Babson College, and
former Lieutenant Governor</p> <p>2017 JAMES A. PEYSER, Secretary of Education,
Commonwealth of Massachusetts</p> <p>2016 JOHN H. SUNUNU, Former Governor,
State of New Hampshire, and
White House Chief of Staff</p> <p>2015 JONATHAN KRAFT, President,
The Kraft Group</p> <p>2014 JAY ASH, City Manager of Chelsea

BERNARD F. LYNCH, Founder,
Community Paradigm Associates, LLC

MICHAEL V. O'BRIEN, Executive Vice President,
Winn Development</p> <p>2013 EDWARD GLAESER, Fred and Eleanor Glimp
Professor of Economics, Harvard University</p> <p>2012 ERIC S. ROSENGREN, President & CEO,
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston</p> <p>2011 SENATOR SCOTT BROWN</p> <p>2010 LISA A. MANCINI, Senior Vice President,
CSX Corporation</p> <p>2009 AMITY SHLAES, Bloomberg News Columnist,
Political Economist</p> <p>2008 JOHN W. ROWE, Chairman, President & CEO,
Exelon Corporation</p> <p>2007 DR. THOMAS PAYZANT, former Superintendent
of the Boston Public Schools and senior lecturer
at the Harvard Graduate School of Education</p> <p>2006 DR. DAVID DRISCOLL, Commissioner of Education,
Commonwealth of Massachusetts</p> <p>2005 TAMAR JACOBY, Author and Senior Fellow
at the Manhattan Institute</p> <p>2004 JOHN GANNON, Staff Director,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Select Committee on Homeland Security</p> | <p>2003 GOVERNOR MITT ROMNEY,
Commonwealth of Massachusetts</p> <p>2002 FRED SIEGEL, Professor of History,
The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science
and Art, New York City, and Senior Fellow,
Progressive Policy Institute</p> <p>2001 HEATHER MACDONALD, Senior Fellow,
The Manhattan Institute</p> <p>2000 REV. DR. FLOYD H. FLAKE, Senior Pastor,
Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church
and former U.S. Representative to Congress</p> <p>1999 HOWARD HUSOCK, Director of Case Studies
in Public Policy and Management, Kennedy School,
Harvard University</p> <p>1998 MYRON MAGNET, Editor, <i>City Journal</i></p> <p>1997 THOMAS BIRMINGHAM, Senate President,
Commonwealth of Massachusetts</p> <p>1996 GLENN C. LOURY, Professor of Economics,
Boston University</p> <p>1995 PETER HARKNESS, Editor and Publisher of <i>Governing</i></p> <p>1994 JAMES Q. WILSON, Author and Professor of Political
Science, UCLA</p> <p>1993 ROBERT POOLE, President, Reason Foundation</p> <p>1992 WILLIAM HUDNUT, former Mayor of Indianapolis</p> <p>1991 DAVID P. FORSBERG, Secretary,
Executive Office of Health and Human Services,
Commonwealth of Massachusetts</p> <p>1990 BRUCE CARNES, Director of Budget Planning,
Office of National Drug Control Policy</p> <p>1989 EDWARD J. LOGUE, CEO,
Logue Boston, former Director of the Boston
Redevelopment Authority</p> <p>1988 RAYMOND FLYNN, Mayor of Boston</p> <p>1987 WILLIAM BULGER, Senate President,
Commonwealth of Massachusetts</p> <p>1986 IRA JACKSON, Commissioner,
Department of Revenue,
Commonwealth of Massachusetts</p> |
|---|---|

THOMAS S. GREEN PUBLIC SERVICE AWARDS



EACH YEAR, THE RESEARCH BUREAU RECOGNIZES THE “UNSUNG HEROES” in municipal government who are committed to making Worcester and nearby communities better places to live and work. The **2019 Thomas S. Green Public Service Award** recipients were honored at a ceremony and reception at Assumption College on April 25, 2019.



The 2019 Thomas S. Green Public Service Award Recipients



THOMAS BARRETT

Worcester Public Schools



NICOLE COONEY

Worcester Department of
Public Works & Parks



MICHAEL DAIGNEAULT

Worcester Department of
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ADAM FURNO

Douglas Highway Department

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