

## President's corner

*By Curt Boganey, President, City Manager, Brooklyn Center*

As my term winds down, I must reflect on what this opportunity has meant to serve you as Board president. I can honestly say that serving as president has been one of the highlights of my thirty-four year career.

Looking back, it made me think about my 1975 summer internship with ICMA at 1140 Connecticut Avenue in Washington, D.C. That's where I learned the history and the significance of our profession, now more than one hundred years old.

That internship breathed life into our code of ethics and helped me to appreciate the critical training and development role that our associations play for our members. It is where I was exposed to the meaningful international outreach efforts and the important "plan" advocacy responsibility of the association.

Back then we were the International City Manager's Association. Not the City and County Management Association, which better reflects the aspirations and diversity of our organization's members and the need for professional local government management in its various forms across the nation and the world.

Today MCMA is an ICMA affiliate organization, and beginning next year the state regions will be empowered to directly nominate ICMA vice presidential candidates. In my mind all of this reflects the progress that has been made over the years. This evolution over the last 34 years reflects the desire of ICMA to connect and serve its membership while staying true to our highest ideals of professionalism, inclusion, and community service.

This year we were able to expand our Range Rider program, and I am so excited about the benefits this has brought to our members in transition. The work of all committees has been outstanding and I thank every volunteer who served and/or chaired a standing committee.

I want to offer special recognition to the Next Generation Committee which volunteered to participate in several university job fairs promoting and advocating the profession.

Finally, I want to thank the Board for spending several hours developing long-term fiscal/budget policies and recommendations that will ensure the long-term economic viability of our association in a prudent, cost effective manner (see budget article). Finally, I want to thank our secretariat, Kevin Frazell and staff at LMC, who make all things possible.

So looking back, the reason this year has been a highlight in my career is that it has given me unique opportunity to give something back to a profession that has given so much to me. This is a profession that I am more proud of every day. This is why I encourage all of us to participate in the credentialing program, and personally contribute to the ICMA Fund for the Profession and the new Life Well Run Campaign.

Each of these activities demonstrates the value we place on our own professional development and our commitment to ensuring the legacy of this profession will continue for future generations to come! If we don't, who will? ☐

# Board meeting recap

By Kevin Frazell

The MCMA Board of Directors met on Feb. 4 at Arrowwood Conference Center in Alexandria and on March 25 at the LMC offices in St. Paul. Highlights of the meetings were:

- Discussing the possibility of chartering a bus for MCMA members attending the September ICMA Annual Conference in Milwaukee.
- Reviewing and approving a contract to continue holding the MCMA Annual Conference at Grand View Lodge for the years 2013-2017.
- Establishing policies to guide the financial operations of MCMA.
- Developing a draft budget for FY 2011-12.
- Considering state association financial support for the ICMA Life Well Managed Campaign. ◻

**Your  
Range  
Riders  
are here  
to help!**

## MCMA Officers/Board Members

### President:

Curt Boganey, Brooklyn Center, (763) 569-3300  
cboganey@ci.brooklyn-center.mn.us

### First Vice President:

Mark McNeill, Shakopee, (952) 233-9300  
mmcneill@ci.shakopee.mn.us

### Second Vice President:

Phil Kern, Delano, (763) 972-0550  
pkern@delano.mn.us

### Secretary/Treasurer:

Melanie Mesko Lee, Hastings, (651) 480-2350  
mmesko\_lee@ci.hastings.mn.us

### Directors:

Tim Houle, Crow Wing County, (218) 824-1045  
tim.houle@co.crow-wing.mn.us

Lisa Henning, Dakota County, (651) 438-4254  
lisa.henning@co.dakota.mn.us

Shaunna Johnson, Waite Park, (320) 252-6822,  
sjohnson@waitepark.org

Barry Stock, Savage, (952) 882-2646  
bstock@ci.savage.mn.us

Brian Gramentz, New Ulm, (507) 359-8233  
brian.gramentz@ci.new-ulm.mn.us

## Ex-Officio Members

### Immediate Past President:

Heather Worthington, Ramsey County,  
(651) 266-8000  
heather.worthington@co.ramsey.mn.us

### APMP President:

Dave Schaps,  
(651) 730-2722  
dave.schaps@ci.oakdale.mn.us

### LMC Executive Director:

Jim Miller  
(651) 281-1205  
jmiller@lmc.org

### AMC Executive Director:

Jeff Spartz  
(651) 789-4325  
jspartz@mncounties.org

### Range Riders:

Bill Bassett  
(507) 243-4346  
wbassett@hickorytech.net

Paul Sparks  
(507) 377-0449  
ptsparks@charter.net

Bob Thistle  
(763) 755-3563  
r.thistle@comcast.net

**MCMA Newsletter** is published three times a year for the members of the Minnesota City/County Management Association by MCMA's Secretariat:

League of Minnesota Cities, 145 University Avenue West, St. Paul, Minnesota 55103-2044  
Contact: Kevin Frazell, Director of Member Services, kfrazell@lmc.org • (651) 281-1215 • Fax: (651) 281-1296

# MCMA budget, financial policies, and potential dues increase

By Curt Boganey and Kevin Frazell

The inevitable has finally come to pass—the MCMA Board of Directors is recommending that the membership approve a dues increase at this year's annual meeting.

The dues recommendation is the culmination of an in-depth review of MCMA's finances by the Board of Directors. The review was prompted by the fact that while MCMA still enjoys an extremely healthy fund balance of nearly \$50,000 or well over 50 percent of annual expenditures, we are spending down our cash balances rapidly. Without changes, the fund balance would be depleted by the end of FY 2013. This situation has come about as the result of taking on new programs, a few years of lower annual conference attendance, and no increase in the general dues schedule for well over 10 years.

The Board decided to take a long-term perspective to bring the budget back into balance, beginning with adoption of new financial policies. Those policies include early involvement by the committees in making requests and making sure that all training and conference events at least break even, if not make a profit. With regard to fund balance the Board determined that the Association will keep a minimum of 25 percent of year-end expenditures. Balances of up to 40 percent may be retained and will not be used for on-going operations, but could be tapped for one-time contingencies and working capital. Fund balance of over 40 percent can be used for operations in lieu of a dues increase and other revenue-raising options.

Projecting out five years into the future, the Board made or recommends the following significant changes to the operating budget:

- ICMA Group Dinner—eliminate MCMA subsidy, make a paid event; annual savings of \$2,000.
- Local Government Intern—eliminate beginning in FY 2012; annual savings of \$5,000.
- Range Rider program—keep at three rather than expanding to five; annual savings of \$1,500.
- Conference patrons—allow conference patrons beginning in 2012; \$5,000 revenue increase.
- Dues Increase—upon approval of the membership increase dues schedule 20 percent beginning in FY 2012; \$4,900 revenue increase.

A few additional minor adjustments were made as well. In total, these adjustments will continue to slowly decrease fund balance to the point that it reaches the 25 percent guideline at the end of FY 2016.

While a 20 percent dues increase may sound like a lot on the face of it, some perspective will help. MCMA has not increased its current dues schedule (\$.80 or .001 of salary, whichever is more) in at least 10 years and perhaps considerably longer. A survey of state association dues available through ICMA also shows that Minnesota's dues schedule is extremely low. For example, where Minnesota dues on a \$100,000 salary are \$100, in North Carolina they would be \$175; in Oregon \$196; in Illinois and Virginia about \$240; in Florida \$300; and in Nebraska nearly \$400.

As required by the MCMA Constitution and by-laws, the proposed dues increase will be discussed by and voted on the members during the annual meeting on May 5. ○

## Appointments and other professional news

- **Chad Adams**, City Administrator, Medina, has been appointed City Manager, Albert Lea.
- **Todd Bodem** is in transition from Waseca County.
- **Michael Brethorst**, former City Administrator Barnesville, has been appointed City Administrator, Melrose.
- **Andrew Elbert** is in transition from Winsted.
- **Rick Getschow**, City Manager, Hopkins, has been appointed City Manager, Eden Prairie.
- **Peter Herlofsky** has resigned as City Administrator, Farmington.
- **Sara Irvine**, Assistant City Administrator, Afton, has been appointed City Administrator there.
- **Mike Robertson** is in transition from Otsego.

## Reaching the MCMA Secretariat

### For MCMA Secretariat services contact:

Kevin Frazell, Director of Member Services  
League of Minnesota Cities  
145 University Avenue West  
St. Paul, MN 55103-2044  
(651) 281-1215 • Fax: (651) 281-1296  
kfrazell@lmc.org

You can also contact Rebecca Erickson,  
Administrative Assistant  
(rerickso@lmc.org), or Jim Miller,  
Executive Director (jmill@lmc.org).

All can be reached at (651) 281-1200.

## Plan to attend the Annual Conference

*By Erin Storwa and Melinda Coleman,  
Conference Planning Committee Co-Chairs*

This year's annual check-up is not to be missed!

It is spring (well at least the calendar tells us so), and that means the MCMA Annual Conference is near! This year's committee has planned a very insightful conference that is assured to tune up your management "mojo." Plan to join us May 4-6 at the Grand View Lodge in Nisswa.

New this year is an optional pre-conference ICMA workshop (additional \$99 fee) from "Dr." Craig Rapp entitled Building Effective Council-Staff Relationships: Understanding, Establishing & Maintaining the Proper Roles & Responsibilities. Other "specialists" include Dr. Edward Creagan, Dr. Richard Swenson and team Drs. Mitchell Kusy and Elizabeth Holloway. Thursday evening's keynote will be a special consult by "Dr." Dave Childs, returning to his roots.

If you haven't already registered, be sure to be sure to [register now](#) on the GTS website.

We hope to see you there! ○

## Grand View here we stay?

*By Kevin Frazell*

Unbelievably, 2011 will be our fourth year at Grand View Lodge in Nisswa for our annual conference, and our current agreement expires with the May 2012 event. The MCMA by-laws stipulate that the executive Board will cause a review of the site of the annual conference to be done at least every five years. The Board concluded that member evaluations of Grand View have been very positive, so that rather than going through a RFP process, they would simply ask Grand View for a proposal to continuing hosting for an additional five years from 2013-17.

The Grand View response was no increase in rates between 2011 and 2012, then 2 percent annually thereafter. The Board concluded that this is a very favorable rate, and voted tentatively to accept the offer. The issue will be included on the annual meeting agenda so members can have an opportunity to weigh in with any concerns or issues before a final contract is signed. ○

## MCMA Mid-Winter Conference a success

*By Phil Kern, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President*

MCMA hosted its annual Mid-Winter Conference Feb. 4-5 at Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria. Members from all parts of our great state gathered to talk about civic engagement and motivational factors in today's workplace.

Friday's session was headlined by Sean Kershaw from the Citizens League, along with a panel of MCMA members who shared success stories in civic engagement:

- Jamie Verbrugge presented his experience guiding Brooklyn Park through a community visioning and goal-setting process.
- Melanie Mesko-Lee shared with conference attendees the civic engagement process Hastings employed in the process of reorganizing its public safety structure.
- Joel Peck, City of Crosby, shared a summary of the lessons learned from a collaborative multi-community visioning process.

The session was moderated by Kershaw and presented in a fashion that allowed free-flowing dialogue and discussion amongst conference attendees.

Saturday morning, MCMA Member Greg Withers guided conference attendees through a book-group-style discussion of Daniel Pink's book, *Drive*. Pink argues that the idea that people are motivated only by the hope of gain and the fear of loss is not true; rather, that once basic needs are met, people are motivated most by the ability to grow and develop and to reach their full potential. In small groups, conference attendees discussed questions raised by Pink's argument and contemplated its impact on public sector workplaces. Withers facilitated small groups reporting back to the larger group and leading a broader discussion.

Comments at the conclusion of the conference were positive, and once again the Mid-Winter Conference provided educational content for its members and provided a valuable opportunity for networking. ○

## APMP update

*By Dave Schaps, President, APMP;  
Assistant to the Administrator, Oakdale*

The Association of Public Management Professionals had a busy winter, working closely with both MCMA and the Metropolitan Area Managers Association on a number of topics and projects. For reference, the group provides an excellent professional networking opportunity for those interested in local government management.

In addition, APMP is actively working to develop the connections that will link together the next generation, share information and valuable experiences among its membership, and to introduce talented individuals to the potential of a career in public service.

The group hosts monthly lunch meetings, usually hearing from a speaker or discussing various topics, and often travels to a range of locations in the metro area. APMP also frequently joins with the MAMA group to hear about topics beneficial to both organizations.

Recent meetings have included learning more about the judicial system from the Honorable Senior Judge Jim Morrow, and hosting panels of "Interim Managers" and "Interviewers" to brush up on critical skill sets in the profession. The group is also very pleased to provide funding for two members of APMP to attend the MCMA Annual Conference this May.

In addition, APMP has worked closely with the MCMA Next Generation Committee to promote the profession to local graduate and undergraduate programs, including Minnesota State University—Mankato, and the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs. In meeting with dozens of students at each school, we were able to talk about the profession of local government management and how it makes a difference in the lives of real people in our communities.

Special thanks to Logan Martin of Oakdale, Bart Fischer of Chaska, and Matt Stemwedel of Woodbury for taking time to meet with these students. Also, our thanks to the MCMA Board, who provided a critical role in setting aside funding for promotional materials to explain what city and county managers do, and provide information on what groups exist that students can access if they are interested in pursuing a career in public administration.

As always, if you happen to be interested in joining the group, or know of someone that may benefit from participation, more information can be found by clicking on the "Affiliated Groups" tab and "APMP" on the MCMA website at [www.mncma.org](http://www.mncma.org), or by checking out the APMP Facebook page! ☐

## Update from the Professional Conduct Committee

The Professional Conduct Committee is working to raise awareness among the MCMA membership of the importance of ethics. MCMA has adopted the ICMA Code of Ethics as the association's Code of Ethics.

This means that regardless of your membership status with ICMA, as an MCMA member you are obligated to follow the ICMA Code of Ethics. A copy of the ICMA Code of Ethics is available on the MCMA website ([www.mncma.org](http://www.mncma.org)) on the "About ICMA" tab.

The Committee has been working to enhance information available to our members that includes an Ethics Guide, which we are planning to feature during the MCMA Annual Conference and place on the MCMA website. In addition, we will be providing an "ethics advice" column in the MCMA newsletter with articles, tips, and stories shared by other managers. Watch for these articles and share your thoughts with committee members on issues that should be addressed.

### Professional Conduct Committee:

Phil Kern, Board Liaison  
Susan Arntz, Chair  
Clint Gridley  
Greg Withers ☐

# Next Gen Committee continues strong push to market the profession

*By Bart Fischer, Assistant City Administrator, Chaska; Committee Chair*

The MCMA Next Generation Committee continues to make a strong push in getting the word out about the local government profession.

Recently, members of the Committee and APMP attended two job/career fairs at Minnesota State University, Mankato and the University of Minnesota Humphrey Institute. Representatives talked with a number of students at both events about the profession as a whole as well as mentoring, networking and internship opportunities.

Thanks to the League of MN Cities and their Cities Matter campaign for partnering with us by supplying a number of "giveaways" for students to take home as well as providing booth backdrops. Many students commented on how the backdrops made the MCMA/APMP booth look professional and appealing to visit.

In addition, we have been discussing with the Economic Development Association of MN-Young Professionals Group (EDAM-YP) on how we can partner in these recruitment efforts. We will be attending more of these events in the future and would welcome any participation from MCMA/APMP members.

Two of our Committee Members, Chad Adams and Susan Arntz, have been hard at work putting together a mentor/mentee presentation for the MCMA Annual Conference. Be sure to check it out as it will provide valuable insight and resources for both those looking to be mentored as well as those looking to mentor.

The Committee also recently put together a sub group to begin discussions with Bill Joynes of the Hamline CPAL (Center for Public Administration and Leadership) Program regarding how we can partner on reaching out and networking with the next generation of local government profession-

als at Hamline. As we continue to explore and build this relationship with Hamline-CPAL, we hope to create a successful model for reaching out to other colleges, universities and programs throughout the state.

In addition to working with Bill Joynes and the CPAL Program, all of us (MCMA & APMP Members) have also been invited to be part of the Hamline MPA Pub Administration Club! The MPA Pub Club was started by Hamline students as a way to provide students with an opportunity to socialize, hold discussions, and network with one another and professionals in the public sector. The club is open to everyone—students, alumni, professors, and public administration professionals.

They meet at two locations beginning around 5 p.m.: at O’Gara’s in St. Paul on the 1st & 3rd Fridays of the month; and at Coopers in St. Louis Park on the 2nd & 4th Fridays. They would be excited to have any of us attend and network with them, and I would encourage you to go sometime.

I would like to end by putting forth the challenge that I have given each Next Generation Committee member, which is to visit at least 1 classroom this year in an effort to promote our profession. Whether it is your child’s elementary, middle, or high school or an undergraduate or graduate program/classroom, please help us spread the word on how rewarding a career in public administration can be.

If you have questions, ideas or any other needs regarding the Next Generation Committee, please contact me at (952) 227-7529 or [bfischer@chaskamn.com](mailto:bfischer@chaskamn.com).

I am proud of each and every member of this committee as they have all stepped up to the plate to promote and market our profession to the next generation! ◻

# Recognition and Membership Committee: Manager in Transition support

By Mark McNeill

The MCMA Recognition and Membership Committee has been hard at work exploring ways to provide support to our Manager in Transition (MIT) brethren and sistren.

**Range Riders:** Thanks go to new range riders Bob Thistle and Paul Sparks, who, along with veteran range rider Bill Bassett, have been ramping up contacts with managers who have recently lost their jobs. They have also responded to “distress calls” from members who just need a friendly ear and a little good advice as they try to avoid becoming the next MIT.

The availability of these three should greatly assist those who in need. Please don’t hesitate to contact them, either through the MIT link (under “membership” on the MCMA website at [www.mncma.org](http://www.mncma.org)) or through Kevin Frazell.

**MIT Manual:** While on the MIT web page, be certain to look at the MIT Manual for valuable tips in dealing with employment difficulties or job loss. Another big thanks to former MIT Dan Donahue for pulling this together.

**Grand View Practice Interviews:** One new option for MITs, and for managers who are relatively fresh to the profession, will be an ability to participate in “mock” job interviews at the Annual Conference. On May 5, this optional experience will give

those who would like to polish their skills an opportunity to meet before an interview panel (made up of friendly MCMA faces), and afterward receive feedback on how they did.

Unfortunately, while the interview panelists will not be able to offer jobs, their feedback may make landing that next one a bit easier to come by. More details will be available at the Annual Conference check-in table.

**Annual Conference Financial Assistance:** One of the concerns that the MCMA Board has heard is the inability of some MITs to attend the Annual Conference at a time when their personal financial situations are somewhat tenuous. In order to encourage MIT attendance at the spring event, the MCMA board has voted this year to make possible a subsidy for lodging expenses. This will be in addition to a continuation of the waived registration fee. Either of these are for MCMA or MACA members who have left their positions since May 2010.

If you want to apply for assistance with lodging cost, please contact MCMA Secretariat Kevin Frazell. ☐

*As always, if you have experience with being “on the beach” as an MIT and wish to offer suggestions, please contact any member of the Recognition and Membership Committee.*

# Memorandum from the edge

*Jon Hohenstein, Community Development Director, Eagan*

I have come to the sobering conclusion that when I end a written sentence with a question mark or a verbal one with the upward inflection meant to orally cue the same thing, with increasing frequency, it is understood by the receiver to mean, "I am done with what I had to say, please feel free to share whatever you would like about whatever topic is on your mind." How else can I explain the non sequiturs that follow the questions I ask? Don't answer that.

Admittedly, when a person asks an open-ended question, a narrative answer is to be expected, perhaps even one that begins with some background or foundational basis. I still labor under the old fashioned notion that ultimately it should relate in some direct way to the topic under investigation, rather than some elliptical and interminable digression.

On the other hand, a closed-end question, in the form of, "Did you do this particular thing?" leaves practically no room for an answer other than yes or no. Uncertainty should only be present in the cases of intoxication or dementia. Otherwise, there is no third option. After yes or no, it is perfectly reasonable for someone to ask, "Would you like to know more about it?" To which I can answer yes or no. By nature, expansion on a subject is an afterward and not a prologue.

So why is this coming up now, you may ask. You would have been better off asking a yes or no question, because I would have been fenced in by my own diatribe. Now I feel justified in telling you why, at some length. Have I taught you nothing?!

It comes up in part as a personal gripe. Despite what you might think from the above, I am interested in what other people have to say. I like it more when they at least have enough of an interest in what I or others have to say to engage a topic and conversation and not simply fill in the occasions of dead air in the room with random thoughts. I have observed some conversa-

tions in which I am convinced that a hamster with the gift of speech could have stayed on point more effectively than some of the participants.

It also comes up in part as an observation about what passes for debate today, which often appears to be chains of rhetorical flourishes without the logic to tie them together or the substance to justify them. Well, rhetorical flourish might be a bit of a stretch. Fanciful curlicue may be a better term.

In the past, this was most evident in presidential debates, in which the format was so contrived and the candidates were drilled so carefully on their talking points that the moderator no sooner asked a question than the audience was treated to a very complete answer to an entirely different question.

Apparently that approach has been more appealing or attractive to some than I took it to be, because it has become increasingly prevalent in news interviews of all kinds. The same canned answer can be delivered with a straight face to a broad range of questions. There also is a ready response to anyone who tries to guide the speaker back to the topic, never mind the original question. That person is biased and is trying to make the interviewee look bad.

I bring this up because a lot of us are growing numb to it. We are coming to accept non-responsiveness as the norm in the public conversation and that is not good. The marketplace of ideas only has value if the shelves are stocked and the providers compete to be good, better, and best. If there is only one aisle and only one product on the shelf, it's time to find another market. Debate, discourse and even disagreement are all a part of making that market work, as long as we're willing to listen, think critically and actually respond to the questions. It's something each of us can choose to do. So, what do you say? Are you with me? Come on—that's a yes or no question! ◻

**Be sure to  
check out  
MCMA's  
web site:**

[www.mncma.org](http://www.mncma.org)