

## President's column

By Dianne Miller, MCMA President, Eagan Assistant City Administrator

You've made it through over one year of a pandemic. Pause and give yourself a pat on the back. You've earned it.

I'm going to use my final president's column to give a special shout-out to the MCMA Board and all of the members that stepped up for our organization during one of the most difficult years we have ever experienced. I am filled with pride when I think about how we collectively came together over the past 12 months to tackle new programs, suggest unique approaches, and make tough decisions. A few silver linings of the year include:

- **The creation of the virtual Member Connect program**

Bringing together colleagues from across the state (many of whom didn't know each other), we shared innovative ideas and enhanced our relationships with one another. We left our comfort zones at times as we met new people and forged new partnerships.

- **The 2021 Winter Conference**

We couldn't be at Surly Brewing sharing stories and experiences. Instead, over 100 MCMA members hopped onto Zoom for an insightful morning of virtual learning and connecting. Not only was the content

fabulous, but the technology went off without as much as a hiccup. High-five to our wizard behind the screen, Madison Hagenau, and her team at the League for having the most seamless transitions to breakout rooms I've ever experienced!

- **The continuous work of our committees and senior advisors**

Each committee leader and our senior advisors kept their mission in front of them and didn't let a pandemic interrupt their efforts.

From education and outreach to professional conduct, and recognition/membership to celebrating women in the profession, each team stepped up and provided value. Our senior advisors couldn't travel from city to city like in years past, but they made plenty of phone calls and became Zoom experts to offer advice and assistance to many in our organization.

- **The formation of an Assistant of the Year Award**

In partnership with the Association of Public Management Professionals (APMP), the Board has begun to create an award that will recognize the professionalism and accomplishments of worthy assistant city and county managers and administrators.

“Life threw us all a curveball this year. Many endured unimaginable losses, but as a profession and an organization, we collectively rose to the occasion, made adjustments, and I'd say hit the ball out of the park!”

# Board meetings recap

By Madison Hagenau, Secretariat Officer

## The MCMA Board met on Feb. 19 and April 16.

Highlights of those meetings were:

- Discussion of plans for a Virtual Annual Business Meeting to take place on May 20.
- Review and approval of proposed fiscal year 2022 budget.
- Interviewed candidate for the position of senior advisor.
- Reviewed conference plans for the 2021 Annual Conference in Duluth.

## Appointments and other professional news

- **Laurie Hokkanen**, administrative services director, Plymouth, has been appointed city manager, Chanhassen.
- **Robert Therres**, public service manager, Blaine, has retired.
- **Tom Johnson**, county administrator, Nobles County, has retired.
- **Sabrina Hille**, city administrator, Maple Lake, has been hired as assistant city administrator, Otsego.

*Do you have a new appointment or other professional news to share?*

*Contact the secretariat at the information listed.*

## Reaching the MCMA secretariat

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### MCMA Officers/Board Members

#### **President:**

Dianne Miller, City of Eagan

#### **First Vice President:**

Laurie Hokkanen, City of Plymouth

#### **Second Vice President:**

Geralyn Barone, City of Minnetonka

#### **Secretary-Treasurer:**

John Mulder, City of Hermantown

#### **Directors:**

Brad Martens, City of Corcoran

Peyton Mastera, City of Dilworth

Jackie Schulze, City of Waconia

Patrick Antonen, City of Circle Pines

Noah Schuchman, City of Duluth

### Ex-Officio Members

#### **Past President:**

Scott Neal, City of Edina

#### **APMP President:**

Jared Voto, Washington County

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**Your Senior Advisors are here to help!**

# APMP UPDATE: book club, Emerging Leader Award & bylaws

*By Jared Voto, APMP President, Washington County Senior Strategic Planner*

In order to connect more in a year when we cannot meet in person, APMP started a book club for our members and friends. The APMP Board selected "A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota" as our inaugural book and we had 21 people participate in four small groups, led by members of the APMP Board. Each group met a few times over four months to discuss the stories in the book, how it might relate to the work we do in local government, and talk about other issues of the day. We received a lot of positive feedback on the book club and plan to continue with another book next fall.

In other news, APMP's annual award will be changing its name to the Emerging Leader Award, from the Assistant of the Year award. The Board feel this better reflects what we look at when we select an award recipient and is more inclusive of the fact that many members do not hold an assistant title. Be on the lookout in the coming months for information on the new award and please nominate your staff that you feel fit the criteria.

Lastly, on April 22, the APMP membership reviewed and approved changes to the APMP bylaws, proposed by the Board. The changes clean up language and ensure the bylaws match the current practices of the organization. The MCMA Board will need to ratify the changes before they go into effect.

With my last update as APMP president, I want to say thank you to the APMP Board, its members, and friends who took part in the activities we hosted during our all-virtual year. It was great to spend time with all of you and I look forward to seeing everyone in person, as soon as that is possible. As always, reach out to me or any of the board members for additional information on these items. ◉

*– Contact Voto at [jared.voto@co.washington.mn.us](mailto:jared.voto@co.washington.mn.us)*

**Be sure to  
check out  
MCMA's  
website:**

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

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## • **Looking forward to Duluth to this fall!**

I have a sneaking suspicion that our 2021 Conference is going to be absolutely phenomenal. On top of a great speaker and program lineup, the thought of all of us being physically together again in one city makes me a tad giddy (and I'm an Insights Blue!). The countdown is on ...

As I wrap up my tenure as the president of the Board, I thank each of you for the opportunity to serve. Life threw us all a curveball this year. Many endured unimaginable losses, but as a profession and an organization, we collectively rose to the occasion, made adjustments, and I'd say hit the ball out of the park!

On my desk is a framed quote that reads, "The only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found a way to serve." Let us continue to inspire and encourage one another as we celebrate our profession and service to our communities. ◉

*– Contact Miller at [dmiller@cityofeagan.com](mailto:dmiller@cityofeagan.com)*

# Yes, ethics still matter – running for political office

By Bruce Messelt, MCMA Professional Conduct Committee Chair, Sherburne County Administrator

Tenet 7 of the ICMA/MCMA Code of Ethics reads: Refrain from all political activities which undermine public confidence in professional administrators.

Further, ICMA's Tenet 7 guideline regarding running for office specifically states: Members shall not run for elected office or become involved in political activities related to running for elected office, or accept appointment to an elected office. They shall not seek political endorsements, financial contributions or engage in other campaign activities.

In 2020, MCMA learned that a member actively employed by one local jurisdiction was running for elected office in another jurisdiction. While the elected office being sought was both nonpartisan and associated with a different form of government, this action still represented a clear violation of Tenet 7 of the ICMA/MCMA Code of Ethics.

These types of ethical lapses are taken quite seriously by ICMA and MCMA. As recently as December 2020, ICMA has taken such actions as public censure, revocation of membership, and barring for life the future membership of individuals found to have violated this aspect of Tenet 7. In other instances, private censure or another form of action is taken to address less grievous violations.

In this instance, as MCMA had sole jurisdiction, the member acknowledged the violation, indicated a preference for pursuing political opportunities over a career in professional administration, and immediately resigned from MCMA. This notwithstanding, pursuant to the Association's constitution and bylaws and at the recommendation of the Professional Conduct Committee, the Executive Board issued a private censure to the former member. In addition, the Executive Board elected to prohibit any future reinstatement of the respondent's membership in MCMA.

At times, we members hear of alleged ethical lapses or violations committed by our peers, but often do not learn of the outcome. Out of respect for the rights of all parties involved, the ICMA and MCMA process utilized for investigating and acting on such allegations is conducted in private, with only the most egregious violations of our Code of Ethics resulting in public censure and disbarment.

Even while needing to balance these two oft-competing objectives of respect of rights and privacy against transparency and detailed sharing of information, our associations' commitment to our Code of Ethics remains paramount. The process does work. And, due to the nature of this most recent example of upholding Tenet 7, we wanted to share this specific example with all members. ◻

– Contact Messelt at [bruce.messelt@co.sherburne.mn.us](mailto:bruce.messelt@co.sherburne.mn.us)

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