

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Thursday, November 7, 2024

This meeting was conducted in-person and by electronic means. The League used Zoom to conduct the virtual option for this meeting.

Members Present: Justin Miller (Lakeville), Wendy Berry (West St. Paul), Courtney Johnson (Carver), Jenny Max (Nisswa), Sharon Hanson (Marshall), Phil Kern (Delano), Emily Koski (Minneapolis), Julie Maas-Kusske (Maple Plain), John Mulder (Hermantown), Audrey Nelsen (Willmar), Jorge Prince (Bemidji), Evan Vogel (Cambridge) and Dan Buchholtz (Metro Cities)

Members Present Remotely: Clinton Rogers (Janesville), Larry Odebrecht (Stillwater), Pat Baustian (CGMC) and Brian Heck (MAOSC)

Members Absent: HwaJeong Kim (St. Paul) and Scott Neal (Edina)

Staff Present: Luke Fischer, Pat Beety, Kellie Sundheim, Ed Cadman, Anne Finn, Dan Greensweig, Mark Ruff, Lisa Schaefer, Julie Liew, Jen Wolf, Madison Hagenau, Ted Bengtson, Craig Johnson, Daniel Lightfoot, Beth Johnston, Nathan Jesson, Owen Wirth, Annie Coyle, Donyelle Mikacevich, Milt Ferris, Lisa Sova, Jenn Poppen, Amber Eisenschenk, Kara Coustry, Aimee Gourlay, Laura Honeck, Ari Bloom, Rachel Walker, Adriana Temali and Katie Davidson

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance (**Roll Call**)
2. Presentation / General Communications
 - 2.1 Presentation of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Freedom Award – MN ESGR State Chairman Chad Sackett, MN ESGR Award Director, ESGR Ombudsman Jack Grams and MN ESGR Training Director John Kingrey

The League received the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Freedom Award. MN ESGR State Chairman Chad Sackett presented the League with what is the highest recognition nationally given to employers by the Department of Defense. This award is given to employers that provide exceptional support to employees who serve as guard and reserve members. There were 1800 submissions, narrowed down to 15 recipients and the League was 1 of 5 winners for the government organization category. Litigation Attorney Patrick Arneson also presented Luke Fischer with the ESGR Patriot Award, an award that recognizes individuals for supporting employees in the guard and reserve.

- 2.2 Recognition of Veterans - Patrick Arneson, Robert Bernier, Dan Greensweig, Matt Hanley, Julia Kelly, Joshua Miller and Ryan Zipf

In honor of Veterans Day, the Board recognized and thanked the following League employees who have served our country: Joshua Miller, Ryan Zipf, Dan Greensweig, Matt Hanley, Patrick Arneson, Julia Kelly and Robert Bernier. Thank you for your service and sacrifice.

2.3 Review of Annual Member Survey Results (Annie Coyle)

The League hears from members through a variety of mechanisms throughout the year from post-event surveys to post-interaction surveys, as well as proactive surveys. Evaluating the member experience is core to maintaining excellent service delivery and driving organizational decision making. Strategic Initiatives Manager Annie Coyle shared the results of an annual member survey conducted for 2024. A survey was sent out to members who reached out to the League for information and resources. In 2024, there were 4,619 interactions between League staff and members. From the 120 survey responses to the annual survey, members shared that the League is highly responsive and provides relevant information, and that we are the primary resource to turn to for information and resources.

3. Approval of Consent Items

(All items listed under Consent, unless removed from Agenda in item 3, shall be approved by one motion)

3.1 October 10, 2024, meeting minutes

3.2 National League of Cities (NLC) 2025 State League Staff Workshop Contribution

3.3 Board interim legislative policies

3.4 Delegation of legislative policy direction to the Executive Committee

Buchholtz made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Maas-Kusske. The motion carried.

4. Action Items

4.1 Draft 2025 Legislative Policies

4.1A Adoption of the 2025 City Policies

Under LMC's process, policy committees are formed. Officials and employees of member cities make up the committees and meet to make recommendations. The board's role is to finalize the adoption of the policies which will be brought to the legislature in the upcoming session. This is the step that we are undertaking today. Finn discussed the timeline and protocol for the process.

Once the policies are adopted, they will be assembled into a book to be given to legislators. It is also housed on our website.

The board can adopt an interim policy in case an unanticipated issue comes up. The executive committee also has the authority to convene and provide direction if a policy needs an immediate action.

Finn mentioned that if there are typographical or spelling errors a motion will be taken at the end of today's meeting to allow staff to make corrections.

IGR staff is available to answer questions if needed.

Beety noted the policy process “5-step cheat sheet” available to all board members and went on to explain the process for offering amendments and how the policy adoption process would take place during the meeting.

President Miller moved the Improving Service Delivery (ISD) policies. He asked staff and members whether they wanted any ISD policies moved for individual consideration. Hearing none, Berry moved approval of all ISD policies, seconded by Johnson. Motion carried.

President Miller moved to the Improving Local Economies (ILE) policies. He asked staff and members if they wanted any ILE policies moved for individual consideration, two amendments to LE-14 have been requested. Berry moved to approve all ILE policies, with the exception of LE-14, seconded by Johnson. Miller asked Buchholtz to explain his amendment.

Buchholtz commented that some of the language coming out of the policy committee on this issue was a little concerning to him, so he is offering this amendment to clean it up. Legislature preempted our authority to regulate assisted living facilities under our rental housing codes, and he thinks it was very short-sighted. The housing task force reviewed this and recommended the word “repeal” when the recommendation came to the policy committee, replacing the word “revising”. He is recommending it be changed back to “repeal”. He added that we have a strong interest in preserving the health, safety and welfare of our residents and hopes the board will support his amendment. There was no further discussion on this item. The vote on LE-14-1 carried.

Koski moved LE-14-2, seconded by Johnson. Miller asked Koski to explain her amendment. Koski would like to reinsert the language on page 3 of the policy that holds providers accountable and protects residents. There was no further discussion on the item. The vote on LE-14-2 carried.

President Miller moved the Human Resources & Data Practices (HR & DP) policies. He asked staff and members whether they wanted any HR & DP policies moved for individual consideration. Hearing none, Berry moved approval of all HR & DP policies, seconded by Johnson. Motion carried.

President Miller moved the Improving Fiscal Futures (IFF) policies. He asked staff and members whether they wanted any IFF policies moved for individual consideration. Hearing none, Berry moved approval of all IFF policies, seconded by Johnson. Motion carried.

Berry made a motion to refer policy comments, amendments and policies not approved to the respective policy committees for discussion and consideration during the 2025 policy adoption process and to direct staff to correct typographical and grammatical errors and to re-order policies and to group policies by topic, seconded by Johnson. Motion carried.

4.1B Adoption of the 2025 Legislative Priorities

Finn mentioned that these 12 priorities will serve as the basis for the next year's legislative session discussions. These priorities also incorporate input from the policy committees about what they would like IGR to devote additional attention and time to in 2025.

Issues that IGR will be addressing in 2025 are Adult-Use Cannabis, Bonding, Emerald Ash Borer, Emergency Management Services, Employment Issues, Housing, Local Government Aid (LGA), Local Decision Making, Local Sales Tax, Public Safety Duty Disability, Sales Tax Exemption on Construction Material and Water Infrastructure and Policies.

The board members were asked if they wanted to make any changes to the list. Vogel asked that collective bargaining – representing the employer be added to the list. Nelsen asked that transportation be added to. There was a suggestion to add elections to the list as well.

Buchholtz made a motion to the adoption of the 2025 Legislative Priorities with the addition of collective bargaining – representing the employer, elections and transportation be added to the list, seconded by Maas-Kusske. Motion carried.

4.2 Approve the 2025 Board Meeting Calendar - Kellie Sundheim

Sundheim presented the proposed calendar for 2025. While there are less board meetings on the calendar, she stressed the importance of having in person board member participation and pointed at the addition of the governance topics to be covered at each meeting.

Buchholtz made a motion to set the meeting dates for 2025, seconded by Maas-Kusske. The motion carried.

5. General Updates

5.1 2024 Board Retreat Summary

Fischer presented the board summary and noted that the goals of the retreat are for Board Members and League staff to come together and build relationships, discuss the status of the organization and offer perspective on organizational priorities such as the Employer of Choice and Resource of Choice initiatives.

5.2 Fall Forums – Adriana Temali

Temali gave a brief update on our Fall Forums, which included seven webinars that tackled important issues facing Minnesota cities. The Forums allow members to hear from speakers they may not otherwise hear from. 242 people registered for the Fall events.

Those registered attended at least one of the webinars. On average, each session had 101 attendees. The week of programming is the result of great collaboration amongst various departments including, Learning, Communications, IGR and Tech Services. A full summary will be sent out in an upcoming Friday update.

5.3 IGR

Members of the IGR talked about the recent federal, state and local elections and noted that Walz will be returning to his position for two more years, so there will be no significant state agency upheavals. They mentioned that there are some results not yet known due to recounts and final results might not be confirmed until December. The November budget forecast is expected to come out in early December so there will be a lot to talk about and figure out before the 2025 legislative session.

Lightfoot talked about the upcoming legislative session and the need to find common ground and synergy right away. He noted that the League values local input and keeping decision making at the local level, so we need to invest in these partnerships and continue to be the voice for our members.

5.4 LMCIT

Greensweig provided the board with a brief update on the topics covered at the LMCIT Board meeting yesterday. The board renewed the contract with Benchmark and BRAC. The Trust hired an outside consultant to review the BRAC contract and we were reassured that everything was in good standing. He also mentioned the upcoming vacancies on the Trust board and provided a high-level of the process to fill those vacancies.

6. Affiliate Organizations Update

6.1 Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities

No report was given.

6.2 Minnesota Association of Small Cities

Heck reported that the association set their policy priorities for the upcoming legislative session and that EMS and transportation funding continue to be high on the list.

6.3 Metro Cities

Buchholtz mentioned that they approved their legislative policies at their October board meeting.

7. President's Message

7.1 "How Introverts Can Be Leaders" article by Doug Conant

President Miller spoke a bit about the article he included in the packet and noted that he identifies as an introvert and realized early on that he could be a leader, but it just takes a bit of self-realization and knowing that he needs to find time to recharge after leading discussions.

He also thanked the board for another great meeting.

8. Executive Director Update and Adjournment

Fischer talked about the recent shooting across the street from our building and noted the increased safety measures that we have taken to ensure the safety of our employees and visitors.

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He provided a brief update on our AMS product Protech and let the board know that we are working through some technical issues and that the project is on hold until a number of these issues can be resolved with the vendor.

He noted that the NLC City Summit is next week in Tampa and that he is looking forward to spending the week with the board and city members who will be attending.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luke Fischer', written in a cursive style.

Luke Fischer, Executive Director