



MLGMA

<http://www.mlgma.org>

**MICHIGAN
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

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The Manager

The official newsletter of the Michigan Local Government Management Association

Affiliated with the Michigan Municipal League

September 2002

Institute Committee Plans Thought-provoking Program

*By D. Wayne O'Neal, Eastpointe City
Manager; Chair, 2003 Winter Institute
Planning Committee*

The 2003 Winter Institute Planning Committee has been hard at work developing an interesting and thought-provoking program. An overall theme has not been adopted, but many of the sessions deal with cities in crisis due to the financial problems of the state, Revenue Sharing and the escalating costs of health care.

Program Highlights

Wednesday Keynote: Mike McKinley will present an entertaining and exciting program focusing on some of the many problem areas managers deal with on a daily basis.

Wednesday Luncheon: Chip Drotos, a psychologist who has been working with the managers in transition, will discuss services available to managers.

Wednesday Afternoon: A vignette features four city managers currently facing a financial crisis within their communities. Attendees will be divided into four working groups to deal with different issues and to brainstorm possible solutions.

Thursday Keynote: A representative from GM will discuss how they handled the crisis facing them during the last downturn.

Thursday Luncheon: Robert O'Neill, the new Executive Director of ICMA, will give us an update on what is happening at the national level.

Friday Closing Breakfast: A legislative update will be featured, along with a presentation from Gerard Miller, President and CEO of ICMA-RC.

In addition to these programs, you'll enjoy networking with your colleagues at the various mixers, nights out and breakfast meetings.

I want to thank the following members of the Planning Committee for their hard work: **Richard Watkins** and **Amy McEwan**, Delta Charter Township; **Brent Bury**, Pinconning; **William Stewart**, Coldwater; **Tori Kelly**, Standish; **Tom Barwin**, Ferndale; **Paul Preston**, Mt. Pleasant; **John Zech**, Wayne; **Dave Pasquale**, Lowell; **Brian Murphy**, Beverly Hills; **Barbara VanDurren**, Wyoming.

Please join us January 28-31 in Ypsilanti for the 2003 Winter Institute. You'll be glad you did!

President's Message

by Warren D. Renando, Jackson City Manager

I want to bring to your attention some issues that we all need to be aware of, both individually and as an organization.

Veto Override

No governor had been overridden since the 1970s and certainly no governor had been overridden to such a degree that the veto got one vote in each house. We owe many thanks to the Michigan Municipal League, our elected officials and to many of our public employee unions for their unprecedented cooperation and help.

Since I've been in the State of Michigan I have not seen the counties, townships, cities, unions, and managers work so cooperatively and with such good results. Hopefully, we have set a precedent and the next time we run into a budget crisis at the state level, revenue sharing will not be the first thing cut.

Defense of the Form of Government

At the conference on Mackinac Island, we received news that there will be an election on the form of government in Grand Rapids. Grand Rapids is one of the oldest manager forms of government in the country. This election would create a highly paid, full time mayor whose power increases at the cost of the council/manager.

At the request of the Board, I have written a letter which I hope will be published in the Grand Rapids newspaper. I have requested that some of our members do the same. We contacted the ethics committee of the National ICMA to see if it was appropriate, and were told that it is.

The strongest critics of the manager form of government say that managers lack the ability to lead major cities and that the manager form of government does not provide the kind of administrative leadership a large city needs. Many of the largest cities in America have the manager form and are living proof of the effectiveness of professional management.

The MLGMA Board is proud of the profession and will stand for its defense. The Board of Directors at the Mackinac conference appointed a subcommittee to make contact with a public relations firm to develop specific tools for the MLGMA to use in the defense of the form, and also

to give to those who are interested in the adoption of the form. We want to provide general information on the form in a format that can be customized to meet the requirements of individual communities.

The subcommittee, chaired by Kathie Grinzinger, and made up of Ted Staton, Richard Watkins and myself, have already met and should have hired a firm by the time you read this message. Hopefully, by the end of the year a product will be available to anyone who needs information on either the retention or adoption of the manager form of government.

An initial budget of \$20,000 was voted by the Board for this project. We will also seek financial assistance from ICMA.

Credentialing Assessment

I took the opportunity to take my credentialing assessment at Mackinac and have received the results. The assessment was interesting, and I actually enjoyed it.

The results accurately reflect my abilities and weaknesses as a manager, and gave me the opportunity to see some things that I should be working on. In that sense, I think the assessment is of great value. I urge you to participate and make a commitment to work on those aspects of your skills that need improvement.

I'm going to work to see that ICMA's coursework meets our needs. I believe this assessment will result in better educational products that will be of more value.

August 7, 2002

Mr. Michael Lloyd, Editor
The Grand Rapids Press
155 Michigan Avenue, NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Dear Mr. Lloyd:

I am writing on behalf of the Michigan Local Government Management Association (MLGMA) and its Board of Directors regarding the recent initiative by the City of Grand Rapids to place on the November ballot a proposal for a "full-time" mayor, as well as the July 15, 2002 editorial "A full-time debate for City", in which the Press advocates for a strong-mayor form of government for Grand Rapids.

The MLGMA is the premier state association of local government (city, township, village, and county) managers, administrators and assistants, with a membership of over 400 persons. We are affiliated with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA); an association of appointed professional managers who serve local units of government throughout the world. ICMA requires a commitment to a code of ethics and a program of continuing professional education.

The council-manager form of government serves over 3,750 communities of all sizes, and it has served the City of Grand Rapids well for over 85 years. The strength of the council-manager form of government is the fact that a strong council rather than a strong mayor provides the leadership. There is no "political" separation between the will of the legislature and the duties of administration of the City. A city manager brings with him a professional education and years of experience in public management. He does not bring a "political agenda" since he never runs for office, has no vote, no veto power, or political contributors to look out for.

Grand Rapids has strong, professional, ethical management as evidenced by Kurt Kimball's 28-year tenure with the City. Grand Rapids is regarded throughout the State as an exceptionally well run City, in large part because of the professional management the City has enjoyed for years under the current form of government.

We take issue with the assumption that the Mayor must be full-time or that the strong-mayor form of government is the best form of government for a large city. Any action that places more power in the mayor's office diminishes the role of the council and drives wedges between those who make the policy and those who must carry out that policy. Many cities larger than Grand Rapids throughout the United States, including Dallas, San Antonio, San Diego, and Phoenix have city managers. A closer look at the cities of Detroit, Warren, and Flint, which are strong-mayor forms of government, should convince people that the strong mayor form of government should not be emulated in Grand Rapids. Tinkering with the council-manager form of government would be a dangerous experiment that is not likely to improve local government.

Sincerely,

Warren Renando
City Manager, City of Jackson
President, Michigan Local Government Management Association

MLGMA News

Membership Support Services Committee

by Paul Brake, Meridian Charter Township Assistant Manager

Continuation of Successful Combination—Report on Progress

The Membership Services Committee is making progress in its second term as the combined Assistants and Diversity Committees. More than two years ago the MLGMA empowered this committee to support the development and longevity of new and existing members, and members representing the changing demographics of our communities and workforce. The effectiveness of this committee will be reviewed, once again, upon its expiration in December 2003.

Upon the inaugural meeting of this group, the committee has officially renewed its commitment to three main objectives:

1. Identify and welcome new members and to personally invite their participation in MLGMA conferences and activities.
2. Keep the membership apprised on contemporary diversity issues.
3. Publicize issues of diversity in MLGMA and MML publications.

The committee is still hashing out some innovative and creative ideas to assist first-time conference attendees (particularly at the Winter Institute).

This includes continuation of "Membership Ambassadors," greeters at the conference registration desk, and activities to make certain that new attendees are comfortable and matched with senior members. The committee is committed to increasing the diversity of attendance at MLGMA functions and to provide an atmosphere of acceptance to current and new attendees. Look for more details in the future.

Just as we are concentrating on those already in the profession, the committee has launched an effort to encourage those potentially interested college students to consider the local government management profession. In particular, special emphasis will be given to encourage women and minorities.

Committee members Teri Arbenowske, Shannon Stumbo, Amy McEwan, Shane Reeside and Stan Pasioka have been busy contacting college professors across the state in public administration programs.

As part of this effort, the committee is formulating a brochure and information packet about the Association. These informational materials will be distributed to professors and students at colleges and universities across Michigan. This is coordinated with the assistance of ICMA staffers and is already hailed as a first of its kind.

A special thanks to Teri Arbenowske and Stan Pasioka for undertaking this component of the project.

We are pleased to report that the group has successfully continued recruiting and authoring a series of articles for the *Michigan Municipal Review*. Dana Foster's article in the July issue encourages managers to bring assistant managers to conferences and getting those members involved. Also, the article takes a candid look at the demographics of the managers in the profession and what needs to be done.

An upcoming article on the Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council in Farmington Hills will be featured in the September issue. This article showcases an innovative effort to

provide this community with opportunities to learn about and experience different cultures. We are very proud of these articles and look forward to continuing the dialog in upcoming series of other related diversity topics.

The committee is pleased with the work we have been able to accomplish thus far and look forward to the exciting opportunities that lay ahead. What is done so far is a "work in progress" and we are confident that the results produced will be worthy of reporting at the annual Winter Institute early next year.

Please feel free to pass along your comments and suggestions to any of our members or you can contact our chairperson Paul Brake via e-mail at brake@meridian.mi.us.

Small Communities Committee Mid-year Report

by W. Michael Freer, Village of Roscommon

The Small Communities Committee has held two meetings as a group and has made significant use of the internet to communicate in a spirited fashion on a the issue of ICMA Credentialing and how it might effect the small community manager.

Representatives of the committee related their concerns to the MLGMA Board. One of the issues addressed was a lack of information about the credentialing process. Members shared concerns that they might in some way be identified as "not credentialed" or otherwise categorized within MLGMA. The Board assured us that such would not be the case. There would be no effect as to a member's status, committee assignments, leadership opportunities, etc. within MLGMA.

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Back page news & Calendar

Regional Managers Groups

BORDER BANDITS

Hillsdale/Branch/Calhoun Counties. *Contact:* Maurice Evans, CM, Marshall.

GENESEE COUNTY

Genesee County—meetings held first Thursday of the month. *Contact:* Michael Senyko, CM, Fenton.

LAKE AREA

Macomb County, parts of St. Clair County and the Grosse Pointe area—lunch meetings held 3rd Thursday, every other month. *Contact:* Brian Vick, AA, Grosse Pointe.

MIDDLE OF THE MITTEN

Lansing metro area—meetings held 1st Thursday of the month. *Contact:* Theodore J. Staton, CM, East Lansing.

MID-MICHIGAN CITY/COUNTY

Upper Central Lower Peninsula. *Contact:* Ken Hibl, CM, Clare.

NORTHERN MICHIGAN L.P.

Meetings held 4th Thursday of the month. *Contact:* George Korthauer, CM, Petoskey.

OAKLAND COUNTY

Meetings held 1st Wednesday of the month, excluding July and August. *Contact:* William Ross, CM, Auburn Hills.

SAGINAW COUNTY

Saginaw County—meetings held last Friday of the month. *Contact:* Ron Lee, Saginaw Township Manager.

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

Wayne/Washtenaw/Lenawee/Monroe Counties—meetings held 3rd Wednesday of the month. *Contact:* George Brown, CM, Adrian.

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN

Berrien/Kalamazoo/St. Joseph/Cass/Van Buren Counties—meetings held 3rd Wednesday of the month. *Contact:* Frank Walsh, CM, St. Joseph.

THUMB NUTS

Thumb area—meetings held three times each year. *Contact:* Charlie Graham, CM, Frankenmuth.

U.P.

Meetings held twice each year. *Contact:* Spencer Nebel, CM, Sault Ste. Marie.

WEST MICHIGAN

Kent/Muskegon/Ottawa Counties; Ludington/Portland areas—lunch meetings held in Grand Rapids, 3rd Wednesday of each month, except July and August. *Contact:* Scott Huebler, CM, Whitehall.

Calendar

2002

September

- 11- MML Convention
- 13 Dearborn

September/October

- 29- ICMA Annual Conference
- 2 Philadelphia, PA

2003

January

- 28- MLGMA Winter Institute
- 31 Ypsilanti

March

- 26 MML Legislative Conference
Lansing

Small Communities Committee, *continued from page 3*

Concerns regarding the continuing education aspect of credentialing surfaced as well. What will be accepted toward that requirement? Will MML training or MLGMA workshops be acceptable? Or must all 40 hours be ICMA University sessions, which many communities might not pay to have their manager

attend? We were pleased to learn that the Professional Development Committee has had success in this area in getting local courses and training accepted by ICMA.

We thank the Board for its effort and diligence in this area and will continue to pay close attention as a committee on credentialing and how it effects "small town" managers.

The Small Communities Committee has one more scheduled meeting on September 25th in Lansing with the possibility of an additional meeting before the end of the year as need arises. If there is an issue any of you in smaller communities would like us to address, share with the Board, etc. please let me know at mfreer@email.com.

DEADLINE

MLGMA members are encouraged to submit articles for publication in *The Manager*. The next issue is scheduled for December 2002. All copy should be submitted to the editor, Sue Lee, [leeford598@aol.com] by Friday, November 1, 2002.

Ethics Committee

The 2002 MLGMA Ethics Committee was inadvertently omitted from the listings in the March issue of *The Manager*. We apologize for this oversight. Members of the committee are as follows:

Kurt Kimball, Chair
Grand Rapids

Bill Baldrige,
North Muskegon (Retired)

Ryan Cotton, Spring Lake

Daniel Fitzpatrick, Oak Park

Frank A. Gerstenecker, Troy (Retired)

Frederick W. Geuder, Harbor Springs

Robert Hamilton, Monroe

Richard Lewis, Traverse City

Tom Markus, Birmingham

Pat McGinnis, West Branch

Peter Stalker, Cadillac

Ted Staton, East Lansing