

EPM Remarks 2022 Annual Meeting

Good Afternoon. It is wonderful to gather in person after so many virtual events.

A heartfelt thank you to PwC for hosting us this afternoon, and to Stephen Mosha, MTF's chair, for his wise counsel and strong strategic guidance over these past months.

For those of you have been attending MTF Annual Meetings during my tenure, you know that I like to frame my remarks around a theme. I thought it would be fun to drive home key points using song titles, so here goes. This year, the theme is "looking forward" or as Fleetwood Mac would advise, ***Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow***.

Since we last gathered in person in 2019, the pandemic has changed the world, in ways big and small. People have been reevaluating everything. Who here hasn't altered the way they shop, bank, seek medical care and achieve balance in their lives?

It is not just individuals who are engaged in this reevaluation.

Businesses have fundamentally altered the way they operate, too.

Everything from who, where and how to hire staff, to where to set up shop is being reconsidered in light of recent changes to the way we work. In short, the pandemic accelerated the pace of change in numerous ways. Or as the legendary Bob Dylan put it, *The Times They are-a-Changin*.

As we celebrate our 90th anniversary, this is also an opportune time for MTF to examine how we advance our mission in an evolving world, assuring that we remain vibrant and vital to our Commonwealth for another 90 years.

We approach this exercise from a position of strength. Our insightful and talented staff have furthered our relevance as the preeminent source of information and driver of policy discussions critical to Massachusetts's future.

MTF is often called the fiscal watchdog, and we always will be. It is a moniker we wear proudly. But that alone isn't enough for an organization committed to growing a Massachusetts that is full of opportunity for all, shared prosperity, strong community. Expanding our

vision to include a broader array of topics will ensure that MTF best serves the Commonwealth and its residents in the years to come.

To that end, MTF will double-down on its current mission's to promote the state's fiscal stability and long-term economic well-being, while also finding new ways to leverage our expertise. We'll do so by focusing on new issues, and in collaboration with new partners. This may involve strategic alliances that will build organizational capacity will creating synergistic opportunities.

As with most organizational evolutions, or really any change, it may be uncomfortable, but we will emerge stronger for it. As part of that effort, the work of revising our strategic plan is well underway; we expect to share initial concepts for your input and insights via a survey in the weeks to come. Your feedback will assure that MTF remains *Simply the Best* as Tina Turner would say.

Like any good leader, I also have been doing some self-reflection. To borrow the words of the great Kenny Rodgers in *the Gambler*, "you got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold em." So today I announce

my intention to step down as President of MTF at the end of this year. I didn't come to this decision lightly, but know it is the right decision, because it will create new opportunities for both MTF and for me.

Although this job has been the highlight of my career, periodic change in leadership is essential for any organization, and that's particularly true for a small non-profit operating in a time of great change. New leadership can bring MTF to greater levels of effectiveness.

I remember it like it was yesterday when I took over from Mike Widmer. Mike was an icon on Beacon Hill and a tough act to follow. But new perspective creates new opportunities, so like Frank Sinatra suggested, I had to do it *My Way*. And I did.

I am proud of what we have accomplished together over these 7 and a half years and that is something to *Celebrate*, as Kool and the Gang recommends. MTF is in a stronger position organizationally and financially than it was in 2015.

With your help and financial support, we re-envisioned every aspect of the organization – from big topics like developing MTF's first strategic

plan to less sexy things like updating MTF's offices, website, technology, modes of communication and even our logo. These actions have left us well-positioned for growth. Perhaps most importantly, MTF has built a topnotch staff who provide the member engagement and budgetary and fiscal analysis for which we are so well known. I want to acknowledge each of them – Andy Bagley, Deb Carroll, Doug Howgate and Ashley White - for their dedication day-in and day-out. I appreciate the ways they have made my job so much easier.

But we did so much more than that, guided by the premise that data is the bedrock of innovation. The MTF team - staff together will all of you - have influenced our Commonwealth's most consequential policy discussions. We honed our reputation as an expert on transportation finances. The research behind 2015's report "*The T: The End of Its Line*" was the foundation for successful advocacy to create the Fiscal and Management Control Board and suspend the Pacheco laws. Our subsequent research on MBTA's capital spending and our call for new blueprint for transportation, prompted the Baker administration to form

the Commission on the Future of Transportation, which I proudly co-chaired. The Commission’s recommendations were well-received and now serve as a guidepost for moving forward. MTF also formed “The Transportation Table,” which was a group of disparate stakeholders who shared a commitment to working collaboratively to find solutions to the many transportation challenges. Although the pandemic tabled that work, recent headlines indicate those challenges remain, and it is an MTF priority to drive those discussions forward.

On fiscal and budgetary issues, MTF remains a trusted voice upon which lawmakers can rely, a role that was on full display during the uncertainties of the FY2021 budget. The steady work of providing timely and comprehensive analyses of each budget iteration and other important policy matters – work made stronger and timelier by Doug Howgate’s unparalleled expertise – will always be mission critical.

On the tax front, MTF reinvigorated our annual tax policy conference with the addition of national experts on timely tax topics. We led the charge for adoption of the FAS 109 deduction, reduction of the EMAC

assessment and making it temporary, and decoupling from the IRC for section 163(j). We opposed accelerated sales tax remittance, and though it passed, significantly mitigated its negative impacts. MTF was one of five plaintiffs to successfully challenge the income surtax ballot initiative the first time around and we continue to speak out about why it is not sound tax policy to embed a tax rate in the constitution. We also educated the public on the many tax implications of telework. Most recently, we have made a strong case for the Governors' tax package, especially with respect to the estate tax. The proposal provides relief to the most vulnerable, while also addressing areas in which Massachusetts is an outlier.

That's a pretty solid list, but I am most proud, perhaps, of the innovative ways that MTF has used its analytical capabilities and longstanding credibility to draw attention to other, perhaps nontraditional, pressing issues. These include:

- ✓ Calculating the high cost we are paying for opioid epidemic and the role employers can play in being part of the solution;

- ✓ Providing an honest assessment of progress to date in closing the racial divide and some critical data upon which to measure future progress; and
- ✓ Determining the opportunity cost of an inadequate child care system.

In closing, please know that this job has been an honor and the high point of my professional life. I have learned so much, grown so much, and really enjoyed its many aspects. To paraphrase a line from Josh Groban. *“You raised me up to more than I can be”* and I am forever grateful to you for providing the opportunity.

While I share this news with you today, I’m intently focused on the work of the year ahead, from actively planning a fall Gala to celebrate our 90th anniversary to completing the work of our strategic plan.

Working collaboratively with a search firm, we hope to choose my successor by the fall, allowing for a smooth transition. I am confident we will have many strong internal and external candidates from which to choose.

By then, you may be humming the tune, “*Come on, Eileen,*” and thinking it is time for me to go, but I can assure you that I will continue to work on your behalf each and every day until December 31st.

Per Journey’s orders, *Don’t Stop Believing* in MTF because the work it does is really valuable and I know its best days are still ahead.

Let me end with a heartfelt thank you to my business association colleagues for their friendship and collaboration on so many issues over the years, to the Executive Committee for their steadfast commitment and guidance to this special organization, and to each of you for your support of MTF and me over the years.

That conclude my remarks, Mr. Chairman.