



MLGMA

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MICHIGAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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The Manager

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Affiliated with the Michigan Municipal League

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See you at the Amway Grand!
MLGMA 2005 Winter Institute
Grand Rapids • January 25-28, 2005

MLGMA Scholarship Makes Highest Quality Training Accessible

by Ted Staton, East Lansing City Manager

Due in large part to support from the MLGMA scholarship and the East Lansing City Council, in June I attended the Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. It was, without question, the highest-quality professional development experience I have had during my 25-year career in local government.

What made it so? A handful of ingredients: a distinguished faculty, high-caliber participants, other educational and cultural opportunities in the Boston/Cambridge area, and a curriculum balanced between skill development and an affirmation of the values of public service.

Using the Harvard case study method, the faculty used examples from the areas of housing, health care, and human services to teach negotiating skills, problem analysis, problem solving, and performance measurement. Other case examples highlighted the value conflict evident in issues we manage every day and some techniques to aid in resolving those conflicts. Of particular value was the win-win approach to negotiating. Too often we

enter conflicts with the view that one can win only at another's expense. We studied techniques that broke that negotiating paradigm.

Participants were required to bring their own case study to share with a small class group and faculty consultants. This aspect of the program is new, but it was highly valued—and terrific free consulting!

My classmates were from Florida, Maine, Washington, California and all parts in between. There were four local government managers from Ireland, one from Taiwan and a member of the Macedonian Parliament. Their intellects and their experiences made them an intimidating bunch to be around for three weeks.

There were both appointed and elected officials, and the dialog between the two produced a greater understanding of the differences in perspective. I developed tremendous respect for the state and local elected officials in the class.

During a particularly provocative seminar based on the case study of Robert Moses, the great architect/engineer of so many of the great public

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Board Meeting Highlights

by Mike Herman, Albion City Manager; 2004 MLGMA President

Following are highlights of the November 12, 2004 MLGMA Board of Directors meeting.

- Financial Update—As a result of the Winter Institute (2004) revenues, the MLGMA budget for 2004 is in good shape as we approach the end of the fiscal year. Over the last couple of years we have experienced a decrease in our fund balance. The auditors had indicated that we still had an acceptable fund balance (approx. \$58,000) but that we needed to ensure that the balance did not continue to decline.
- The Nominating Committee is in the process of finalizing its slate of candidates for presentation at the annual meeting at the Winter Institute.
- The Board has completed action on the outstanding ethics violation cases. See articles on Holmes and Wood in the newsletter. I am happy to report at this time that we do not have any other active ethics investigations in Michigan.
- MLGMA members received a DVD promoting the new Civics education program for Michigan high schools. All members are asked to meet with their school superintendents and encourage them to make use of this new education program. Please provide feedback to Mike Young, City Manager of Rockford

on the outcome of your meeting (e-mail: myoung@rockford.mi.us)

- Brian Murphy, Assistant City Manager Troy is our representative to the ICMA 2005 Conference Planning Committee. He is interested in suggestions for next year's conference. Please contact Brian with your comments and suggestions (e-mail: murphybp@ci.troy.mi.us)
- The program is being finalized for the 2005 Winter Institute. All MLGMA members are encouraged to attend this annual conference and experience the great educational sessions and the excellent opportunity to network with other managers.
- The 2005 MLGMA membership applications have been sent out along with the committee sign-up sheet. The applications reflect the new membership structure for the Association. All members are asked to encourage managers in their area to apply for MLGMA membership. If you know of a manager or assistant who is not a member of MLGMA or is new to the State or profession, please let Dan Gilmartin at MML know of this individual and information

on MLGMA membership will be sent to them.

- We are still experiencing a difficult financial situation in Michigan. Many cities are continuing to have to make service and staffing reductions in order to balance their budgets. It is certainly not a fun time to be in municipal management. However, it is at exactly this time that communities need a professional manager to help address these difficult issues. I would encourage all managers to network with their neighboring managers to provide support during these stressful times. Please keep the PASSION for the profession as your citizens do need your continued good work on their behalf. Also remember that we do have Range Riders and a professional consultant available to assist you in dealing with your professional responsibilities. Please do not hesitate to contact these individuals for assistance. Dan Gilmartin at MML can provide the telephone numbers to make contact with the appropriate individual.

Holmes, Wood Barred from Membership

The MLGMA Board of Directors voted on November 12, 2004 to publicly censure and bar Mr. Grady Holmes, former City Manager in Algonac, Michigan from future membership in MLGMA.

The MLGMA Board concurred in the findings of the ICMA Executive Board who found that Mr. Holmes violated Tenets 3 and 12 of the ICMA Code of Ethics when he pled guilty to a felony charge of defrauding the City of Algonac.

The MLGMA Board believes that in the case of Mr. Grady Holmes, the review process and final decision were fair and just.

At the same meeting, the Board of Directors approved the public censure and expulsion of Mr. Michael Wood, former City Manager in Belding, Michigan and barred him from future membership in MLGMA.

The MLGMA Ethics Committee investigated potential ethics violations in regards to Michael Wood being charged with numerous counts of possession of child pornography, using a computer to commit a crime and misconduct in office. During this investigation, Mr. Wood subsequently pled no

DEADLINE

MLGMA members are encouraged to submit articles for publication in *The Manager*. Please submit all copy for the March 2005 issue to the editor, Sue Lee, [leeford@comcast.net] by Monday, February 7, 2005.

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Awards Committee Seeks Nominations

by Scott Huebler, Whitehall City Manager; Awards Committee Chair

Imagine, if you will, a 7-year-old walking into FAO Schwartz's in Chicago to hear her parents beam "Honey, go ahead and pick out a Barbie doll, but just one." She joyfully skips around the corner to see in gazed amazement the floor-to-ceiling, three wall collection of



every Barbie doll ever made, hundreds of them. There is Cowgirl Barbie, Shopping Barbie, Business-woman Barbie, Cheer-leader Barbie, but alas, no City Manager Barbie. As the

young child stands, eyes affixed with a dilemma of a lifetime, she begins to softly mutter "Choices, choices, choices, choices..."

Submitted for your approval, choices are good. The Awards Committee is looking for choices. If you know at least one other local government professional, chances are, you know at least one person worthy of being bestowed the admiration of their fellow colleagues, and most esteemed association. But you do not need to know any other person, at all! You can submit your own name—we won't tell.

Awards for outstanding whatever (but only serious ones) will be presented in beautiful downtown Grand Rapids this winter. No official form necessary. Any piece of paper will do—feel free to fold, spindle, and mutilate. Names and a reason for recognition should be

submitted to Scott Huebler, 405 Colby, Whitehall, MI 49461; or e-mail Huebler@cityofwhitehall.org no later than Christmas Day (that's December 25).

How to Approach a Manager in Transition

by Fred Geuder, Harbor Springs City Manager

The MLGMA Managers in Transition Committee approached Chip Drotos for some suggestions on how to approach a manager who was recently terminated. Chip is the consultant we have available for referrals to managers in transition, and Chip offered the following suggestions.

1. Make contact. Most managers in transition will not initiate a call. You don't have to be a professional to let someone know you are thinking of them.

2. Take their lead. Some managers in transition are more willing to talk than others.

3. Be non-judgmental.

4. Offer to meet with them. Just being there is a helpful way to give support, especially in the beginning. The "gift" of presence is extremely valuable during this time.

5. Recognize that the person may be experiencing a variety of emotions. Don't take it personally if the individual is angry or emotionally upset.

6. Encourage the person to stay busy.

7. When appropriate, ask about other family members and how they are dealing or coping with the situation.

8. Trust your gut feeling. If the person is very upset, encourage them to seek professional help with a therapist, minister, Chip

Drotos (the MLGMA referral), or someone.

9. Remember, you can't take away pain or hurry someone through the grieving process.

10. Diminish unrealistic expectations. (For example, the person thinks they may get their job back.)

11. Do a check of their support system. Do they have family, friends, or neighbors they can talk to about this?

12. Stress caring for one's self at this time. Physical immune systems go down during times of transition.

Managers Invited to AWWA Legislative Luncheon

On Tuesday, February 8, 2005 the Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association (AWWA) will hold its annual Legislative Luncheon at the Lansing Center. This luncheon is coordinated with the Michigan Municipal League and state legislators are encouraged to attend to network with their constituent municipalities.

This year the AWWA would like to invite city managers to join their public works directors and staff in meeting with their state legislators at this luncheon. This would be a good opportunity to meet with your state legislators in an informal social setting to discuss issues of importance to your community.

Please RSVP by Tuesday, January 25, 2005, to Mary Jane Robinson, City of Wyoming Utilities Department, at 616-261-3552 or e-mail: robinsonmj@ci.wyoming.mi.us. There is no charge for this luncheon event. Managers should plan on meeting their State Legislators at the entrance to the Exhibit Hall about 11:15 a.m. The luncheon typically lasts until about 1:00 p.m.

