

April 2021 eNews

Mester's Message



113 years; it was 113 years ago, on April 2, 1908, that the nation's first Council-Manager form of government was enacted in Staunton Virginia. 9 years; it was nine years ago, on February 29, 2012 that the Virginia General Assembly designated the first week of April, in recognition of the 1908 act and the work of local governments, as Local Government Education Week. 1 year; after this past year of the health and racial injustice

pandemics it is critical to restore trust and active involvement in local government. Our focus on local government education during this month, as well as throughout the year, will allow us to restore and further our democratic experiment as well as enhance the delivery of local government services. We need to continually foster understanding and participation in this profession starting from K-12 education all the way to our emerging leaders!

So, during April 2021 let's continue focusing on the VLGMA framework of **L** for delivering strong community-based and collaborative **Leadership** and **M** for enhancing our **Management** capabilities within our Council-Manager structure. In connecting the Council-Manager form of government as well as the important local government education week to our Code of Ethics there are four relevant tenets to ponder this month:

Tenet 1. We believe professional management is essential to efficient and democratic local government by elected officials.

Tenet 5. Submit policy proposals to elected officials; provide them with facts, and technical and professional advice about policy options; and collaborate with them in setting goals for the community and organization.

Tenet 6. Recognize that elected representatives are accountable to their community for the decisions they make; members are responsible for implementing those decisions.

Tenet 9. Keep the community informed on local government affairs; encourage communication between the citizens and all local government officers; emphasize friendly and courteous service to the public; and seek to improve the quality and image of public service.

Given relevancy to today's society and community challenges let's continue to connect these tenets to the Declaration of Ideals (adopted in the early 1980s, <https://icma.org/declaration-ideals>). Of the eleven ideals four are aligned with the above tenets:

Ideal 1. Provide an environment that ensures the continued existence and effectiveness of representative local government and promotes the understanding that democracy confers privileges and responsibilities on each citizen.

Ideal 7. Develop a responsive, dynamic local government organization that continuously assesses its purpose and seeks the most effective techniques and technologies for serving the community.

Ideal 8. Affirm the intrinsic value of public service and create an environment that inspires excellence in management and fosters the professional and personal development of all employees.

To translate these tenets and ideals into the intersection of our professional and personal roles can you answer "yes" to these questions even when hard to balance the day to day work requirements and pandemic mitigation responsibilities? Consider:

1. Do you strategically engage with your governing body to develop a collaborative work plan that executes their vision and policy goals as well as aligns with your professional recommendations and staff resources?
2. Do you actively partner with your K-12 school district to integrate local government roles into the curriculum?
3. Do you actively participate in undergraduate and graduate curriculums as guest presenter, practicum instructor and/or mentor?
4. Do you encourage your employees to share, with the community, their roles in local government and the value of community building? Do you support your employee's time and energy to supervise interns?

5. Do you and your staff participate in community organization speaker bureaus?
6. Do you engage youth in the development of policies and programs? Is your outreach to all youth to include underserved, socio-economically disadvantaged and represents all races, ethnic, income and geographic areas?

Turning questions into Action, here are some great ideas:

1. Consider adopting a Local Government Education Week Proclamation and executing activities (template: <https://www.vlgma.org/civic-engagement>);
2. Encourage staff from various service functions (i.e. police, public works, human services, finance, administration, governing body) to participate in high school career days highlighting Council-Manager form of government;
3. Share your expertise and passion by being a guest presenter, describing your role in relation to the governing body's role, at ICMA university student chapter meetings as well as the VT Local Government Management Certificate courses;
4. Forge a partnership with the 7th grade civics teachers for an annual "What I Do" in local government presentation as well as encourage activities like VML's "If I Were the Mayor" contest;
5. Provide link and copies of the ICMA "Today I Made a Difference" coloring book on local government services (https://icma.org/sites/default/files/ICMA%20Coloring%20Book-Today%20I%20Made%20a%20Difference_05-2020.pdf);
6. Submit guest articles to local newspaper such as the recent one in Falls Church News Press entitled "The Influence of Women Is Evident Through Falls Church" which highlighted numerous local government careers as well as governing body, non-profit and civic groups roles (<https://fcnp.com/category/c16-local-commentary/>);
7. Collaborate with a civic group to provide youth members to serve on your locality's boards and commissions such as the Falls Church Citizens for a Better City's Youth Initiative started in 2014 ([Home | fallschurchebc](#) or [Home | youthrepsinitiative](#)); and
8. Consider developing a service-learning experience such as GIVE Day ("Get Involved, Value Everyone") coordinated by a PTA and 5th grade student ambassadors ([summary video found here](#) or full video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=3pcQlfU7ivM>).

Please join me in welcoming our newest VLGMA members: Angela Hill, Montgomery Assistant County Administrator; Rachael Brinson, Remington Town Clerk/Deputy Treasurer; and Phillip Haddad, Massanutten Property Owners Association Activities Director.

I am looking forward to a great informative, educational and networking opportunity at the April virtual DAO meeting, hosted by Powhatan County, with a relevant agenda focusing on "Economic Development in a Post Pandemic Environment". Well timed as our communities move from mitigation and rescue to recover and resiliency. I hope to "see" you on April 16th!

Stay safe, healthy and remain strong, Cindy

[Contact Cindy Mester](#)

Mashaw Outstanding Assistant Award



Nominations are officially open for the FY 2020-2021 Marcia Mashaw Outstanding Assistant Award. The deadline for submissions is May 2.

An email with a nominations form was recently sent to all VLGMA-member administrators and managers.

The Mashaw Outstanding Assistant Award recognizes a deputy or assistant manager or deputy or assistant administrator who has demonstrated outstanding performance, particularly with a special project or during a period of unique conditions and circumstances.

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VLGMA Nominations Now Open



Nominations are now open for election to the Executive Committee and the Secretary of the Executive Board of VLGMA. The election of new officers will occur at our Summer 2021 meeting.

As Past President my last obligation is to fill a slate of nominations for the Executive Board and the Executive Committee. Fortunately I have the help of a great committee appointed by President Mester.

We are now accepting nominations for six people to fill two year terms on the Executive Committee. These terms will expire June 30, 2023. The Committee also seeks nominations for the position of Secretary for the Executive Board. The Secretary is the entry point to the Board and is on track to eventually become President of VLGMA.

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April Virtual DAO Meeting



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN A POST PANDEMIC ENVIRONMENT

Hosted by Powhatan County, Bret Schardein, Assistant County Administrator

Powhatan County is excited to host the 2021 Spring DAO **virtual** meeting on Friday April 16th, 2021 from 9AM to 1PM. The theme for the meeting is *Economic Development in a Post Pandemic Environment*. Liz Povar of the Riverlink Group will lead our panels through discussions exploring the opportunities and challenges for local government economic development as the world continues to transition beyond the peak pandemic environment.

[More info](#)

[Online registration](#)

[Contact Bret Schardein](#)

Local Government Education Week



Local Government Education Week is officially here! Each year the first week in April is designated as Local Government Education Week in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This year continues that tradition. During this week I encourage all of you to make an extra effort to reach out to your community to see if you can get in front of various groups. We are all ambassadors of our profession, and this week is a great time to get in front of citizens to make sure they are aware of the wonderful things that we do in local government. Although it may be difficult to be involved in our traditional ways, we can all come up with creative ways to

help spread the word about all the good things that Local Government does for our communities.

As a public acknowledgement of Local Government Education Week, I encourage you all to have your Governing Bodies adopt a resolution proclaiming the first week in April as Local Government Education Week. You can download a sample resolution and get a ton of information and ideas of projects and initiatives from the civic education portion of the VLGMA website <https://www.vlgma.org/civic-engagement>.

Now get out there, socially distanced of course, and spread the good word about local government in Virginia!

[Contact Michael Stallings](#)

Focus on the Future – A Look at VLGMA’s Strategic Plan



Focus on the Future – A Look at VLGMA’s Strategic Plan

By Craig Meadows, VLGMA President-Elect

Spring time in Virginia ... is there a prettier place to be this time of year than in our wonderful state? The sky is bright blue, flowers are beginning to bloom, the trees are budding, and, if you are like me, your eyes and nose begin to itch, and your car takes on a yellowish hue from the pollen! Allergies aside, spring is a great time of year to begin to think about renewal, and how we can foster growth in our organizations and relationships.

For the past several months, I have shared with you the six strategic areas of VLGMA’s Strategic Plan, and discussed why those six areas are critical to our growth as a professional organization serving our membership. Just as a reminder, those six strategic areas are –

- 1) Communications and Networking;
- 2) Next Generation of the Profession;
- 3) Civic Engagement;
- 4) Membership Growth and Support;
- 5) Professional Development; and
- 6) Leadership and Ethics

[Contact Craig Meadows](#)

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Community Conversations



“Telling the Full Story”

Co-authored by Timothy Baroody, City Manager, and Angela Freeman, formerly the City Diversity, Equity and Economic Advancement Officer

The City of Fredericksburg is committed to a more self-aware lens, with greater intention and attention to equity and inclusivity as we strive to reach our vision of success and creating an organization reflective of and attentive to the communities we serve today and tomorrow.

Through a fair and just public policy, we have emphasized the importance of proactive attention to address unintentional bias and any form of discrimination in all areas of our government and community. Our efforts are inclusive of developing and promoting programs and initiatives to provide education and resources to our teams in the areas of service delivery and community well-being. The following provides historical context and represents the origins of our city's racial equity initiatives and how our teams are working together to be our best selves for those we serve.

To discuss this concept further or ask questions contact City Manager's Office PIO, Sonja Cantu (spcantu@fredericksburgva.gov)

Have a topic for a future Community Conversations article to suggest?; please contact Cindy Mester (cmester@fallschurchva.gov)

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A DAO in the Life



A DAO in the Life

Stephen M. Willoughby, Director of Richmond Department of Emergency Communications

Public safety doesn't "shut down." Citizens need help every minute of every day, and Richmond's public safety staff must be there to answer and respond to their calls for help, COVID-19 or not.

Throughout this yearlong pandemic, my focus and challenge has been on how we can help to keep everyone safe while continuing to provide essential public safety services. Everyone includes citizens, other first responders and our staff – the "first of the first responders" at the Richmond Department of Emergency Communications, who answer and dispatch 911 and non-emergency calls for the City of Richmond and provide and maintain public safety infrastructures for the city.

[Contact Stephen Willoughby](#)

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Civic Engagement - Town of Crewe



Civic Engagement During Natural Disasters and Extreme Weather Events

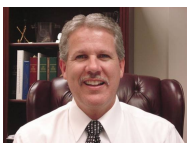
By Brian Thrower, Town Manager, Town of Crewe

Back in mid-February central/southside Virginia experienced a horrific ice storm that left some individuals without power for weeks. Nottoway County felt the aftermath of that storm particularly hard. Trees, limbs, and other debris scattered our streets, alleyways, yards, and driveways after the storm and still do today. Nottoway County and the Town of Crewe are slowly cleaning up the storm debris two months after the disaster.

[Contact Brian Thrower](#)

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Poquoson Assistant City Manager Dies from COVID-19



Graham Wilson, Poquoson Assistant City Manager Dies of COVID

"The 91st District has suffered a great loss today. Poquoson Assistant City Manager and former Poquoson Commissioner of the Revenue lost his courageous battle with COVID-19," Del. Martha Mugler wrote on Facebook.

"Graham always greeted you with his infectious smile and was well known for his quick wit," Mugler wrote. "Even from his hospital bed with very little strength he would give (text) hilarious accounts of his experiences there in the care of others."

*From www.dailypress.com

<https://www.claytorrollins.com/obituary/Graham-Wilson>

Institute of Government Update



You will be receiving FY22 VIG membership renewal information from us later this month. There are no changes to the dues' structure for this upcoming fiscal year. We hope that you find the services and training we provide helpful to your organization and community. We are always willing to consider new and different ways to serve you. If your locality has not been a VIG member recently, we look forward to identifying a pathway to membership. Thank you for your continued support of VIG.

We are excited to announce our new partnership with the Virginia Government Finance Officers Association (VGFOA). VIG will be providing continuing professional education programs (CPE) to the VGFOA membership. We look forward to serving local government finance professionals from around the Commonwealth.

[Contact Charles Hartgrove](#)

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Certificate News

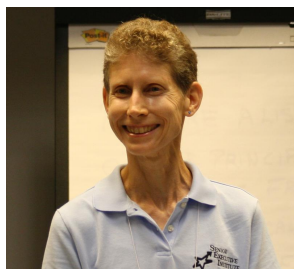


The Local Government Certificate Program is in the midst of a rigorous semester. We are gearing up for the Summer semester and continuing our recruitment efforts and answering questions about the Local Government Certificate Program through a virtual webinar led by Dr. Stephanie Davis. The **Summer application deadline is May 1, 2021** with a \$25 application fee and students who work for local governments can apply for the Bob Stripling Scholarship program (more details below) for tuition assistance. For more information, please find our spring session below:

- **Thursday, April 15, 2021: 12pm-1pm**
Zoom: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/83551852911>

[Contact Stephanie Davis](#)

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Cat Chat

This poem, O Cat, to you endowed
for you are the bono fide cat's meow,
for as your sense of status goes,
all other creatures are far below.

What high standards of cleanliness you demand.
Every part of you gets CAT scanned.
Constantly grooming your physique,
preserving the perfect, feline mystique.

With you nested on my lap,
together we take a gentle cat nap.
Petting you, my fingers roam,
I become a cat a comb.

The embodiment of a cat alytic converter,
reducing tension with every murmur,
soothing music when you purr,

You sit so contentedly and survey
all the activity of the day.
It takes a dog to make you bolt
as if released by a cat apult.

I can cat call till I'm blue
but to your own self, you are true.
It is only when you want to cat sup
that I can, with you, catch up.

Watching you entertains me all day,
for you love to pounce, prowl and play.
But birds and mice might not agree,
considering you a cat astrophe.

The aroma of cat nip you never miss,
favorite source of cat harsis.
Despite all cat a clysm, you survive.
After all, you have how many lives?

Some people intuitively relate,
dog or cat? – the big debate.
Now cats to some seem almost diabolic
but never to a cat a holic.

This poem, you get the gist?
Cat is the inspired catalyist.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)



Position Changes And Other Events

March 2021

- Portsmouth appoints Angel Jones as city manager effective April 12.
- Wayne Strickland, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission Director, has announced his retirement effective June 30 after 42 years of service.
- Kris Tierney, Frederick County administrator since 2017, has announced his retirement effective July 1. He has served the county in various leadership roles since 1988 including zoning administrator, deputy planning director, and deputy county administrator.
- Graham Wilson, Poquoson assistant city manager since 2017, passed away on March 10 due to complications from COVID-19. He previously served as the Poquoson commissioner of the revenue for 18 years and also served as the chief deputy commissioner of the revenue for Hampton.
- Jane Bennett, Pound town manager, has resigned from her position effective March 10.

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