

## The President's Column

### Taking the Show on the Road: Expanding MCMA Connections Across Minnesota

*By: Jackie Schulze, MCMA President, Waconia Assistant City Administrator*

This time last year, the MCMA Board of Directors was finalizing a new strategic plan under the leadership of Past-President Peyton Mastera. As I stepped into the presidency, I felt fortunate to have such a clear roadmap to guide our priorities. One year into this multi-year plan, I'm proud of the board's progress — we've already completed several key initiatives and built meaningful momentum on others.

One of the board's top priorities has been strengthening member engagement across the entire state. Historically, MCMA board meetings have been held at the city halls of board members. While this approach has served us well, it also limited opportunities to connect more broadly with members in different regions, especially since the current make-up of our board is very metro-based.

This year, we set out to change that by quite literally "taking the show on the road."

In February, Alexandria hosted our first regional board meeting under this new initiative. We invited MCMA members from the surrounding area to attend the meeting, share their perspectives, and join us for lunch afterward. It was a great opportunity to hear directly from members about the unique challenges and opportunities facing their communities. We also appreciated Alexandria City Administrator Marty Schultz, who kicked off the meeting by sharing valuable regional insights and setting the stage for a thoughtful

and engaging discussion.

The response has been incredibly encouraging. After sharing this effort on LinkedIn, we heard from several managers across the state — including northeastern and central Minnesota — who expressed interest in hosting future meetings. While I'm personally disappointed that my remaining time on the board won't allow me to visit all these locations, I am excited to see this initiative continue to grow. I know that current board members are eager to carry this forward and explore even more regions.

Next up, we'll be heading to the Mankato area for our fall board meeting in September, continuing our commitment to connecting with members where they are.

At its core, this initiative is about more than just changing meeting locations — it's about strengthening relationships with all of our members. By engaging with members across Minnesota, we are expanding our network, gaining a deeper understanding of regional perspectives, and fostering a stronger sense of community within MCMA. These connections not only enhance the value of the organization but also support each of us in our roles as local government leaders.

We look forward to continuing this journey and hope to see many of you at a future "on the road" meeting. ◻

– Contact Schulze at [jschulze@waconiamn.gov](mailto:jschulze@waconiamn.gov)

## Appointments and Other Professional News

- **Anthony Martens**, city administrator, New Richland, has been appointed city administrator, Blooming Prairie.
- **Jennifer Nash**, city administrator, Hanover, has been appointed city administrator, St. Augusta.
- **Aurora Yager**, deputy city manager, Wayzata, has been appointed city manager, Wayzata.

*Do you have a new appointment or other professional news to share?  
Contact the secretariat at the information listed.*

## MCMA Board Meeting Recap

*By: Madison Hagenau, MCMA Secretariat*

The MCMA Board met on Feb. 20 in Alexandria and March 27 in Chanhassen. During these meetings, the board:

- Discussed the proposed MCMA Dues Structure
- Debriefed the 2026 MCMA Winter Workshop
- Discussed plans for the 2026 MCMA Annual Conference
- Considered updated ICMA Regional Nominating Committee Agreement
- Finalized Mentorship Program format and structure

### Reaching the MCMA secretariat

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## MCMA Newsletter

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**Your senior advisors are here to help!**

### MCMA Apparel Store Now Open!

**Check out the new MCMA apparel store and order your branded apparel today!**

# ICMA Training for Minnesota Members

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is offering two in-person training courses exclusively for Minnesota ICMA members. These courses are designed to equip local government professionals with the tools to confidently navigate conflict and communicate effectively during times of crisis. Space is limited, so early registration is encouraged!

## **De-Escalation Strategies for Public Employees: Supporting Residents During Conflict, Stress, and Crisis**

**May 20, 2026**

**1 - 4 p.m.**

**League of Minnesota Cities | St. Paul, MN**

Local government staff are often the first point of contact for residents facing frustration, confusion, or crisis. This interactive workshop equips participants with practical, real-world tools to manage difficult interactions safely and effectively. Cost to attend is \$100 for ICMA members.

**[Register here!](#)**

## **Strategic Crisis Communications for Local Government Managers**

**May 21, 2026**

**8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**League of Minnesota Cities | St. Paul, MN**

Effective communication during a crisis builds trust, protects reputations, and shapes outcomes. This full-day training, provided by Julie Parker Communications, prepares local government leaders to confidently manage communications during high-risk, politically sensitive situations. Cost to attend is \$175 for ICMA members. **🕒**

**[Register here!](#)**

**Be sure to  
check out  
MCMA's  
website:  
[mncma.org](http://mncma.org)**

## **MCMA Mentorship Program**

MCMA has launched a new mentorship program to strengthen connections across the profession and support the next generation of local government leaders. As part of MCMA's ongoing commitment to professional development, the program pairs members in meaningful, year-long one-on-one connections — creating opportunities to share experiences, grow networks, and support each other's development. **🕒**

Mentorship benefits both mentors and mentees, fostering learning, collaboration, and lasting professional relationships. **[Visit the MCMA website to learn more and apply to participate as a mentor or mentee!](#)**

## **STAY CONNECTED** with MCMA beyond the newsletter!

Follow our LinkedIn page for the latest updates, highlights, insights, and upcoming events. It's the easiest way to see what's happening across the MCMA community — and to join the conversation.

**[Follow MCMA on LinkedIn and stay in the loop!](#)** **🕒**

# Been There, Done That!

## *Unsolicited Advice from Your Senior Advisors*

### Words of Wisdom

By: Dave Osberg, MCMA Senior Advisor

Over 20 years ago, there was a group of colleagues sitting together at the MCMA conference at Cragun's, talking about how to achieve success and long tenure in our careers. We collectively started writing down those skills on a notepad then provided by Cragun's. (I still have the original document!) It wasn't too deep but we did get on a roll and had some fun with it, all while agreeing none of us can claim to practice them all the time. Yet, attempts to keep them in front of us on a daily basis could be a path to success.

Let me offer you a few of those words of wisdom from that night over 20 years ago and a few additional ones that have come to the forefront since.

#### **HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE**

Many of us can agree that having a positive attitude can be contagious in the workplace and in our personal lives. As a leader in the organization, it can be your responsibility to bring that to the work place each day. You can choose your attitude when you walk into your office each day, and be assured, your employees know the type of mood you carry during the day.

Furthermore, during the course of conversations and interactions with others, we all prefer to be around people who bring positive energy. There is often nothing more draining than listening to someone belabor their latest misery. I recall a meeting several years ago when someone walked in late, banged the chair, complained about their hectic day, and made a general commotion. The leader said something to the effect, "And as a result, we should all have to suffer?" Don't make others suffer; be a positive force in your organization.

#### **DON'T BURN A BRIDGE**

This advice was shared many years ago, and to this day remains one of my all-time favorites, yet it can be one of the hardest to practice. In the spring of 1980 then Eagan City Administrator Tom Hedges told a smart aleck intern who was finally moving on to his first city administrator position: "no matter the circumstances, never burn a bridge!"

That advice still holds true today. One may have a match in your hand, and you may want to throw it at the miserable person. In today's world that may be a text, email, or voicemail you want to send, but don't! You never know when that person may run for office or otherwise come back into your life, and that bridge you burned may come back to haunt you. Don't do it!

#### **DON'T BE ANNOYING**

This one may seem obvious, however, it was a unanimous selection by our group that night at Cragun's. Many of us are blind to annoyances we practice ourselves or that we witness on a frequent basis. Years ago, after an exercise at the annual conference, participants in a group exercise were critiqued after the session by an overzealous colleague. It was simply a lighthearted exercise, attempting to address the difficult issue of ethics. The overzealous colleague was unnecessarily critical and failed to read the room and thus we all agreed annoying.

*Been There, Done That! continued on page 5*

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website:  
mncma.org**

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We also agreed that night years ago that sometimes we all talk too much. Furthermore, what might be worse than dominating the conversation is a tendency to talk about ourselves just a little too much. Be alert to your audience, their awareness and interest in your topics. It may also be helpful to avoid the habit of thinking we must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Sometimes it's OK to sit one out. If we do feel the need to comment more often than necessary, we should also seek to find the path that gets to the point. (My wife thanked me for putting this one in :))

While those are just a few of the 16 points we came up with that night nearly 20 years ago, there are two more that have come to the forefront in the last several years that are worthy of consideration.

### **BIG SHOES TO FILL**

When someone is heading into a new job, it is already hard enough with all they are expected to learn. Don't make it any harder on them by telling them, "You have big shoes to fill!" They are likely fully aware of that responsibility and don't need a reminder. Don't try to fill someone else's "big shoes." Upon taking a new job, if someone tells you, "You have big shoes to fill," kindly tell that person, "I don't intend to fill anyone else's shoes, I plan to wear my own." Then, go on to do great things...in your own shoes!

### **"DIDN'T YOU USED TO BE SOMEBODY?"**

While this saying may resonate with those approaching or in retirement, there is an undercurrent that may be worth reflecting on to be certain you do not let your job define you while still working. Be assured you are somebody while you are working as a local government executive and you will forever be "somebody" upon retirement. Don't let the position or title define you, as we are not quite as important as we think we are. Use that vacation time and spend time with your family; the organization can get along without you for a while, and as we all know, for good or bad, we are never far away from a phone call, text, or email. If we hire good people and teach them well, they will do good work while we are away.

One may also notice upon retirement that there are those once associated with you who may not be quite as interested in you once the title is gone. For many of those folks, you may be relieved. For others, you may be disappointed by the abandonment of that relationship. Your legacy carries on longer more because of who you are, not what you did, so those friendships and relationships most important to you will continue to strengthen once the title is gone.

When you do retire, be assured you do not become a "nobody." You become free. You become a different person. Do not dwell on whatever image, identity, or legacy you may have once had while in the office. That will always remain. Focus now on what you are becoming and embrace it.

In closing, one of the best pieces of advice I can provide to all of you — regardless of what stage of life and work you are in — comes through my daughter Sarah. She shared with me a poem and brief narrative about things she may have learned during my career. It was extremely touching at the time, and is still sound advice for all of us:

"I learned at times to listen more than I talk, build bridges and seek opportunities to compromise, and show up for people in all seasons of their life." ◉

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