

December 2020 eNews

Mester's Message



Yes we are at the end of 2020 and what a year it has been. Yes, challenging times but VLGMA local government professionals have prevailed and more than survived...moved forward in support of our communities! This month I am taking a break from the monthly focus on specific Code of Ethic Tenets but only to celebrate you and your commitment the core values of our profession. This is consistent with the VLGMA framework of V= leading with our **Vision, Values**. As members of ICMA and VLGMA we dedicate ourselves to the

“faithful stewardship of the public trust and embrace a shared ideal of management excellence” and “to achieve equity and social justice, to affirm human dignity, and to improve the quality of life for individuals and community” (Declaration of Ideals, 1980s). These ideals are embedded in VLGMA’s Vision as well as our Purpose.

Vision

Supporting local government managers building great communities through inclusion, innovation and leadership.

Purpose

The primary goal of the association is to strengthen the quality of local government through professional management. The association seeks to promote professional management in a variety of ways including training, networking, and resource sharing.

It is edifying that we can build up our community and not down by our words and actions (*Silver Boxes- The Gift of Encouragement, Florence Littauer, page ix*).

I continued to be impressed and appreciative of the various ways VLMGA members are answering the need for quality public service. I am also grateful to not be alone on this journey and appreciative the encouragement I have received along the way. I hope in my small way, in serving VLGMA this year, I pass on this encouragement to others.

A little word in kindness spoken,
A motion or a tear,
Has often healed the heart that’s broken,
And made a friend sincere.

Then deem it not an idle think
A pleasant word to speak;
The face you wear__ the thoughts you bring__
The heart you may heal or break.

From “A Little Word” by Daniel Clement Colesworthy as shared in the book Silver Boxes- The Gift of Encouragement, Florence Littauer (page 109)

So together we end 2020 and start a Joyous 2021 New Year with equity and stewardship of the public’s trust. This message is sampling of language diversity, via online translations, to get us focused to putting words into action.

2021 Joyous New Year!

¡Feliz Año Nuevo! năm mới vui vẻ سنة جديدة سعيدة

Joyeuse nouvelle année Vreugdevolle Nuwe Jaar Χαρούμενη Πρωτοχρονιά
Joyous Neujahr □□□□ □■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ Capodanno gioioso

שנה שמחה □□□□□ Joyous Bliain Nua □□□ □□ Koa Tau Hōu

Radosny Nowy Rok Веселый Новый год سال نو شاد مریخا wa furaha

Ulihelisidi Atse Udetiyvsgv Ваа Hózhǫǫgo Nee Nínáadoohah

[From 2020 New Year to](#)

Stay safe, healthy and remain strong, Cindy

[Contact Cindy Mester](#)

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

As we enter into the last month of 2020 (and, I think I speak for nearly all of us when I say that we are SO ready to say goodbye to this year...), we are all looking forward to the brighter days ahead that await us in 2021. As your professional support and development organization, VLGMA is looking forward to the future as well, and how we can utilize our strategic plan to guide us to greater service in the new year.

The VLGMA Strategic Plan contains six strategic focus areas; I reviewed the first two (Communications & Networking, and Next Generation of the Profession) in my previous articles. The third strategic focus area – Civic Engagement – is included in the plan to guide us in developing a civic engagement program or resources. In facilitating this goal, the VLGMA plan outlines seven action steps that our leadership should follow –

[Contact Craig Meadows](#)

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Community Conversations



Community Conversations

Mercury Payton, Town Manager, Vienna

Vienna scores solid community engagement ‘hit’ with ‘On Deck with Mercury’ program

The Town of Vienna has developed a community engagement program that has served us well through the past nine months as covid cases in the region have waxed and waned – and waxed again. The idea for the program, though, pre-dates the pandemic.

Early in 2020, in response to community feedback on a couple of hot-button topics – residents felt that either they were not made aware of the Town’s intentions or that they hadn’t had sufficient opportunity to address the topics – I developed, along with my leadership team, a concept for a casual monthly conversation at which Town accomplishments and plans could be shared and residents could be heard. We call the community engagement program On Deck with Mercury (in part because I’m a huge baseball fan).

To discuss this concept further or ask questions contact Mercury (Manager@viennava.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

Leslie Beauregard, Staunton Assistant City Manager

If 2020 has taught us anything it’s that we all need to take deep breaths and find our meditative space, probably much more often than usual. Stay in that space and let’s talk about a topic that everyone related to this year: the election. The fact is that no matter your political viewpoint, we all found ourselves stressed out and anxious about the election, the building up to it and certainly what has occurred post-election. At the same time that we were managing our own emotions and feelings, we had to support and help manage a process to carry out the most challenging election in recent memory amid a health pandemic!

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Civic Engagement - Civic Engagement Survey



Civic Engagement Survey

It is time for you to tell us all the great things you are doing to engage with your citizens. The Civic Engagement Committee is conducting a survey of all the great civic engagement activities that are going on across the Commonwealth. Please take time to complete this survey as it will help us tell the story of all the creative ways that we are reaching out and engaging with our communities.

[Contact Michael Stallings](#)

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ICMA call for candidate nominations for the Executive Board



The following is published on behalf of VLGMA President Cindy Mester.

ICMA call for candidate nominations for the Executive Board

On October 8th, ICMA sent an email to all members for a nomination call for Regional Vice-Presidents to serve on the ICMA Executive Board. Nominations will open on November 3, 2020 for the 2021 election year. Deadline to submit your interest is January 8, 2021. This is an important leadership opportunity to serve ICMA, the Southeast Region, and the local government management profession. This opening is for the designated non-Chief Administrative Officer year in ICMA's Southeast

region. As VLGMA's President I am honored to serve on the ICMA 2021 nominating committee.

Eligibility and the selection process for this position are governed by the ICMA Constitution and the **ICMA Southeast Regional Nominating Committee Process for Identification and Selection of Nominees for ICMA Vice-President** [[https://icma.org/articles/article/have-you-considered-serving-icma-executive-board.](https://icma.org/articles/article/have-you-considered-serving-icma-executive-board)]

According to the region's geographical rotation protocol, the position for an Executive Board Vice President, serving a three-year term, is open to a non-Chief Administrative Officer (non-CAO) serving in an appointed position to a local government. Because Virginia (*thank you Laura!*), Georgia, and Kentucky currently have representation on the Executive Board, candidates from those states will only be eligible if no other qualified candidates are identified. ICMA notes this does not preclude a qualified individual from these states from applying for this year's process but could impact their ability to be selected if states without current/recent representation on the Board put forth qualified candidate(s) for consideration. I encourage you to consider submitting your candidacy for 2021 consideration.

As a heads up, the 2023 elections will be a nominations call that is open to any ICMA member (CAO and non-CAO) for which Virginia will again be eligible.

Institute of Government Update



Thank you for those of you who actively participate in AskVIG listserv. We have seen an increase in inquiries from member local governments during the last month. Here are examples of recent topics:

1. Many communities in Virginia have streets named for prominent Civil War era Virginians, battlefields, etc. Please share your locality's policy or criteria regarding changing street names.

[Contact Charles Hartgrove](#)

[Read More](#)

Certificate News

The Local Government Certificate Program is winding down the fall semester and preparing for Spring enrollment. To increase enrollment for the Spring Semester, we are continuing our recruitment efforts and answering questions about the Local Government Certificate Program through a virtual webinar led by Dr. Stephanie Davis. The Spring application deadline is January 1, 2021 with a \$25 application fee and students who work for local governments can apply for the Bob Stripling

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Tedd's Take



Signing Off

I've notified VLGMA President, Cindy Mester that I will be discontinuing Tedd's Take with this December message. It is simply time to put a bow on it after some 125+ "Takes" starting in July 2010. Retirement makes it a bit tougher to remain current and relevant, challenging me to identify topics of interest to the general membership. Simply put, it's best to know when to fold 'em.

Contact [Tedd Povar](#)

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Mel's Poetry Corner



Christmas Mouse

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
not a creature was stirring, except for one little mouse.
Watching and waiting in a patient quest,
her two alert eyes peered out from under the old chest.

When suddenly through the darkness, the dust, and the grime,
a radiant Light shone with a glow divine.

Out of the silence, a still small Voice, she beheld
along with an absorbing Love, profoundly felt.

Our little mouse friend let this moment simply be
an ineffable, astonishing glimpse of eternity.
Her mousehood had been miraculously replaced
by the love now expressing through her own humble face.

Contact [Mel Gillies](#)



Position Changes And Other Events

November 2020

- Steven Hicks has been appointed town manager of Front Royal effective December 7. He previously served as the town manager of Selma, NC and has over 25 years of local government experience.
- Rob Ritter, Lovettesville town manager since 2018, has been terminated by the town council. Rob previously served as town manager of Dumfries and Chincoteague. Sam Finz has been appointed interim town manager.
- Kevin Hughes has been appointed acting deputy city manager of Suffolk. He has served as the director of economic development since 2010 and has been with the city since 2005.
- Reba Mohler, town manager of Clifton Forge since July 2020, has resigned effective at the end her 30 day notice to the town council. She previously served for 9 years as the city administrator of Roncerverte, WV.
- Gene Dishner passed away November 2. He served over 38 years in leadership positions in Virginia state and local government. He was Scott County's first county administrator and the first director of both the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy.

Contact Us

