

Town of Wilbraham Veterans Director Reelected to Executive Board of National Veterans Advocacy Group

DENVER, CO. - Jered Sasen of Town of Wilbraham, Massachusetts, was reelected May 15, 2024 to the Executive Board of the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) at their Annual Training Conference.

Sasen assists veterans and their families from across the area by advocating for veterans to obtain the benefits and services they deserve. As a member of the E-Board, he will serve in the governing body of NACVSO, which oversees multiple lines of service and the overall operations of the 30-year-old organization.

In addition to his reelection, Sasen was recognized for his work with NACVSO by receiving the President's Award during the organization's Annual Banquet.

"I am beyond excited and honored to continue working with the executive board of this incredible organization," said Sasen. "Looking ahead, I'm looking forward to helping with the expansion of many of our programs. The future is looking bright!"

Along with serving veterans and their families, Sasen is a veteran himself, having served in the United States Navy from 2006 to 2016.

Since 1989, NACVSO has advocated for government policies that serve veterans and supported the nation's approximately 2,200 county veterans service officers. CVSOs are local government employees responsible for helping veterans and their families in their communities access their benefits. CVSOs can



help advocate for veterans and their families with the VA, connect them to state and local resources and identify gaps in policies that serve the veterans in their communities.

In addition to the elections, the event was marked by two historic events for the organization: the first was the NACVSO-VA Claims Clinic wherein all week, Denver-area veterans were able to meet with Veteran Service Officers, receive help filing claims for VA benefits, complete claims-related exams, and some received decisions right on site.

The second historic event was hosting the US Court Appeals for Veterans Claims, which allowed attendees to witness a live hearing before the court - a first for NACVSO and for the Court in front of a

Veteran Service Organization.

Other speakers included VA Under Secretary for Benefits, Joshua Jacobs, who commended NACVSO for their dedication to veterans and partnership with VA, acknowledging the NACVSO-VA Claims Clinic as a milestone in their continued partnership.

"The foresight to utilize the collective knowledge and experience of this conference's attendees to improve the lives of Colorado Veterans, Families, Caregivers and Survivors is truly astonishing," said Jacobs. "When I heard you were putting on this clinic, I knew if there was an organization that could pull it off, it was you-- NACVSO."

State Auditor seeks signatures for ballot question

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
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WEST BROOKFIELD - State Auditor Diana DiZoglio has one wish for her birthday on June 5, and that's to gain the 13,000 signatures needed to get a question on the November ballot.

This ballot question would allow voters to compel the Legislature to be audited. The audit would be performative, and also look at how tax dollars are being spent.

"This is the same type of audit we do for every other entity," DiZoglio said. "Legislature is the only one refusing."

Last fall, over 75,000 residents across the commonwealth signed a petition after DiZoglio's request to audit the Senate and the House of Representatives was denied by the House Speaker and Senate President. DiZoglio and her office staff have been traveling to towns and cities, asking for help to collect the necessary signatures before the deadline, making a stop in West Brookfield on May 5.

DiZoglio said she has a "deep love and affection" for policy making and transparency in the Legislature, after spending six years as a state representative and four years as a state senator before taking her current office in 2023.

"We do so many great things here in Massachusetts," DiZoglio said.

Despite this, the commonwealth is ranked one of the least transparent state governments, she said.

"As your state auditor I've been given the really unique opportunity to have a platform; a singular voice,"

she said. "We need transparency. There are a lot of tough conversations that need to be had."

DiZoglio said she has been reflecting on the saying, "knowledge is power," and she feels that this applies to a legislative audit, and how its results will spread knowledge and power back to the voters.

"I've seen knowledge hoarded, essentially, by people in power," she said. "If we have knowledge about state budget and government, we have an opportunity to join in - to rise against or support."

DiZoglio said her office works to "bring light" to over 200 state entities. She is it is common practice in many other states to audit the Legislature regularly as well.

"The decisions that impact us all should be made in the light of say," she said.

DiZoglio said no system is perfect, but that the government should strive to be better.

"Our goal and our mission is to help," she said of the State Auditor's office. "To make sure everyday people get the best services."

DiZoglio said the government cannot improve its service to constituents if potential problems can't be identified and addressed. She said it's "deeply concerning" that her office's efforts to get access to the Legislature have been demonized and talked down about.

"It doesn't say a lot of good things about how our system is running. What is there to hide?" she



State Auditor
Diana DiZoglio

said.

DiZoglio said there have been 113 audits of the Legislature completed by her office dating back to 1849. Now, they are unable to get access to information about public tax dollars, she said.

DiZoglio said the audit is a nonpartisan issue, and it's more about those who have power and those who do not.

"Leadership has a lot of power," she said.

Retaliation is also a common occurrence in the Legislature, DiZoglio said, adding that this behavior is "unacceptable."

She said retaliation directed at herself personally is missing the mark, and coming back on the voters who elected her.

"This is something that need to be talked about over and over again... This is not the Massachusetts we know and love," she said.

DiZoglio urged residents to "have a seat at the table" before decisions are made in the Legislature, asking them to help gather the remaining signatures for the ballot question before the June 5 deadline.

"You have the power to make change, I cannot do this without you," she said.

For more information about the audit or to sign the State Auditor's petition, visit dianaforma.com. For more information about the State Auditor's office and its role in state government, visit www.mass.gov/org/office-of-the-state-auditor.

PUBLIC NOTICES

TOWN OF HAMPDEN CONSERVATION COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, (MGL CH 131, S 40), it's implementing regulations (310 CMP 10.00) and the Town of Hampden's Wetlands Protection Bylaws, the Hampden Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, June 5, 2024 at 6 PM** at the Town House, 625 Main Street, Hampden, for a **Request for Determination of Applicability, (RDA), submitted by Shawn Sullivan for the repair of failing retaining walls in close proximity to the Scantic River, 23 Walnut Road, Hampden.** Additional information relating to this request is on file in the Conservation Commission office and available for review by the public by contacting the Commission. Anyone interested in or wishing to be heard on the request may appear at the time and place designated.

On Behalf of the
Conservation Commission,
Judy McKinley-Brewer,
Ted Zebert,
co-chairs

05/30/2024

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On Behalf of the
Conservation Commission,
Judy McKinley-Brewer,
Ted Zebert,
co-chairs

05/30/2024

WILBRAHAM PLANNING BOARD

The Wilbraham Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at 5:45 PM** in the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, on the application of Daniel Fernandes for site plan approval as required under Sections 3.4.1.4 and 13.5 of the Wilbraham Zoning By-Law to allow construction of a 30 foot by 45 foot farm stand on a portion of the property owned by Charles L Merrick Trust located at 651 Main Street as shown on information on file in the Planning Office and posted for public viewing on the Planning Board page of the Town of Wilbraham website at www.wilbraham-ma.gov/123/Planning-Board. Both in person and virtual participation are available. To participate virtually go to <https://meet.goto.com/244871717> or call 866-899-4679 (Access Code: 244-871-717).

John McCloskey
Chair

05/23, 05/30/2024

Town of Hampden Notice of Public Hearing

The Hampden Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, June 12, 2024 at 6:30 PM** in the Town House, 625 Main Street, Hampden, MA on the application of Raymond Kuselias to amend or modify a Special Permit Decision dated September 27, 2023 under Section 7.2.4 of the Hampden Zoning Bylaw for a Substandard Frontage Lot on property owned by the applicant on Burleigh Road, Parcel 28-029-000 Information related to this application is on file in the Town Clerk's Office and is available for review by the public during normal business hours.

For the Board,
Madison Pixley, Chair,
Hampden Planning Board
05/23, 5/30/2024

Please check the accuracy of your legal notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.

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Denise Dubowski

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