

VERMONT MUNICIPAL CLERKS' AND TREASURERS' ASSOCIATION
73rd ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
LAKE MOREY INN
FAIRLEE, VERMONT
SEPTEMBER 21, 2009

The Vermont Municipal Clerks' and Treasurers' Association met in Fairlee, Vermont at the Lake Morey Inn in the Terrace Ball Room. Registration was from 8:00 am to 9:00 am with a breakfast buffet and an opportunity to visit the vendor booths. The 20 vendor participants were:

ACS	Brown's River Marotti Co.
Chittenden Bank	Citizens Bank
Clerkbase	Cott Systems
Creative Imaging Solutions	DuPont Systems
Eastern Systems	First American Real Estate Tax Service
Great West Retirement Services	IDS-Identification Source
IMAS, LLC	LHS Associates
Merchants Bank	NEMRC
Sirius/Browntech	TD Bank
Vermont Title Attorneys Association	VLCT

The morning session started at 9:00am with 1st Vice President Alison Kaiser, Stowe introducing Dr. Steve Taubman. Dr. Taubman's session named Mindfulness, Magic and Communication entertained and taught the audience many methods to increase productivity, reduce stress, and over come roadblocks in our jobs as Clerks and Treasurers. At noon a buffet luncheon was served. Patricia McCoy, Poultney introduced the vendors and the raffle winners' names were drawn.

Business Meeting

President John Cushing, Milton called the business meeting to order at 1:30 pm. Minutes of the 72nd VMCTA Annual Meeting were reviewed and it was noted that they should have been included in the conference packet. President Cushing explained that the minutes were included with the online registration forms and this was done to reduce postage costs. Virginia Messier, Berkshire made a motion to accept the minutes. Colleen Haag, Shelburne seconded the motion. The motion carried and the minutes were approved as written.

Constitutional Amendment

President Cushing presented an amendment to the constitution regarding membership dues as follows:

Section 6. Dues: Effective July 1, 2010 annual dues shall be:

<i>Active Member</i>	\$25.00	35.00
<i>2nd Member from same Municipality</i>	\$15.00	20.00
<i>Retired</i>	\$ 5.00	10.00
<i>Associate</i>	\$30.00	50.00

Gary Snider, Richford made the motion to pass the increase in membership dues as presented by the Constitution Committee. Sandy Pinsonault, Dorset seconded the motion. There was discussion on, and agreement with some, that the membership dues should increase more than stated in the amendment. Linda Spence, Manchester commented the VMCTA Association had the lowest dues of any Clerk's organization she belonged to and that it was time to increase the dues accordingly. Alison Kaiser, Stowe suggested that the membership dues increase to \$50.00 for active members and \$25.00 for 2nd members. Doreen Woodward, Westminster made the motion to amend the amendment to show this increase. Deb Breckett, Williston seconded the motion. Patricia McCoy, Poultney expressed her concern that during these uncertain economic times that this much of an increase may result in a hardship for small towns with limited budgets. She added that many Town Clerks pay for their dues out of their own pockets. In her experience belonging to different organizations she has never seen dues double in one year. Annette Cappy, Brattleboro, agreed with Patricia and added that with her 18 years of experience being on the Membership Committee she was concerned with such an increase the association would likely lose Assistant Town Clerk memberships. Deb Beckett, Williston questioned what the membership dues cover. Alison Kaiser, Stowe explained that membership dues cover the lobbyist, website, and education. There was a call to move the question. The vote to amend the amendment failed. The amendment to the constitution to increase dues as recommended by the Constitution Committee passed in the affirmative.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Donna Kelty, Barre Town informed the members as of September 15, 2009 the VMCTA had \$13,218.23 in its checking account and \$5,375.63 in its savings account totaling \$18,593.86 for cash on hand. The 2009-2010 Proposed Budget was distributed showing the FY09-10 Income at \$45,405.00 and Expenses also at \$45,405.00. There would be no income from the Voter News Service due to no elections in 2009. Under expenses the rate for Liability Insurance for Treasurer's Bond had increased. The Lobbyist contract fee was added and Legal fees were increased so the association could apply for

501(c)(3) status. Under Scholarship expenses there will be a refund from NEMCI of \$775.00 for a scholarship that wasn't used. Donna did express a concern that the association may need to use some of its reserve this year to balance the budget. Bobbi Brimblecombe, Marshfield questioned why under income, the Certification line item in FY08-09 shows that \$4,500.00 had been budgeted for re-certification of Clerks and Treasurers and the actual was only \$100.00. Sandy Pinsonault, Dorset explained that there was some trouble with the re-certification application in the calculating of points needed to recertify, and that the points system needed to be changed. She added that corrections have been made and that applications were now available for 2010. Vendor fees were discussed and the possibility of increasing those fees. Patricia McCoy, Poultney explained that the VMCTA has the lowest vendor fees of any New England Association at only \$125.00 per vendor table and suggested we increase this to \$200.00-\$250.00. It was decided that the VMCTA Executive Board would discuss increasing the vendor fees. Auditor Virginia Messier, Berkshire informed the members that the Auditors found no discrepancies in the VMCTA books. Linda Spence, Manchester made the motion to accept the Auditors report. Patricia McCoy, Poultney seconded the motion. The motion carried. Patricia McCoy, Poultney made the motion to accept the Treasurer's report. Linda Spence, Manchester seconded the motion. The motion carried. Auditor Virginia Messier, Berkshire made the motion to accept the proposed budget. Cheryl Lindberg, Norwich seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Patricia McCoy, Poultney announced that 2009 is Vermont's turn to host the New England Association of City and Town Clerk's Annual Conference. The conference will be held at the Equinox in Manchester, Vermont November 18th – 20th. She informed everyone that scholarship money to attend the conference is available through the VMCTA.

Nominating Committee

The following VMTCA Officers were nominated:

Alison Kaiser, President; Sandra Pinsonault, 1st Vice President; Tammy Legacy, 2nd Vice President; Georgette Wolf-Ludwig, Secretary; Patti Lewis, Treasurer; Donna Kelty, Auditor

Members at Large: Lucrecia Wonsor (2yr); Bobbi Brimblecombe (2yr); Priscilla Aldrich (1yr); Tracy Borst (1yr)

Linda Spence, Manchester made the motion to elect the following officers nominated by the Nominating Committee. There were no other nominations. Karen Richard, Colchester seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried.

Other Business

There was discussion on curriculum and the recertification program for Clerks and Treasurers. Alison Kaiser, Stowe encouraged fellow Clerks to attend the New England Municipal Clerks Institute and announced that Bear Scovil, Assistant Town Clerk from Manchester had graduated from the institute this year. Karen Richard, Colchester and Alison Kaiser, Stowe asked for around of applause to thank Trevor Lashua, VLCT's Senior Associate for Advocacy and Information for all his help this year with State House matters for the VMCTA.

Colleen Haag, Shelburne made the motion to adjourn the business meeting. Sherri Morin, Underhill seconded the motion. All were in favor.

The business meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm

Attest: _____
Georgette Wolf-Ludwig, CVC
Secretary of the VMCTA

After the business meeting Alison Kaiser, Stowe conducted a review of the 2009-2010 VMCTA Legislative Policy: 1.0 Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations. Changes and additions are as follows:



PREAMBLE

Federal, state and local government must work together. Local government can no longer sustain themselves fiscally or

administratively without cooperation from state and federal governments. Likewise, to function best, state government needs to collaborate and communicate with local officials to deliver services both effectively and efficiently.

Local government needs sufficient resources and authority to contribute to the maintenance of a reasonable quality of life for all Vermonters. Local governments are able to fulfill these responsibilities when state and federal governments implement laws, policies and programs that help solve municipal problems and meet municipal needs.

We who administer, legislate and raise revenues at the local level believe that our service to the citizenry is most in tune with the needs of the community because we are knowledgeable and accessible.

1.0 FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

1.01 EDUCATION FUNDING

Given the fact that:

- Education finance is largely being controlled by the state,
- Each year the state has raided the Education Fund, with this year being the largest raid yet,
- For next year, there is already discussion of even greater raids on the Education Fund, *increasing the burden to the local taxpayer.*
- While this is happening, local officials continue to spend significant time trying to understand, explain and implement the education finance system.
- *As first responders to the public, local officials believe that any system the legislature cannot explain is too burdensome for the public. As a result, the system does not benefit the individuals it was originally designed to assist.*

VMCTA recommends the creation of a new education finance system that takes into consideration both the Brigham decision and the lessons of the past 11 years. ~~Local officials are willing to assist in the creation of a new system, provided that such efforts will be taken seriously by the administration and the legislature.~~ *Local officials are*

willing and eager to work with the administration and the legislature to create a new education finance system.

1.02 ELECTION LAW CHANGES

The state should reimburse municipalities for any local costs for implementation of any state election law changes (including voter and election official education), as well as subsequent administrative or technological costs. The implementation of any election law changes must also satisfy the requirements of local election officials to have an election system that functions smoothly and effectively on election day.

1.03 PUBLIC RECORDS LAW UPDATE

With significant input from local officials, the legislature should update all Vermont statutes concerning public records, reflecting changes in technology as well as in other areas. Such amendments must continue to balance the public's need for and its right to more accessibility to public information with the municipalities' ability to store, process and make them available, and with individuals' privacy concerns.

1.04 UNFUNDED MANDATES

The state should provide reimbursement for state mandates on local governments. The Joint Fiscal Office must prepare and make public a fiscal impact statement showing the administrative and implementation as well as service costs imposed on local governments before any state legislative or administrative action affecting them can be approved.

1.05 ADVISORY COMMISSION FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The legislature should establish an Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations with authority to draft and recommend legislation designed to resolve issues between Vermont state and local governments. ~~Such Commission should include equal representation by local government officials~~ *Any commission that affects municipal issues should not be formed without equal representation by local officials.*

1.06 STATE PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES (PILOT) PROGRAMS

The state should fully fund all state payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) programs (including for state buildings, Agency of Natural Resources land, capital city and Corrections Department facilities) on an ongoing basis. The state must expand PILOT to include all state lands and must value state buildings at full fair market value and all state land in accordance with local land schedules for PILOT purposes. Until proceeds from the local option taxes fully fund the state buildings PILOT, the state General Fund must fund any remaining balance and all other PILOT payments.

1.07 OTHER PRIORITIES

In addition to the six priority issues listed above, VMCTA also supports legislation that would accomplish the following:

A) Amend the school calendar so that Primary Election Day and General Election Day are either school holidays or in-service days in order to hold the election in their school gymnasium and provide the ability for accessibility and parking to voters.

~~C) Require a candidate to file a “Declaration of Candidate” in order for write in ballots to be counted. The declaration must be filed by the close of polls. Otherwise write ins will not be counted.~~

B) Join 42 other states in enacting a constitutional “home rule” amendment as follows: “A city, town or village shall have the power, through approval by a majority of its voters, to adopt, amend, and repeal a charter of incorporation. A charter may authorize the municipality to exercise any legislative power or perform any function not specifically prohibited by the Vermont Constitution or general law. The powers and functions granted to cities, towns and villages under this section shall be liberally construed.”

~~C) Allow local liquor/tobacco and domestic pet license fees to be set and retained locally.~~

In addition to the state required fees, fees for local licensures shall be set and retained locally.

D) Require that all state rules, regulations, criteria and other administrative actions that have an impact on the operations of local government be implemented only after 30 days have passed since a publicly noticed hearing.

E) Develop a uniform definition of residency for all state and local government purposes.

F) With guidance from local officials, comprehensively rewrites the municipal financial management statutes.

G) Require the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance committees to review all local fees set in statute in conjunction with their periodic review of state fees. The review should include significant local input.

H) Enable towns to bill and collect from the state the costs associated with mandating inclusion of its notices or other inserts in town tax bills or other mailings.

I) Investigate and implement a simple mechanism to exempt resident property tax owners with high unearned income or high assets ~~for~~ **from** receiving a property tax adjustment.

K) To refine the PTTR and have the fee be \$10 per page

At Dinner Alison Kaiser, Stowe presented the Town Clerk of the Year award to:

Sandra Pinsonault of Dorset

Town Clerk Certification Awards were awarded to:

Connie LaPlume, Westfield
Veronica Parrish, Middlebury
Heidi Racht, Huntington
Ann Webster, Middlebury

No Treasurer Certifications were awarded.

Around of applause was given to all the recipients.

The Honorable James H. Douglas, Governor swore in the VMCTA Officers.

Entertainment followed with Dr. Steve Taubman, everyone truly enjoyed themselves.

The conference continued the next day with two educational sessions; Communicating Effectively with your Legislatures and Responding to Public Records Request.