

Lakes Region Planning Commission

103 Main Street, Meredith, NH 03253

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www.LakesRPC.org



LRPC Executive Board Meeting

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

9:00 – 11:00 AM

HYBRID MEETING

In-Person Attendance

LRPC Office, First Floor Conference Room
Humiston Building, 103 Main Street
Meredith, NH 03253

Virtual or Telephone-only Attendance

Online Access via Zoom Video: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81296029045>

Telephone-only Access: Dial 1-929-205-6099 and enter Meeting ID: 812 9602 9045

AGENDA

Seven (7) Executive Board members must be present in-person at the meeting location to establish a quorum. The quorum can vote to allow remote participation by other Executive Board members in conformance with RSA 91-A.

1. **Call to Order** ([determine remote participation](#))
2. **Draft Minutes of September 8, 2021** [Attachment](#)
3. **Finance Report** [pending / at meeting](#)
4. **Monthly Executive Report** [Attachment](#)
5. **Committee Reports**
 - a. Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
6. **Old Business**
 - a. FY23 HHW Appropriations and Update ([D. Jeffers](#)) [Attachment](#)
 - b. John Cotton Update
 - c. Proposed Bylaw Amendments ([tabled from 9/8/21](#))
 - d. Annual Meeting Planning
7. **New Business**
 - a. Annual Conflict of Interest Forms [Attachment](#)
 - b. Nominating Committee ([within 180 days of annual meeting](#))
8. **Roundtable**
9. **Adjourn**

The Lakes Region Planning Commission reserves the right to hold a non-public session whether noted on the Agenda or not. Notice of a non-public session on an agenda is for planning purposes only.

News

- [NHARPC CORNER: True or False: Debunking Common Master Plan Myths](#)
September/October 2021
- [TECH INSIGHTS: 7 Benefits of a Technology Partnership](#)
September/October 2021
- [Legislative Update to RSA 128: Town Health Officers](#)
September/October 2021
- [Housing shortage 'still the major issue in the state,' says ex-NHHFA chief](#)
September 28, 2021
- [New Hampshire Announces Formation of Collaborative Economic Development Regions](#)
September 22, 2021
- [Bristol celebrates new fiber network](#)
September 17, 2021
- [Laconia downtown renaissance ignites](#)
September 18, 2021
- [CDFA Invested \\$20 Million into New Hampshire Communities in State Fiscal Year 2021](#)
September 17, 2021
- [State receives four bids to market former Lakes Region Facility for redevelopment](#)
September 10, 2021
- [NHMA 2021-2022 Legislative Policy Positions](#)
2021 – 2022





LRPC Executive Board Meeting

DRAFT Minutes of September 8, 2021

PRESENT	John Ayer (Chair), Mardean Badger, Bill Bolton, Pat Farley, Steve Favorite, David Katz, David Kerr, Robert Snelling, Steve Wingate
ABSENT	Dean Anson, Tony Giunta, Jean Marshall
STAFF	Jeff Hayes (Executive Director), Tracey Ciriello (Meeting Recorder)
PUBLIC	Charlene Vallee, Hennessy & Vallee, PLLC, CPA
LOCATION	Hybrid Meeting: LRPC Office, 1st Floor Conference Room and Zoom Conference

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and stated a quorum was physically present with 7 Executive Board members. S. Favorite and S. Wingate joined the meeting remotely via Zoom in order to reduce exposure to COVID-19. D. Katz motioned to allow remote participation per 91-A:2. B. Bolton seconded the motion. ROLL CALL VOTE by the Chair: Badger—yes; Bolton—yes; Farley—yes; Favorite—yes; Katz—yes; Kerr—yes; Snelling—yes; Wingate—yes; Ayer—yes. **SO VOTED**

With consensus the Chair took the agenda out of order since the auditor was present at the start of the meeting (via Zoom) and began with agenda item 6.a, FY21 Audit, then continued rest of agenda in order.

2. Approve Minutes of June 9, 2021

P. Farley moved to accept the minutes of June 9, 2021 as presented. M. Badger seconded the motion. ROLL CALL VOTE by the Chair: Badger—yes; Bolt—yes; Farley—yes; Favorite—yes; Katz—yes; Kerr—yes; Snelling—yes; Wingate—yes; Ayer—yes. **SO VOTED**

3. Monthly Executive Report

J. Hayes noted that the data for the report comes from timesheet task summaries, which are consolidated and then high-level items are chosen. He described the Pardoe Foundation sunset grant—the organization is winding down to close and has made final gift awards to 15 recipients of its own choosing. LRPC was one of the organizations chosen and will receive a \$20K multi-year grant over the next 4 years of \$5,000 per year. He also announced that all the regional planning commissions in the state will receive \$100K each in ARPA funds via a grant through the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs (NHDBEA) to do a regional housing needs assessment. Principal Planner S. Slack will be the project manager for this effort. He also noted that we have several Circuit Rider contracts—Northfield, Center Harbor, Plymouth. The Chair observed that the monthly report was 7 pages long when he first started on the Executive Board and acknowledged a great job in paring it down.

4. Committee Reports

a. Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

- TAP and GACIT Updates

D. Kerr reported that last week's TAC meeting as well as the GACIT meeting were both cancelled. J. Hayes indicated the GACIT schedule was not set yet but was being made based on the Executive Councilors' schedules. The state is currently focused on the bike/ped plan. LRPC has begun a new 2-year UPWP (transportation planning) contract with NHDOT for about \$479,000, around \$40K more than last year. NHDOT sets the indirect rate, but managing the overhead rate can be difficult and J. Hayes and Finance Administrator C. Carder spent a lot of time managing it.

5. Old Business

a. Summer 2021 HHW Collection Report

J. Hayes reported it was a good collection. Drone pictures were taken showing lines of cars. LRPC is paying for dumpsters for host communities. Piloted a gas can program this year because people want their gas cans back but have to give them up if using to transport to the collection. Northfield was the only member that did not participate this year; they are concerned about the cost per resident. LRPC has been fortunate to have a fixed rate contract the last few years because in the past, while we had record participation, we went over by \$30K that LRPC had to pay for. However, we will see an increase in collection costs going forward. HHW in the context of overall solid waste management was discussed in general. D. Katz inquired about negotiating a new plan ahead of time. J. Hayes indicated this year was the second of the 3-year fixed contract but when the time comes to renegotiate, everything will be on the table. A discrepancy in the numbers for the proposed FY23 HHW appropriations must be addressed before they can be voted on, so the item was tabled.

b. Annual Meeting Planning Committee

There was confusion regarding whether the 50th anniversary would be celebrated this month, September 2021, or in June 2022. Still planning on the 50th anniversary in June 2022. The speaker is confirmed and the budget will need to be approved at the June 2022 meeting. Even though the current budget has changed a lot since June 2021 due to new revenue and expenses, J. Hayes indicated it was still important to have the budget discussion in June. A discussion took place regarding whether a quorum could be achieved at the annual meeting, whether number of commissioners vs. number of members constitutes a quorum, whether there could be a quorum of people but not towns, etc. J. Hayes suggested sending out a questionnaire in advance of the annual meeting. D. Katz and M. Badger confirmed that the bylaws state that members are the towns and commissioners are the representatives, and that 50% refers to the number of members. J. Hayes clarified that LRPC's current bylaws had been written when we incorporated as a non-profit. Then about 15 years ago LRPC became subject to RSA 91-A when the state determined that regional planning commissions were a governmental entity. So the portion of our bylaws that states a quorum can be declared is in conflict with RSA 91-A, the Right-to-Know law. The discussion was tabled until later in the agenda under New Business, e. Proposed Bylaws Amendments.

6. New Business

a. FY21 Audit Presentation

J. Hayes affirmed that the auditor works directly for the Executive Board and introduced Charlene Vallee of Hennessey & Vallee, PLLC, CPA, whose firm conducted this year's annual audit. Ms. Vallee presented the audit via Zoom and reviewed the draft financials audit report distributed in advance of the meeting, noting or explaining specific sections such as the net pension liability on page 7 and a more traditional balance sheet view on page 9 without the pension liability, to give a truer picture of operating expenses. She introduced an additional document not included with the draft audit report, a two-page Financial Ratio Analysis showing three types of ratios with accompanying narratives and explained each and how they compared to last year's.

The Chair thanked the auditor for the presentation and Ms. Vallee left the meeting. D. Katz moved to accept the FY21 audit as presented. M. Badger seconded the motion. ROLL CALL VOTE the by the Chair: Badger—yes; Bolt—yes; Farley—yes; Favorite—yes; Katz—yes; Kerr—yes; Snelling—yes; Wingate—yes; Ayer—yes. **SO VOTED**

b. FY23 Membership Appropriations

Proposed increase in membership dues, which had been kept the same for the past 3 years, reflects new census numbers (updated every 10 years) and 5% inflation factor. Alton may potentially join again and LRPC hopes to bring them back into the fold—it has been unfortunate not to have them. 2020 Census numbers revealed some towns had lost population. D. Katz moved to accept? approve? the FY23 member dues appropriations as presented. [REDACTED] seconded the motion. ROLL CALL VOTE the by the Chair: Badger—yes; Bolt—yes; Farley—yes; Favorite—yes; Katz—yes; Kerr—yes; Snelling—yes; Wingate—yes; Ayer—yes. **SO VOTED**

c. **FY23 HHW Appropriations**

Tabled until October.

d. **Meeting Formats, mask optional**

No discussion.

e. **Proposed Bylaw Amendments**

- Quorum
- Remote Meeting Participation

J. Hayes explained how 3 other RPCs have created subsidiary or auxiliary 501(c)3 organizations and suggested it was worth keeping LRPC incorporated, as we have been by filing every 5 years with the NH Secretary of State (NHSOS). The Chair asked if dropping the Inc. in our name changes anything with the NHSOS; J. Hayes said he thought it doesn't matter for their purposes. J. Hayes reviewed the proposed change of a 51% majority to establish a quorum and the necessity to remove the ability to declare a quorum. R. Snelling confirmed that membership was based on population and asked whether only one vote would be counted per town. J. Hayes affirmed that the full Commission has the authority to amend the bylaws. Consensus was to table the discussion.

f. **Funding Updates**

- State School, Housing Needs Contract, Pardoe Foundation

Reviewed under agenda item 3.

7. Roundtable

D. Katz, New Hampton—Lot of changes regarding excavation regulations; town still contemplating solar; the BOS and Planning Board signed an access management memorandum to NHDOT in June but have not heard back from so are taking silence as consent.

S. Wingate, Tuftonboro—Proposed new police station unpopular—constructions costs deemed too high.

S. Favorite, Bristol—Could only hear J. Hayes clearly during today's meeting; school back in session; starting to cut in/splice fiber so will see if can be done before winter; page numbers would help on meeting material attachments.

J. Ayer, Gilford—STRs are an issue that have come a head so the Planning Department is trying to figure things out; people wanting to stay in their campers on their own land is a new issue; washout in Black Brook in July; Starbucks and Clear Choice urgent care both coming to town; Planning Department short-staffed right now due to COVID case.

8. Adjourn

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Tracey Ciriello, Meeting Recorder*

MOTIONS SUMMARY

MOTIONED / SECONDED / RESULT

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Allow remote participation by Executive Board members attending virtually | Katz / Bolton / passed |
| 2. Approve June 9, 2021 minutes | Farley / Badger / passed |
| 3. Accept FY21 audit as presented | Katz / Badger / passed |
| 4. Approve/Accept? FY23 dues appropriations* | Katz / ? / passed |

**before offering to the Commission to approve*



Monthly Executive Report

FY22
September 2021

General Administration / Education & Outreach

- **FY21 Audit Accepted.** The annual audit was conducted in August by independent auditor Hennessey & Vallee, PLLC, who presented it to the LRPC Executive Board at their September 8 meeting.
- **FY22 Budget Adopted.** A draft budget proposal for FY22 was reviewed in May and finalized in June by the Executive Board before submitting to the Commission for approval. Commissioners voted to approve the FY22 budget at their next regular meeting on September 27.
- **FY23 Dues Approved.** With dues having been kept the same for the past three years while inflation remained relatively low, a planned increase was expected once 2020 Census numbers became available. Municipal membership appropriations were recalculated with the updated population totals and a 5% CPI inflation rate. After review and approval by the Executive Board on September 8, the Commission voted to approve the FY23 dues on September 27.

STAFF ACTIVITIES & TRAINING

- **PSU intern** Reed Silvers started in September working with Jessica Bighinatti on LRPC's draft Bike/Ped plan; with Susan Slack on the on the USDA Streetscaping grant, and with Dave Jeffers on GIS mapping.
- **NHDES Solid Waste Operator Training on Full Cost Accounting** webinar on disposal of difficult materials.
- **New England States** VPI Workshop, Sessions 3 & 4.
- **36th Annual Hazardous Materials Management (Virtual) Conference** (NAHMMA).
- **LCHIP** Board meeting in Concord.
- **GACIT** meeting in Conway for Carroll County.

Economic Development

- **Community Development Block Grant** (CDBG). NH CDFA notified us September 20 that the Governor & Council approved three Microenterprise Technical Assistance Grants for Grafton County for \$385,000, which includes a \$35,000 award for grant administration for LRPC.
Grafton County will subgrant to 3 organizations—BEDC in Laconia, NCIC in Lancaster, and WREN in Bethlehem—that will use the funds to increase income and economic stability across 140 micro-enterprise businesses in 5 counties, three of which are ours: Belknap, Carroll, and Grafton.
- **Northern Border Regional Commission** (NBRC). The Belknap Mill received a close-out certificate for its project.
The Gale School in Belmont received extension on Notice to Proceed documentation until 12/31/21.

Regional

- **PRLAC.** Prepared and submitted a Water Quality Planning (604B) Grant application to NHDES to update the Pemigewasset River Corridor Management Plan.
Drafted an updated appeal for Administrative funding to PRLAC communities. Corresponded with Chair, including conveying that an increase in administrative funding will be needed for FY24.
- **USDA TAT Grant for Streetscaping.** Completed data collection of Pedestrian Infrastructure in Plymouth and Ossipee including inventory of Sidewalks, Crosswalks, Curbs, and Pedestrian Access Buttons.

Local

- **New Circuit Rider Contract.** In addition to Center Harbor and Northfield, LRPC will also provide circuit rider planning assistance to Plymouth's Planning and Zoning Boards.
- **Hazard Mitigation Plan Updates.** Continued HMP update assistance in Bridgewater, Tilton, and Tuftonboro.
- **RSMS.** Beginning preparation for forecasting now that data collection is complete in Hebron and Plymouth.

Household Hazardous Waste

- Completed Lakes Region Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collections with a total of 1,721 participants. Met with reporter from the Laconia Daily Sun regarding the collections.
- Distributed an online survey to 700+ resident contacts via an email blast to gather public input about our HHW Program.



Photos: Courtesy of Laconia Police Department

Laconia PD composite stitch.



August 7, 2021: HHW Collection Site, DPW Garage, 27 Bisson Ave, Laconia

Solid Waste Management

- Worked with student intern to draft “**Trash Talk Weekly with LRPC**” social media posts for educating residents about the issues surrounding different types of solid wastes (plastics, glass, paper, electronics, food waste, etc.).
- Connected with **Southwick Elementary School** (Northfield) and **Winnisquam Regional Middle School** (Tilton) to share resources and discuss food waste reduction practices, on-site composting, and grant opportunities. Purchased tools and equipment for Southwick to support their compost site.

USDA PROGRAM FUNDING

- FY20–21 USDA Solid Waste Management Grant: *Ended 9/30/21.*
- FY21–22 USDA Solid Waste Management Grant: *Awarded August 2021. Begins October 1.*
- LRPC will begin the process of applying to the USDA for another Solid Waste Management Grant for FY22–23.
Application timeframe: October–December 2021.

EPA Healthy Communities Grant

- Completed site visit to Merrowvista and YMCA North Woods/Pleasant Valley Camps in Tuftonboro to provide composting technical assistance for remaining family camp weeks and to prep for winterizing the on-site garden.

Photos by LRPC Solid Waste Planner Paige Wilson, 8/4/21 and 9/7/21 site visits.



Transportation

- Completed and submitted final UPWP report to NHDOT, 2020–2021 UPWP Final Performance Report.
- Publicized GACIT hearing schedule in the Lakes Region for the state 2023–2032 Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan.
- Attended Conway (Carroll County) GACIT meeting in preparation for upcoming September and October meetings in Franklin, Laconia, and Plymouth.



ACRONYMS

BEDC	Belknap Economic Development Council	NHDES	NH Department of Environmental Services
CCDS	Culverts and closed drainage systems	NHDOT	NH Department of Transportation
CDAC	Community Development Advisory Committee (CDFA)	NHOSI	NH Office of Strategic Initiatives
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant	PRLAC	Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee
CDFA	Community Development Finance Authority (NH)	RSMS	Road Surface Management System
GACIT	Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation	SADES	Statewide Asset Data Exchange System
HHW	Household Hazardous Waste	TAC	Transportation Advisory Committee
NAHMMA	North American Hazardous Materials Management Association	TAP	Transportation Alternatives Program
NCIC	Northern Community Investment Corporation	TAT	Technical Assistance & Training
		UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
		WREN	Women's Rural Enterprise Network
		USDA	US Department of Agriculture

Lakes Region Planning Commission
Household Hazardous Waste Appropriation FY23
(based on total housing units)

Municipality	2010 Census		FY22 Share	2020 Census		FY23 Share
	Total Housing Units	% Housing Units		Total Housing Units	% Housing Units	
Alexandria	967	1.59%	\$ 1,636	941	1.52%	\$ 1,566
Andover	1,121	1.84%	\$ 1,896	1,132	1.83%	\$ 1,884
Belmont	3,615	5.94%	\$ 6,115	3,614	5.84%	\$ 6,014
Bridgewater	995	1.63%	\$ 1,683	948	1.53%	\$ 1,578
Bristol	2,488	4.09%	\$ 4,209	2,495	4.03%	\$ 4,152
Center Harbor	795	1.31%	\$ 1,345	771	1.25%	\$ 1,283
Effingham	963	1.58%	\$ 1,629	970	1.57%	\$ 1,614
Franklin	3,938	6.47%	\$ 6,662	4,046	6.54%	\$ 6,733
Freedom	1,580	2.59%	\$ 2,673	2,062	3.33%	\$ 3,431
Gilford	5,111	8.39%	\$ 8,646	5,175	8.36%	\$ 8,612
Gilmanton	2,118	3.48%	\$ 3,583	2,152	3.48%	\$ 3,581
Hebron	600	0.99%	\$ 1,015	604	0.98%	\$ 1,005
Hill	512	0.84%	\$ 866	499	0.81%	\$ 830
Holderness	1,510	2.48%	\$ 2,554	1,428	2.31%	\$ 2,376
Laconia	9,879	16.23%	\$ 16,712	10,275	16.60%	\$ 17,098
Meredith	4,728	7.77%	\$ 7,998	4,742	7.66%	\$ 7,891
Moultonborough	4,940	8.11%	\$ 8,357	4,910	7.93%	\$ 8,171
New Hampton	1,083	1.78%	\$ 1,832	1,175	1.90%	\$ 1,955
Northfield	1,969	3.23%	\$ 3,331	2,006	3.24%	\$ 3,338
Ossipee	3,057	5.02%	\$ 5,171	2,982	4.82%	\$ 4,962
Sanbornton	1,612	2.65%	\$ 2,727	1,695	2.74%	\$ 2,821
Sandwich	1,057	1.74%	\$ 1,788	1,073	1.73%	\$ 1,786
Tamworth	1,969	3.23%	\$ 3,331	1,883	3.04%	\$ 3,133
Tilton	1,845	3.03%	\$ 3,121	1,928	3.11%	\$ 3,208
Tuftonboro	2,435	4.00%	\$ 4,119	2,390	3.86%	\$ 3,977
HHW Total (Fixed Price contract)			\$ 99,000			\$ 99,000
Universal Waste (fluorecent bulbs, batteries)			\$ 4,000			\$ 4,000
TOTAL	60,887	100.0%	\$ 103,000	61,896	100.0%	\$ 103,000

Data source: Housing Unit figures from 2010 Census and Census 2020.



CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

The following shall govern the conduct of members of the Executive Board of the Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC).

I. Declaration of Policy

It is the policy of the LRPC that no Executive Board member shall have any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, engage in any business transaction or professional activity, or incur any obligation of any nature which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his or her duties. To implement this policy and to enhance the faith and confidence of the people of the region in their planning commission, this policy sets forth standards of conduct required of LRPC Executive Board members in the performance of their official duties.

It is declared to be the policy of the LRPC that Executive Board members are bound to perform their duties efficiently and faithfully under the laws of the state of New Hampshire. Executive Board members are bound to observe the highest standards of ethics consistent with this policy regardless of personal considerations, recognizing that promoting the public interest and maintaining the respect of the people in their local municipalities must be of foremost concern.

II. Definition

"Conflict of Interest" shall mean a situation, circumstance, or financial interest which has the potential to cause a private interest to interfere with the proper exercise of a public duty.

III. Conflict of Interest

Executive Board members shall avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. Executive Board members shall not participate in any matter in which they, or their spouse or dependents, have a private interest which may directly or indirectly affect or influence the performance of their duties.

IV. Misuse of Position

No Executive Board member shall disclose or use confidential or privileged information for personal benefit or for financial gain. Directors shall not use their positions with the LRPC to secure privileges or advantages for themselves, which are not generally available to the public, or to secure privileges or advantages for others.

V. Acceptance and Giving of Gifts

No Executive Board member or their spouse or dependents, shall give, solicit, accept or agree to accept a gift or favors from any person or entity who is subject to or likely to become subject to or interested in, any matter or action pending before or contemplated by the Executive Board member or by the LRPC.

VI. Financial Disclosure

To ensure that the performance of official duties does not give rise to a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest, Executive Board members shall file an annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure, listing financial and organizational interests which might cause a conflict of interest.

Financial and organizational interests which might cause a conflict of interest.

ANNUAL FORM DISTRIBUTED: **OCTOBER 13, 2021**

Board Member Name: _____

Board Member Signature: _____

Date: _____

NHARPC CORNER: True or False: Debunking Common Master Plan Myths

Katie Nelson, Principal Planner, Central NH Regional Planning Commission

There are many common statements made about master plans, but have you ever wondered what's true and what isn't? For example, do master plans really need to be updated every 5 years? Do master plans serve as legal documents? Does my community need a master plan to adopt a zoning ordinance? Whether you're new to master planning or just interested in learning more, we hope this information is helpful and gives you a better understanding on common myths regarding master plans in New Hampshire.



The following information is not intended to serve as legal advice and should instead be considered practical planning advice.

First, what is a master plan?

A master plan is a planning document that serves to guide the overall future character, growth, and development of a community. It describes how, why, where, and at what pace a community desires to improve its built environment, economy, and quality of life. It provides guidance to local officials when they are making decisions on budgets, ordinances, capital improvements, zoning, and subdivision and site plan regulations. In simplest terms, a master plan functions much like a roadmap or a blueprint to the future of the community. The plan does not define what can or cannot happen, but rather, it offers a vision of what could occur and includes steps leading to positive community outcomes. New Hampshire RSA 674 relating to Local Land Use Planning and Regulating Powers outlines the purpose and description, preparation, and the adoption and amendments of a community master plan and outlines its necessity to further planning and regulation.

True or False: Master Plans are adopted by the Board of Selectmen (or by Town Meeting).

False! Under NH RSA 674, state statutes, the preparation and adoption of the master plan is the responsibility of the planning board. The planning board also has the responsibility for promoting interest in and understanding of the community's master plan.

Although the master plan falls under the jurisdiction of the planning board, gathering input and investment from local community officials, volunteers, residents, and stakeholders throughout the development process can lead to greater community support of the plan and implementation of the master plan's goals.

True or False: Master Plans serve as legal documents.

False! The Master Plan itself is not a legal document and it is not required under law.

However, a master plan provides the legal basis for adopting zoning ordinances and subdivision and site plan review regulations. Innovative land use ordinances cannot be legally adopted nor can certain grants be applied for unless a relatively current master plan is in place. Additionally, when land use appeals are made to Superior Court, the court system relies on the local master plan's content to make many of its decisions,

True or False: Master Plans are required to adopt a zoning ordinance.

True! A master plan is required for a community to adopt any zoning ordinance, a historic district, or an agricultural or heritage commission. A master plan is also required for the planning board to adopt subdivision and site plan review regulations or a capital improvements program.

True or False: Master Plans need to be updated every 5 years.

False! There is no requirement that a master plan be updated with any designated amount of time. State statutes read "Every planning board shall from time to time update and amend the adopted master plan." Yet, master plans are most effective when they contain current conditions, trends, and challenges. As a long range plan, a master plan usually covers a time period greater than five years. A master plan can be amended and adopted one section at a time or the document can be updated in its entirety. Many planning boards create committees that include non-planning board members to assist with updating the plan. While the plan's implementation actions to improve the community should be ongoing, revisions to a master plan are recommended every 5 to 10 years.

True or False: Master Plans are a one size fits all.

False! Master plans are not the same for every community! They can vary in length, layout, and content. According to NH RSA 674:2, a master plan must include two mandatory sections; a vision chapter and a land use chapter. A master plan may also contain optional topics, including but not limited to transportation, housing, energy, natural resources, community facilities, utilities, coastal management, natural hazards, regional concerns, and implementation.

Vision section – A set of statements documenting the desires of the citizens affected by the master plan. Included shall be a set of guiding principle and priorities to implement that vision.

Land use section – Translates the vision into physical development goals. It should note existing demographics and land uses, consider alternative opportunities for future development, and promote the preferred alternative.

Layout of today's master plans can vary from the traditional chapter layout to shorter, graphical designs. Some plans are displayed in landscape, with two columns using short and direct sections. Plans are also trending towards much shorter length, with some plans totaling less than 50 pages. Optional appendices could be used to display supporting information without cluttering the main body of the master plan. In addition, there is no rule that states that all chapters of the master plan must be prepared and adopted at the same time. Many communities will break out the process into multiple phases, and chapters can also be adopted one at a time. As master plans are generally posted online, there is no driving reason to adopt the entire document at once.



Katie Nelson is Principal Planner with the Central NH Regional Planning Commission. She can be reached by phone at 603.226.6020 and via email at knelson@cnhrpc.org.

Article Topics:

[local master plans](#)

[master plans](#)

[regional master plans](#)

TECH INSIGHTS: 7 Benefits of a Technology Partnership

By John Hey, Director of Operations

Municipalities, especially smaller municipalities, can often feel left behind with information technology. It's understandable. With constrained budgets limiting the ability to hire expensive IT professionals, municipalities can struggle to maintain computers, internet connectivity, wi-fi, and email. Because municipal staff are so strapped for time, they often let essentials such as antivirus software, data backup, and cybersecurity best practices go by the wayside—or settling for a “good enough” situation.

Yet, municipalities struggle heavily when IT fails them. Old hardware and software, no longer supported by vendors, constantly breaks down. Relentless cyberattacks that you read about in the headlines threaten to topple your municipality any day. Your data backup may fail if an incident occurs, from a server failure to ransomware.

If you irregularly use a break-fix vendor that only puts out fires, then answer this question silently to yourself: Are you happy and satisfied with this situation?

Probably not. But you may feel that a better IT solution is out of reach.

It's not.

Many municipal leagues have crafted programs ([such as IT in a Box](#)) to ensure that even smaller municipalities can have proactive IT support, maintenance, and planning. The benefits are like night and day compared to what most municipalities currently use—whether it's a break-fix vendor or an overwhelmed IT employee.



Below, we discuss seven benefits of a technology partnership with a trusted IT vendor experienced with municipalities.

1. It can cost less to hire a trusted IT support vendor than to hire an employee.

The price of IT support can be significantly lower than the full-time cost of an IT employee (including benefits). Plus, IT talent is difficult to procure, especially if you find yourself far outside of a major metropolitan area. The right IT partner can provide you access to a team of top talent at a lower cost than a salary. That partner will also never get sick or go on vacation.

If you already have IT staff on hand, then an IT partner can supplement their work by offloading the day-to-day tactical tasks that consume a lot of time, freeing up your internal IT staff to focus on strategic initiatives and projects.

2. Dedicated IT support teams can maintain, monitor, and support your systems 24/7.

Proactive monitoring and maintenance of your systems can seem out of reach when you're only putting out fires. A dedicated IT support team can maintain your hardware, software, network, and systems while also monitoring them for issues and alerts. By proactively maintaining and monitoring your IT, you uncover issues early and prevent more serious, expensive problems from occurring later down the road.

Many municipalities also need support outside of 9-to-5 hours. City council meetings, police departments, or employees working from home may all require IT support at odd hours. A technology partnership with a trusted IT vendor offering a 24/7/365 helpdesk can provide this support without having to pay overtime or rely on an on-call IT employee.

3. An IT partner can keep up on trends, share knowledge, and introduce opportunities.

Maybe there is an [advance in cybersecurity that will help you fend off cyberattacks](#). Maybe adding some new features to your website will help benefit residents. Maybe a new software application can help you increase productivity within your municipal operations. An IT partner will give you access to a team who stays up-to-date about the latest trends and technologies, sifting through the noise to see what might benefit you. (It's important to work with a municipal-experienced IT partner so that they are not inundating you with technology ideas and solutions that are impractical.)

4. An IT partner can help you decrease liability.

Many IT-related threats relentlessly inundate municipalities including:

- Cyberattacks: In particular, [ransomware](#) can devastate your city as much or more than a natural disaster. Other cyber threats include malware, viruses, credential theft, and data breaches. If successful, these cyberthreats can have a serious impact on your city or town.
- Data loss: Without a reliable, tested data backup solution, [your municipality is at risk to permanently lose data](#) on servers, computers, or external hard drives. The permanent loss of data can lead to operational, financial, legal, and public embarrassment repercussions.
- Compliance with federal and state laws: Many federal and state laws apply to municipalities including Freedom of Information Acts (FOIA), CJIS compliance for public safety, IRS laws, laws about protecting personnel information, and PCI DSS standards related to payments. An IT slip or oversight can lead to non-compliance.

An IT partner can mitigate risks and lessen your liability related to cyberattacks, data loss, and compliance. By implementing cybersecurity best practices, deploying a data backup and disaster recovery solution with periodic testing, and ensuring you have policies in place to comply with various federal, state, and local laws, an IT partner can help you avoid many of the serious issues and incidents that have the ability to take down a municipality for weeks or months.

5. An IT partner will help you maximize expensive IT investments.

In quite a few cases after we've assessed a municipality's IT situation, we have discovered that they avoided using a tech partner for many years because of cost. Yet, we often find the following:

- Old hardware that needs constant fixing and upkeep.
- Old software that creaks along and barely meets the municipality's needs.
- ISP or telecom contracts locking municipalities into poor yet expensive service.
- Municipalities not taking advantage of free support from existing hardware, software, and technology solutions contracts.
- Municipalities paying for redundant, expensive software when they already pay for the same software included within another application (such as Microsoft SharePoint included within Office365).
- Overpaying for website hosting, maintenance, and support.

An IT partner can assess your current situation, look for ways to save money, and streamline your technology assets so that you are maximizing your investments. Newer hardware and software save you money in the long run, renegotiated contracts can lower your costs, and finding uses for applications you already pay for can save you even more money.

6. Vendor management and procurement get taken off your plate.

At your municipality, you may dread getting on the phone with a technical vendor. With a lot on your plate and realizing you don't have deep technical expertise, you do your best. Along the way, you hear a lot of jargon, try to explain the problem as best as you can, and hope the problem gets fixed. Each time, you're not sure if you're identifying the right problem, explaining it correctly, and providing the right information. If it's complex, constant calls to the vendor eat up valuable time.

An IT partner can handle vendor management for you. They cut to the chase quicker by identifying the right problem, knowing what questions to ask, and making sure the vendor is held accountable as they fix the issue. Plus, an IT partner has dedicated time to stay on top of the vendor until the problem is resolved. This saves a lot of time for you and can even save money, as many hardware and software vendor support contracts often go unenforced.

Procurement can also get handled more quickly with an IT partner while also saving you money. Experienced IT support engineers will know how to source the best technology and aggressively get government pricing from vendors.

7. An IT partner will help you set strategy and vision.

Beyond the proactive day-to-day IT tasks that keep your operations running smoothly, an IT partner can also provide you the equivalent of a Chief Information Officer who can help you with planning and strategy. They can help take your municipality's strategic vision and see how technology can help you with it. This may include using technology to help with special projects, improving operations, or enhancing resident services.

John Hey is Director of Operations for VC3, a leader in providing managed IT support to its clients (especially the local government sector). At VC3, John provides leadership over daily operations, strategic leadership, and visioning while driving continuous improvement. Deeply passionate about culture, quality of service, and community leadership, John vigorously pursues VC3's successful standing in each. John's specific areas of expertise in business, coupled with technical acumen around business continuity, practical security, and IT infrastructure, make him unique in the marketplace. John is based in Columbia, South Carolina.

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Legislative Update to RSA 128: Town Health Officers

Sophia Johnson, MPH, Health Officer Specialist,

During the past year, the local health officer has fulfilled an important role in New Hampshire's cities and towns by responding to COVID-19 concerns and questions. Often, health officers were on the front lines investigating sanitary conditions and COVID-19 cases. Many took on the role of learning the executive orders and reopening guidance, which required them to perform compliance inspections and respond to COVID-19 concerns in businesses, housing complexes, schools, community centers, and other public locations. Health officers were often the best and only 'local' experts for providing best practices and guidance to reduce the spread of COVID-19 at a community level.



Figure 1 Health Officers play a vital role in ensuring safe and healthy environmental conditions.

New Hampshire's COVID-19 response has provided many lessons learned on how to best assess threats and manage public health emergencies at the state and local level. As part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, NH DHHS identified some areas for improvement and for further collaboration with local health authorities. Some of the gaps identified include the need to improve communication, clarify local public health readiness, and support for basic training of local health officers.

As a result of these COVID-19 lessons, a number of partners joined forces with the goal to improve local public health. A workgroup convened to propose changes to RSA 128, including representatives from the New Hampshire Health Officer Association (NHHOA) in partnership Representative William Marsh (R-Brookfield), NH DHHS, the New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA), and local health officers. One over-arching goal was to improve health officer competency and train health officers to better

understand and apply the laws they enforce. Other goals included the ability to protect local public health as well as facilitate the proactive preparedness of local municipalities to respond to environmental threats. It took many months of negotiations to get the language right to address the needs of municipalities and the state, and in the end, it resulted in HB 79 that addressed health officer training, communicable disease, and the closure of public pools. Surprisingly, the bill passed the House and the Senate with no changes whatsoever.

On June 9, 2021, the Governor signed HB 79 the bill into law. As a result of the passage of this bill, the following changes have been made to RSA 128:

- Health officers must complete a 3-hour training module within the first year of their appointment (provided free-of-cost by DHHS);
- Health Officers may receive confidential data related to communicable disease provided they meet certain criteria as outlined by RSA 141-C:10 V;
- Local Boards of Health shall meet once a year to review the state of readiness to respond to local public health issues;
- Local Boards of Health may be requested to provide information to DHHS on the readiness to address relevant public health threats at the local level.

In response to these legislative changes, the NH DHHS' Health Officer Liaison program hosted a webinar at the NHHOA's Spring Workshop as well as a joint webinar with NHMA on June 23, 2021. These trainings informed local health officers and other municipal officials of these recent legislative changes, how to comply with these changes, as well as how DHHS plans to implement these statutory requirements. Toward that end, DHHS has already begun to plan for the 3-hour training requirements, providing access to training courses on confidentiality, and providing guidance to local Boards of Health on how to complete any meeting and reporting requirements. DHHS' Health Officer Liaison program continues to stay in communication with municipal health officers through its private listserv as rollout on these changes continues.



Figure 2 Health Officer Responds to Hoarding, 2020

Health officers are an important municipal asset that can help towns solve problems and keep the community safe from unsanitary conditions. Health officers receive state support through the DHHS Health Officer Liaison program which is responsible for appointments, training opportunities, and providing technical assistance. The program's services are intended to increase local health officer's knowledge, skills, and ability to resolve local environmental health issues. The overall goal is to improve local response capacity and protect citizens while enhancing the skills, knowledge, and capabilities of local health officers and their deputies.

Summary of RSA Chapter 128

Under RSA Chapter 128, 'Relative to Town Health Officers', each New Hampshire town is required to nominate, support and renew a health officer position every 3 years for the purposes of enforcing public health laws and protecting citizens. Local health officers are responsible for assessing and enforcing sanitary laws to reduce environmental hazards and health effects. The health officer is a valuable local asset to help identify and resolve public health issues like housing conditions, health nuisances, septic failures, unsanitary living conditions, hoarding, and pest infestations before they affect the larger community.

The role of the health officer is to ensure that towns maintain sanitary conditions in places where people gather, live, work and learn – with a special focus on rental dwellings, buildings, property, schools, childcare, and foster/adoption homes. The sanitary challenges can range from pest infestations to nuisance odors and noise, to unsanitary living concerns and hoarding. Under state law, your local health officer plays a key role in protecting the health and well-being of New Hampshire communities.

Local health officers have a variety of statutory duties and responsibilities to fulfil their role, including the following:

- Performing sanitary inspections and inspections into causes of danger to the public health (RSA 128);
- Enforcing state public health laws and local codes (RSA 128/ RSA 147);
- Adopting local ordinances to regulate the prevention and removal of nuisances and other regulations related to the public health (RSA 147); and,
- Educating community members on issues concerning local environmental health and sanitation.

Information on RSA 128 and NH DHHS' Health Officer Program can be found below:

RSA 128: <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/X/128/128-mrg.htm>

NH DHHS' Health Officer Program: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/holu/index.htm>



By Sophia Johnson, MPH, Health Officer Specialist, New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Health Officer Liaison Program. Sophia graduated with a Masters Degree in Public Health from the University of New Hampshire and has worked as an Environmental Health Specialist with the NH Manchester Health Department performing sanitary inspections and enforcement before joining NH DHHS' Health Officer Liaison program. She is responsible for managing health officer appointments and training in addition to providing technical assistance.

For questions regarding local health officers or RSA 128, please contact Sophia at 603-271-3468 or healthofficer@dhhs.nh.gov.

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Housing shortage 'still the major issue in the state'

By [RICK FABRIZIO](#)

Ex-NHHFA chief Clairia Monier to be honored for lifetime achievement by BIA



Clairia Monier led the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority from 1988 to 2007.

Claire Monier knows all too well about New Hampshire's chronic shortage of housing for moderate- and lower-income residents.

She led the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority as executive director from 1988 to 2007, giving her a front-row seat to an unfolding challenge that became a crisis. The lack of affordable workforce housing has become perhaps the biggest challenge for employers struggling to staff their operations. The lack of workers threatens the success of these employers and the state's economy.

"I see a slight improvement, but it's still the major issue in the state," she said.

Monier's 20-year effort to increase housing for those with moderate to low incomes is being honored by the Business and Industry Association, which will present her with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at its 108th Annual Dinner and Awards Celebration on Oct. 20.

Also being honored with Lifetime Achievement Awards will be Dr. Joseph Pepe, retired CEO of CMC Healthcare System, and Harold Turner Jr., founder of The H.L. Turner Group Inc.

In a 2007 interview with NH Business Review, when asked what was causing the shortage of workforce housing, Monier said, "In my mind, it is restrictions at the local level. It came about in the '80s when we saw this massive migration of population here in New Hampshire because of our economic growth. The towns, in response, said, 'We don't want any more growth. We don't want it to happen that fast. Let's put land-use restriction in place.' And I think that's been a major factor in inhibiting the growth of the housing market."

Zoning restrictions continue to limit new housing, particularly higher density, smaller units, that provide entry-level housing for first-time buyers and renters. New Hampshire Housing today says the state needs 20,000 additional single-family, multifamily and special-needs homes to achieve a balanced market.

"They know the need for housing; they just want it to happen somewhere else," Monier said of local land-use board members. "NIMBY is very alive and well."

Local roadblocks

Monier, 80, has seen her native state change a great deal. She grew up in Bedford, then a farming town, in what she says was basically an immigrant family. Her father was Italian and her mother was from Poland. She left high school in 1956 at age 16 to earn \$1 an hour working in the mills to help support her family. Girls, she says, went to work in the mills in those days.

She ended up finishing high school and became a teacher after graduating from Plymouth Teachers College. She focused on high school social studies, history and government. She went on to earn her master's in urban geography at Clark University and later taught urban geography and urban planning at Saint Anselm College.

"That helped me understand some of the problems here," she said. "And knowing the politics in New Hampshire helped me get things done too."

Monier cited the Legislature's creation of a state-level Housing Appeals Board in 2019 as a recent positive change. The board gives housing developers a quicker, less expensive way to appeal zoning board decisions that inappropriately reject projects than having to go to court.

"I think that was a major legislative accomplishment," she said. "The basic problem is still at the local level. A developer is going to give up eventually. Many times, people who serve on planning and zoning boards don't want their town, their community to change. Change in any form can be a bit discouraging when it affects land use."

Monier said when she took over as New Hampshire Housing's executive director, the authority's board chair only wanted to do single-family homes. "But I think we're running out of vacant schools, mills and churches," she said.

So Monier raised awareness of the need for a variety of housing. She lists innovative types of housing among her major accomplishments, and under her tenure, New Hampshire Housing supported over 400 multifamily housing projects.

She believes affordable housing should be combined with social services. "When you look at homelessness," she said, "it's not just about lack of appropriate housing, but the lack of social services. They do go together."

A Goffstown resident, Monier still volunteers with multiple organizations. She just finished a term on New Hampshire's Residential Ratepayers Advisory Board. She is program chair of the Manchester Rotary Club,

serves on Breathe NH's board and the Amoskeag Industries board of directors.

Her state's aging demographics are not lost on her and add urgency to diversifying New Hampshire's housing stock.

"We have one of highest percentage of people over 65 in the country, along with Vermont and Maine," she said. "We're really like a giant retirement community, even more than Florida. We really need young people to move here and stay here after college, but we need to give them housing they can afford.

"If you want a stable community, you have to have home ownership. That will foster community harmony. You're going to see some attitudes change when people want to be near their children and grandchildren."

Monier believes the business community now realizes it must partner with state agencies and nonprofits to create enough new affordable housing to meet employers' needs for workers. She stresses that "it's really the only way we're going to get ahead," and adds that partnership must include government funding assistance.

Monier sees more manufactured housing as a key piece of the puzzle, noting it no longer has the stigma it used to have. Higher density, clustered housing also can help balance the home market while preserving green space.

"Everyone doesn't need a two- or five-acre lot," she said. "Encourage developers to build more clustered housing."

She sees great gains through mixed-use, in-fill development, particularly adding residences at strip malls with commercial on the first floor and housing on upper floors.

"Now that I'm 80 years old I ask, of all the decisions I made, did I make the right decisions?" she said. "I can look back and feel New Hampshire is better from the decisions I made. I can drive all around the state and see projects we were part of."

To obtain tickets for the BIA's Annual Dinner and Awards Celebration, visit BIAofNH.com/events.

Rick Fabrizio is director of communications and public policy for the Business and Industry Association.

New Hampshire Announces Formation of Collaborative Economic Development Regions

“CEDRs” are part of the state’s Economic Recovery and Expansion Strategy; will collaborate with the Department of Business and Economic Affairs to ensure business stability.

CONCORD, N.H. ([PRWEB](#)) September 22, 2021 -- [The New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs](#) (BEA) announced today the first of the Collaborative Economic Development Regions (CEDRs) have been established to promote economic expansion post COVID. Created as part of the Granite State’s [Economic Recovery and Expansion Strategy](#) (ERES), the CEDRs will deeply engage regional partners and work with the BEA on the recovery efforts.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted New Hampshire’s workforce availability, and key sectors that are crucial to the state’s economy saw record losses in jobs and revenue.

“While the pandemic has taken a significant toll on the Granite State, New Hampshire has proven resilient. Our economy continues to be the best in the Northeast, individuals are back at work, and more and more people are calling New Hampshire home,” said BEA Commissioner Taylor Caswell. “Our goal is to keep New Hampshire’s competitive edge and maintain that consistently across the state.”

To date, two CEDRs have been formed with the final two coming online by year’s end. The new regional groups will create a mechanism to facilitate strong collaboration among economic development partners in addressing areas such as business retention and attraction; workforce development; entrepreneurship; infrastructure, and business advocacy.

“We are pleased to partner with BEA to roll out this economic recovery strategy and believe it will have a significant positive impact for our region and helps us meet our missions by working together,” said Darren Winham, economic development executive director, Town of Exeter, and a leader within the Seacoast CEDR. “We are able to be more effective individually and as a region when we work collaboratively. There’s an amazing amount of synergy in our group, which now includes 40 service providers.”

“Our focus is on growing our collective ability to support New Hampshire’s employers by clearing the way and providing tools for their success,” continued Caswell. “CEDRs are an intentional approach that builds an infrastructure for the state’s entities to work together and deliver on our collective missions to support those employers.”

The full Economic Recovery and Expansion Strategy (ERES) is available here: www.nheconomy.com/eres.

About the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA)

The Department of Business and Economic Affairs is dedicated to enhancing the economic vitality of the State of New Hampshire while promoting it as a destination for domestic and international visitors. For more information visit www.nheconomy.com or www.choosenh.com.

Bristol celebrates new fiber network

By THOMAS P. CALDWELL, FOR THE LACONIA DAILY SUN
Sep 17, 2021



Sen. Maggie Hassan looks on as Jay Jorgensen presents an award in recognition of Bristol Town Administrator Nik Coates' efforts to expand the town's broadband network. (Tom Caldwell photo)

BRISTOL — Joined by state and congressional leaders, Bristol officials and the two companies handling a fiberoptic internet buildout in the community held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sept. 16 that marked the official “flipping of the switch” to open up fast, affordable broadband service to businesses and residents.

The ribbon-cutting took place in front of the town office building, then the event moved up the street to the Old Town Hall where the invited dignitaries or their representatives spoke of the importance of Bristol's initiative, which will be extended to other towns in Grafton County.

“We want to make sure this kind of model is not only available to other places in New Hampshire, but also available 'round the country,” said Sen. Maggie Hassan.



The Bristol Broadband Now network originated several years ago with the vision of Bill Dowey, a member of the Bristol Economic Development Committee. Businesses had been frustrated by the lack of reliable internet and spotty coverage downtown where the surrounding mountains blocked cell towers. Internet providers had shown little interest in making the investments necessary to boost service for so small a community, so Dowey began looking into what the town could do on its own.

He found an ally in Bristol Town Administrator Nicholas Coates, who made it his personal priority to move the idea forward. At the Old Town Hall on Thursday, he explained one reason why.

“We all have our pandemic stories,” he said. “I have a son who’s 12. I can remember very vividly in the last year him struggling to get instruction... Every time he would start to do his work, our internet connection would cut out. We got very frustrated; he essentially lost a year. So, for me, it’s a very personal story.”

If it was not economically feasible for internet companies to make the necessary investment in Bristol, it was even harder to justify asking taxpayers to foot the bill, but Coates and the Bristol Board of Selectmen sought grant funding to help make it happen.

Bristol voters, by a split vote, agreed to move forward, and the project took a two-phase approach: First, using local, state, and federal grants, the infrastructure was upgraded and the fiber network already in place for the Newfound Area School District was extended. That first phase was funded by a \$1.52 million Connecting New Hampshire Emergency Broadband Expansion grant through the

Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. It created a 24-mile fiber route that could accommodate 400 clients, from downtown Bristol to the statewide NetworkNH system at Plymouth State University. That work was completed last December.

The just-completed second phase provides the additional fiber backbone necessary to connect all of Bristol's municipal, educational, and commercial buildings. It was funded by a \$260,000 Northern Border Regional Commission grant and town money.

The infrastructure work was completed by eX², an Omaha, Nebraska-based company that specializes in smart city networks, intelligent transportation, critical infrastructure, and private network solutions and services. Chief Operating Officer Jay Jorgensen said, "We do biographic builds all across the country, and there was a unique sense of cooperation and collaboration here."

Jorgensen credited the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative with providing valuable assistance in gaining access to the utility poles and supporting the broadband effort.

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NEW LINCOLN MKZ	1 AVAILABLE

With the lines now in place, Hub66 will be building a network operations center in the Bristol Town Office to serve as a base of operations for internet service. The company will be sending out fliers with information on how property owners can tie into the fiber network. Hub66, based in Acton, Massachusetts, currently serves more than 2,500 residential and commercial locations.

"We're really excited to be invited into the fabric of the town," said Andrea Vient, chief executive officer for Hub66. "We're looking forward to working with the residents and the businesses to get them connected, and really discover what we can do together."

Coates credited Sen. Hassan with making broadband a national priority and helping the town obtain the support it needed to get the project done. During her remarks, Hassan used the opportunity to promote Congress' infrastructure bill that is providing additional money for broadband expansion.

Representatives from Sen. Jeanne Shaheen and reps. Annie Kuster and Chris Pappas also spoke of the importance of Bristol's effort. Jared Chicoine, commissioner of New Hampshire's new Department of Energy, appeared on behalf of Gov. Chris Sununu.

Chicoine said the lack of adequate access to broadband is one of the most important challenges the state faces, and under the former Office of Strategic Initiatives, he worked with the Department of Education and the Public Utilities Commission to assist towns and service providers to implement the Connecting New Hampshire program.

"The tight deadlines in the federal CARES Act, which funded this program, posed a challenge for many broadband projects," Chicoine said, "but together with Nik and his team, we were able to assist. ... Bristol is an outstanding example of a town putting in the time and effort to help their citizens take advantage of this opportunity."

Hub66 will be offering fiber-to-the-home internet service to the roughly 400 homes located on the phase one route, and over the next five years, will provide the fiber and wireless internet to the whole community.

The town also announced that the program will be expanded to other towns in Grafton County. The town of Hebron has awarded a grant to Bristol Broadband Now to create the next leg of the high-speed corridor, currently running north to Plymouth, by bringing it south along Route 3-A, back to Bristol.

Coates is serving as chair of the Grafton County Broadband Committee that is planning to build the network to every town hall in Grafton County through a \$26.2 million infrastructure investment.

T.P. Caldwell is a writer, editor, photographer, and videographer who formed and serves as project manager of the Liberty Independent Media Project. Contact him at liberty18@me.com.

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Downtown renaissance ignites

From the The Sunshine Project series

By ROBERTA BAKER, THE LACONIA DAILY SUN
Sep 17, 2021



LACONIA — Warren Clement, 79, and Brandon Borghi, 27, represent Laconia's old guard and new guard.

With other longtime business owners, and those who have set up shop in the last few years, they are entrepreneurs, facilitators and cheerleaders who want to turn downtown into a destination – a bustling neighborhood and Main Street where people gather, enjoy life and stay.

It's a movement they are nurturing, and one that is gaining steam.



Within the past 18 months, downtown has blossomed. Defiant Record and Craft Beer opened next to the entrance to the Colonial Theater. Koung Sushi, Piedmont Print and Frame and Trillium Farm to Table now occupy a row of storefronts on Canal Street to Beacon Street East. Flower boxes line Main Street's sidewalk. Boutique-style vendors with stylish interiors and open doors lure foot traffic and cause passing cars to pause. Locals meander for morning coffee and pastries, lunch, or beer and appetizers after work.

Downtown Laconia is turning a corner.

"It's always been a beautiful downtown. It just needed a little love, and more people advocating for it," said Borghi, who opened Fit Focus, a large, full-service fitness center, on Main Street two years ago.

“There’s a confluence of young people with energy and ideas, who know how to service the younger people,” said Clement, who opened the Sundial Shop in 1972, a Main Street landmark for 37 years. Clement now sells real estate at ReMax Bayside, in the same building that once housed his eclectic store. “Now it’s important to selectively bring in what the community needs, and what office and retail needs, and cater to that.”

The architecture, charm and potential of downtown Laconia drew Borghi, his brother, Derek, and their father to purchase the spacious structure, formerly the site of Grace Capital Church, for conversion into a metropolitan-style big-box health club. It now pulls before-and-after work athletes from as far as Alton, Wolfeboro and Center Harbor, Borghi said.

“I came up here and said, ‘This place is beautiful. Look at all the historic buildings,’” said Borghi, who moved here from Boston. “Four years ago, it didn’t have the buzz that it has now.”

A domino effect can take hold: Destination businesses spur related, consumer-oriented satellites, which are expected to spawn more.

Fit Focus attracts “people who are interested in wellbeing and spending money downtown. After a workout, you’re hungry and thirsty. You want to grab a cup of coffee or get your shoes repaired,” he said.

New tenants in his building, which includes the ground floor of the city’s parking garage, include Meraki Hair Salon, Luxe Lashes by Antonia, and GoodNatured Juice and Smoothie Bar, which is expected to open Wednesday, featuring an art-deco style living room and revolving local art.

“I wanted this space to not just be a juicery, but a place you can hang out,” said owner Vincenzo Sisti of Gilmanton. “I want the color to come from plants and local artworks on the walls – things that generally make people happy from a psychological standpoint.”

In general, people want an in-person experience, and things that cater to their personal tastes.

“The whole mall thing isn’t as popular anymore. Main Street is really the ‘it’ thing,” said Jose Diaz, an optician who moved to the Lakes Region from Boston, opening Spyglass Eyewear downtown in July 2020. The pandemic, he said, allowed more people to work remotely, made them tire of social isolation and life over Zoom, and prompted them to shop locally and search for more signature items instead of chain store uniformity.



Once the Colonial Theatre's restoration became secure, downtown rebirth "started to mushroom. One business opened, then another," said Diaz. With the city's backing and interest from developers and start-ups, "It's a perfect storm. The community, as a whole, is cheering for everyone to succeed."

The goal now is to keep the momentum going, and turn downtown into an engine that is self-sustaining and resilient.

On Tuesday Sept 21, from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Lakeport Opera House, Mayor Andrew Hosmer, Meredith developer Rusty McLearn, Concord developer Stephen Duprey and local restaurateur Karen Bassett will lead a community-wide conversation moderated by businessman and former mayor, Mike Seymour: LAKEVIEWS: Downtown Development Panel Discussion and Artful Networking Reception. There are no more seats available for the event, but it will be live-streamed by LRPA and available for later viewing.

Panelists will talk about what works and what doesn't and share their ideas and experiences of downtown renaissance.

It's a story that is unfolding elsewhere in New Hampshire, as mill towns with character are rediscovered and refurbished, and the change is dramatically visible in Laconia. Young business owners with passion and experience are hoping to redefine the city's core in ways that will endure.

"It takes a village, and you can really feel that. Now, if you need retail therapy, you can get it here. The match that accelerates (downtown development) is the arts," said Diaz of Spyglass Eyewear. "I've seen it work in New York and Boston. It's an artisan thing, too."

Destination stores and services pull from a wide area, and spark more to take root downtown, as long as there is ample parking. Energy and enthusiasm are essential – and contagious.

“If we want to see something we want downtown, we’ll do it. We want to keep local alive,” said Karen Bassett, owner of Wayfarer Coffee Roasters, which serves a variety of brews to all levels of palates. Since opening in 2015, the cafe has morphed into a downtown meeting place, as well as a hot spot for regulars who stay for hours while working remotely.

Bassett and her husband Reuben, who are in their 30s, opened Burrito Me in 2010, followed by Wayfarer on Main Street in 2015. They bought Local Eatery in 2019, and opened Wayfarer Coffee Lakeport in the first floor of the Lakeport Opera House in 2020. She said she would like to see more restaurants colonize downtown, including sit-down and outdoor alternatives. “For us, we’re excited,” she said. “The more options we have, the more people are going to be coming to this area.” The goal is to encourage and keep a perpetual stream of newcomers, regulars and tourists. “Just creating something that catches their eye as they drive through” would help do that, she said, with assistance from improved building facades, colorful store windows, and downtown lighting.

“What I hope we’ll see is people who are 35 and just starting out, who look at downtown Laconia as a place to plant their flag or start their career,” said Rusty McLear, 75, who spearheaded the revival of Meredith in 1983, by turning a former asbestos factory into a hotel complex. Recently McLear built nine high-quality, mid-priced condominiums on two floors above the Colonial Theater. Last week all but two were sold.

For a downtown to thrive, there needs to be desirable housing in a place people want to live, then the economic revival effect is synergistic, said McLear. “If any downtown is going to be truly successful, the downtown living facilities need to be successful. You have to have people who add to the community by living there. Whatever gets done downtown needs to be good to very good quality, and not terribly, very expensive. It has to attract people for quality and affordability.”

There are rumblings of further residential expansion. In the past year, the former St. Joseph’s Church rectory was purchased by a young couple with children, who have made the Victorian era rectory their primary home. The adjacent, former Catholic school building is being turned into apartments within a short walk of downtown.

“Whoever thought there would be a sushi restaurant in downtown Laconia? There are a lot of things here that are pushed by the Colonial that are being done independently,” said McLear. “What it has now is that it’s an attractive downtown in a great region between Lakes Winnisquam and Winnepesaukee,” that stays alive with fall tourism, winter activities and skiing at Gunstock, “which just had its best year ever in the middle of the pandemic,” said McLear, who sits on the board for the county-owned recreation facility.

“A lot of new people are looking at the area. When you put good ideas together with capital, you’ve got a potential working project.” One piece in a vacuum is never enough. With the restored Lakeport Opera House, “There’s a really good start to building momentum that will catch fire. If the state school property is developed properly, that could be a big thrust for Laconia.”



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Downtown renaissance ignites

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CDFA Invested \$20 Million into New Hampshire Communities in State Fiscal Year 2021

The Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) made 145 investments in community-based initiatives and organizations, infusing more than \$20 million into community development, economic development and clean energy projects throughout New Hampshire in State Fiscal Year 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021). Investment of these resources touched down in 53 communities across the Granite State. Information on CDFA's impact, as well as organizational and program highlights and activities, are detailed in its newly published [State Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Report](#).

“CDFA’s impact over the last state fiscal year represents a significant increase – 33 percent – year-over-year in the number of initiatives supported,” states Katherine Easterly Martey, Executive Director, CDFA. “We remain committed to helping create communities that are economically and socially resilient. With more than \$20 million invested over the last year, CDFA has increased funds deployed to New Hampshire communities by \$4 million since State Fiscal Year 2019 and we are well on the way to reaching our goal of increasing investments to an average of \$20 million annually by 2022.”

[Awards in State Fiscal Year 2021](#) supported nonprofits, municipalities, businesses and microenterprises as they continued to navigate an evolving and difficult socioeconomic landscape; delivered critical services to their communities; provided new jobs; created healthy and safe affordable housing; helped strengthen Main Streets; improved public facilities; and increased energy efficiency. Additionally, initiatives supported by CDFA reported the following impacts last fiscal year:

- Assisted 8,707 people;
- Rehabbed, preserved or created 152 housing units;
- Created or retained 1,076 jobs;
- Supported 440 micro businesses;
- Developed or rehabbed 18,630 square feet;
- Estimated annual energy savings of 330,272 kW hours; and
- Saved an estimated \$69,500 in annual energy costs.

CDFA's Board of Directors met at the [Belknap Mill in Laconia](#) this week to review State Fiscal Year 2021 accomplishments and discuss the opportunities ahead for the organization to advance its mission and the goals outlined in its [living strategic plan](#). While visiting downtown Laconia, several Board members also had the opportunity to tour the newly renovated [Colonial Theatre](#). Both the Belknap Mill and Colonial Theatre have accessed various [CDFA resources](#) in their efforts to restore these historic landmarks and contribute to the significant revitalization of downtown Laconia.

Business Donor Spotlight

[CDFA's Tax Credit Program](#) engages businesses across New Hampshire each year to support nonprofit organizations that are engaged in community economic development initiatives. Even during tumultuous economic times due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the New Hampshire business community's commitment to nonprofit partners through the Tax Credit Program remained strong as they recognized the need to support community-based projects now more than ever.

Grappone Automotive Group, a long-standing family-owned New Hampshire business, is committed to giving back to New Hampshire communities and has been a longtime investor in projects awarded CDFA tax credits. Since 1999, Grappone Automotive Group has donated more than \$3.6 million to community economic development projects through CDFA's Tax Credit Program.

"CDFA's Tax Credit program maximizes our ability to invest in projects we are passionate about in communities where our team members and guests live, work and visit," according to Amanda Grappone Osmer. "These projects – like expanding the availability of affordable, quality childcare and critical housing or substance use disorder services – directly impact our team members, guests and their families. It's important to our business that contributions through CDFA and beyond demonstrate how committed we are to improving New Hampshire's communities for us all."

COVID-19 Crisis Response

CDFA continues to work with a variety of partners to ensure the organization's resources and response is aligned with the evolving needs of municipalities, nonprofits and businesses. Specific efforts to address New Hampshire community needs during the COVID-19 crisis over the last fiscal year included:

- Administering the [NH Nonprofit Emergency Relief Fund](#) alongside the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and New Hampshire Center for Nonprofits. Grants from the fund totaled \$40 million and enabled 495 nonprofit organizations with a wide variety of missions to continue to serve tens of thousands of New Hampshire residents impacted by the coronavirus epidemic.
- Deploying Community Development Block Grant CARES Act Funds to respond to microenterprise, public service, housing and public facilities needs within New Hampshire's communities.
- Providing gap funding to assist infrastructure projects navigating the economic impacts the COVID-19 crisis is having on timelines and costs, which was creating a significant barrier to their success.

Organizational and Program Highlights

CDFA undertook a number of significant initiatives in State Fiscal Year 2021 to align with its [strategic goals](#), support critical statewide initiatives, and increase the organization's capacity to assist municipal, nonprofit and business partners to advance community-based projects. In addition to supporting the deployment of resources to 145 projects across New Hampshire in State Fiscal Year 2021, CDFA's organizational and programmatic highlights include:

- Increasing the level of technical assistance delivered across program areas.
- Supporting the publishing of the “[Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in New Hampshire: 2020 Update](#)” in May 2021, alongside New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority. The report was prepared by New Hampshire Legal Assistance and focuses on identifying and analyzing the barriers to equal access to housing and community assets, which is crucial to a state’s ability to overcome these challenges.
- Developing [New Hampshire’s 2021 – 2025 Consolidated Plan](#) to help guide the investment of Community Development Block Grant resources statewide in the coming years with the goal of increasing resources available for municipalities to accomplish their community economic development goals.
- Launching the [Community Facilities Energy Assessment and Technical Assistance Grant Program](#) to provide municipalities and nonprofit organizations grant funding for energy-related studies.
- Completing the implementation of CDFA’s [Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative](#) grant program, including publishing a [comprehensive report on the disbursement of funds and effectiveness of the Recovery Friendly Workplace pilot program](#).
- Leading the Council on Housing Stability, alongside New Hampshire’s Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Business and Economic Affairs, in developing a new [Strategic Plan](#) to promote housing stability and tackle homelessness for people of the Granite State.
- Continuing to build data capacities including data collection, analysis and visualization.

For more information on resources available to New Hampshire nonprofits, municipalities and businesses through CDFA’s programs, visit www.nhcdfa.org.

About the Community Development Finance Authority

The Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) is a statewide nonprofit public authority focused on maximizing the value and impact of community development, economic development and clean energy initiatives throughout New Hampshire. The organization leverages a variety of financial and technical resources, including the competitive deployment of grant, loan and equity programs. Those resources include New Hampshire state tax credits, federal Community Development Block Grant resources and the CDFA Clean Energy Fund. For more information about CDFA and its programs visit www.nhcdfa.org or call 603-226-2170.

###

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On September 17, 2021 / [Clean Energy Fund](#), [Community Development Block Grant Program](#), [L5 Capacity Building Program](#), [News](#), [Planning Grants](#), [Pre-Development Loan Program](#), [Tax Credit Program](#)

State receives four bids to market former Lakes Region Facility for redevelopment

BY: [ANNMARIE TIMMINS](#) - SEPTEMBER 10, 2021 4:05 PM



The former Lakes Region Facility property is 220 acres. (Alan MacRae | New Hampshire Bulletin)

The state received four bids by Friday's deadline to market the 220-acre former Lakes Region Facility for redevelopment. A law change tucked into the state budget will allow Gov. Chris Sununu to bypass the usual internal review process and award a contract himself with just three Executive Council votes.

The state Department of Administrative Services said it does not release the bidders' identities or any information about the bids this early in the process. Gregory Johnson, one of the two real estate brokers who [toured the property](#) in late August with Jared Nylund, who is managing the bidding process for the department, was not among the bidders but wished he had been.

Johnson said Friday he learned of the opportunity too late to put a complete bit together by the deadline and was unable to get an extension from the state. He submitted a letter of interest in the event the contract is put back up for bid.

"I think it's a great project," Johnson said. "I hope the state gives it to the right person, and it should be a huge benefit for the state of New Hampshire and the city of Laconia."

In its request for bids, the state acknowledged that the investment required of anyone who buys the property is so significant that the state might collect "close to zero dollars" in a sale.

The redevelopment project became [controversial](#) during the legislative session when Laconia officials and the Lakeshore Redevelopment Planning Commission, which has spent four years preparing the property for sale, learned Sununu was seeking the law change to take control of the sale.

The property overlooks Lake Winnisquam and abuts Ahern State Park, which includes over 3,500 feet of Lake Winnisquam shoreline. It's also home to a 911 call center and the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid Association, which provides emergency fire and EMS dispatch for 35 towns in the Lakes Region.

The property's ultimate buyer can keep those operations on site but is not required to.



ANNMARIE TIMMINS

Senior reporter Annmarie Timmins is a New Hampshire native who covered state government, courts, and social justice issues for the Concord Monitor for 25 years. During her time with the Monitor, she won a Nieman Fellowship to study journalism and mental health courts at Harvard for a year. She has taught journalism at the University of New Hampshire and writing at the Mackey S. Loeb School of Communications.

MORE FROM AUTHOR



New Hampshire Municipal Association

2021-2022 Legislative Policy Positions

General Administration and Governance

Local Authority and Efficiency

NHMA supports maintaining local government authority without infringement by the state, and supports measures that enable municipalities to exercise existing authority more efficiently and with greater discretion.

NHMA supports:

- Legislation granting towns the same authority to adopt ordinances that cities have under RSA 47:17;
- The authority of municipalities to regulate or limit the use of firearms on municipal property, and to regulate the carrying of firearms by municipal employees while on duty;
- Legislation allowing a town, by vote of its legislative body, to authorize appointment of the town clerk or town clerk/tax collector by the governing body, or by the chief executive officer based on a town charter;
- Legislation allowing municipalities to satisfy notice publication requirements through the use of electronic notification rather than newspaper publication, in addition to posting notice in public places.

NHMA opposes legislation that detracts from existing local authority.

Right-to-Know Law

NHMA supports the purposes of the Right-to-Know Law: to ensure the greatest possible public access to the actions, discussions, and records of all public bodies, and to ensure government's accountability to the people. NHMA also supports measures to make the law clearer and make compliance with public access requirements easier and less burdensome for public officials and employees and less costly for taxpayers.

NHMA supports:

- Reasonable requirements to make governmental records available electronically if no additional cost is involved;
- The ability to recover reasonable labor costs for responding to voluminous, excessive, or vexatious record requests;
- Exemptions from disclosure that are easy to administer and that provide appropriate protection for confidential and other sensitive information;
- An expedited and inexpensive process for resolving right-to-know complaints;
- Legislation and funding that provide support for education about the Right-to-Know Law.

Elections

NHMA believes that state and local elections should be fair and open, that voting should be simple and convenient without risking election integrity or security, and that election processes should be efficient without imposing undue burdens on local officials.

NHMA supports:

- Establishment of an independent redistricting commission to draw election districts fairly and without regard to partisan advantage;
- Local autonomy over town and city elections;
- More frequent state review and approval of electronic ballot-counting devices;
- Registration and voting processes that are not unnecessarily complex or burdensome, either to voters or to election officials;
- The use of secure technology such as electronic poll books to make election processes more efficient;
- Greater flexibility in the processing of absentee ballots;
- State assistance for the cost of accommodations for disabled voters in local elections.

Labor and Employment

NHMA recognizes the importance of municipal employees, the need for good working conditions, and the right of employees to organize if they choose. NHMA also believes municipal employers should be free to set reasonable terms and conditions of employment or negotiate the same with their employees or employee representatives, without undue state interference.

NHMA supports existing laws governing public employee labor relations, and opposes changes that impose greater burdens or liabilities on employers.

NHMA opposes:

- Legislation creating a mandatory “evergreen clause” for public employee collective bargaining agreements;

- Mandatory binding arbitration as a mechanism to resolve impasses in municipal employee collective bargaining;
- A right to strike for public employees;
- New mandated employee benefits, including any proposal to enhance retirement system benefits that may increase employer costs in future years;
- Unnecessary limits on municipalities' discretion in making hiring decisions;
- Restrictions on municipalities' ability to privatize or use contracted services.

Substance Misuse Prevention & Response

NHMA supports programs to address substance use disorder and response to substance use issues, to include treatment and recovery support programs.

NHMA supports:

- State funding to address substance use disorder for the following efforts:
 - Prevention
 - Treatment
 - Recovery
 - Enforcement;
- Legislation that supports prevention, treatment, recovery, and enforcement efforts.

NHMA opposes:

- Reductions in state funding for substance use disorder or recovery support programs;
- Legislation that makes it more difficult to address the substance use disorder problem in our communities.

Finance and Revenue

Property Taxes and Related Revenues

NHMA supports legislation that allows municipalities to manage property tax levies in a manner that stabilizes tax rates and ensures equity, fairness, and efficiency in the assessment and collection of property taxes.

NHMA supports:

- The continuing right of municipalities to use any recognized method of appraisal upheld by the New Hampshire judicial system;
- Legislation to ensure that:

- property taxes are assessed to the proper owner by requiring that all owner name changes be separately filed at the registry of deeds when such an owner change is not created by a transfer of the property, and
- all liens, whether of a private or institutional nature, be filed at the registry of deeds, and that all changes to the name of a recorded lienholder be similarly filed;
- A legislative commission to study assessment and collection of property taxes and/or municipal utility fees on manufactured housing on land of another and on transient-type properties;
- Legislation ensuring fairness and accuracy in property tax exemptions including ensuring that all household income and assets are taken into account;
- Legislation that prohibits the use of the income approach by a taxpayer in any appeal of assessed value if the taxpayer refuses to provide such information as requested by the municipality;
- A legislative commission to study reimbursement through payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs) for municipal services provided to exempt charitable properties, including charitable non-profit housing projects;
- Legislation amending RSA 80:56 to enable municipalities to charge a fee for any financial remittance issued to the municipality that is returned as uncollectible;
- Legislation to lower the abatement interest rate that municipalities pay under RSA 76:17-a from six percent to four percent to align it better with the interest rates on delinquent taxes that were lowered by the legislature in 2019.

NHMA opposes:

- Legislation that directly or indirectly increases property taxes, including but not limited to new or expanded mandatory exemptions or credits, or changes in the process for valuing, assessing, or taxing specific classes of properties;
- Legislation that undermines the basic goals of the current use program or reduces the 10-acre minimum size requirement for qualification for current use beyond those exceptions now allowed by the rules of the Current Use Board;
- Legislation that expands the definition of “charitable” in RSA 72:23-1 unless the state reimburses municipalities for the commensurate loss of property tax base;
- An assessment methodology for big box stores that employs comparisons to “dark store” properties abandoned or encumbered with deed restrictions on subsequent use.

State Aid and Non-Property Tax Revenues

NHMA supports funding of state aid to municipalities, supports legislation authorizing local control over non-property tax revenue streams, and opposes legislation that reduces, suspends, or eliminates existing local taxes, fees, or state aid.

NHMA supports:

- Full restoration of revenue sharing under RSA 31-A;

- A state transportation policy that provides adequate and sustainable funding for state and municipal infrastructure and transportation systems and maintains at least the 12 percent share of state highway funds distributed to municipalities;
- Legislation authorizing the establishment of local option fees and providing for periodic adjustments to statutory fees to compensate for factors including, but not limited to, the effects of inflation, such as an increase in the maximum optional fee for transportation improvements;
- Legislation to ensure the collection of unpaid bills for ambulance and other emergency services;
- Reimbursement from the state for the cost of municipal services provided to state-owned properties;
- Legislation amending motor vehicle registration enforcement laws to ensure collection of all state and local registration fees owed by New Hampshire residents;
- Legislation amending RSA 36-A:5 II to allow trustees of trust funds to invest conservation funds instead of only the town treasurer, if voted by the legislative body;
- Programming that supports reduced cost, cost sharing, or equipment sharing that upgrades or replaces aging or unsafe transportation network(s) for towns.

NHMA opposes:

- Suspension of the statutory catch-up provision of the meals and rooms tax distribution;
- Diversion of state highway funds for non-state transportation network purposes.

New Hampshire Retirement System (NHRS)

NHMA supports the continuing existence of a retirement system for state, municipal, school, and county government employees that is secure, solvent, fiscally healthy, and financially sustainable, and that both employees and employers can rely on to provide retirement benefits for the foreseeable future.

NHMA supports:

- Restoration of the state's 35% share of employer costs for police, teachers, and firefighters in the current defined benefit plan and any successor plan;
- Inclusion of participation by a municipal official designated by NHMA on any legislative study committee or commission formed to research alternative retirement system benefits plans or designs;
- Performance of an actuarial analysis of any legislation proposing benefits changes or other plan changes that may affect employer contribution rates.

NHMA opposes:

- Legislation expanding benefits that increase current or future employer contribution costs;
- Legislation that assesses additional charges on employers beyond NHRS board-approved rate changes;
- Legislation that expands the eligibility of NHRS membership to positions not currently covered by the plan;

- Legislation further restricting a municipality's ability to employ NHRS retirees in part-time positions or the imposition of any fees or penalties associated with such employment.

Education Funding

NHMA supports a revenue structure for funding an adequate education to meet the state's responsibilities as defined by the constitution, statutes, and the common law with revenue sources that are predictable, stable, and sustainable.

NHMA supports:

- A revenue structure that is not disruptive to the long-term economic health of the state;
- A revenue structure that is efficient in its administration;
- A revenue structure that is fair to citizens with lower to moderate incomes.

NHMA opposes:

- Retroactive changes to the adequate education funding distribution formula after the notice of grant amounts has been provided to local governments.

Infrastructure, Development, and Land Use

Energy, Environment, and Sustainability

NHMA supports preservation and enhancement of municipal energy, climate, and sustainability planning for communities, protection of the natural environment, and implementation of clean and renewable energy, while recognizing the need for municipalities to manage their resources and the natural environment without undue cost.

NHMA supports:

- Legislation that broadens municipalities' ability to install and use renewable energy sources, including higher caps or elimination of caps on net energy metering;
- Legislation that provides financial and other assistance to municipalities for conservation techniques and installation and maintenance of renewable energy sources;
- Legislation that allows municipalities to adopt local environmental regulations that are no less stringent than those implemented by the state;
- Legislation that enables municipalities to enact measures that promote local energy and land use systems that are both economically and environmentally sustainable;

- Legislation that protects and preserves local natural resources and public infrastructure, builds community resilience, and fosters adaptation to climate change and mitigates its risks;
- Policies that support customer and community choice in energy supply and use competitive market-based mechanisms to promote innovation, cost effectiveness, and sustainability; and
- Legislation that provides state or federal assistance to municipalities to mitigate environmental inequity impacts faced by their residents, and drive early local engagement in decision processes.

NHMA opposes:

- Legislation that overrides local determinations of appropriate energy sources and regulations.

Water Resources Protection, Control, and Management

NHMA supports measures enabling municipalities to protect, control, and manage efficiently and safely water and its resources, treatment, and movement, with a focus on management and infrastructure. NHMA believes any new mandates that impose additional costs on municipalities must be funded by the state or federal government.

NHMA supports:

- Legislation that provides state or federal investment in maintaining and making improvements to the state's critical water infrastructure, including, but not limited to, public drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, and dams;
- Legislation that encourages regional and innovative solutions to drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and groundwater issues;
- Regulation of emerging contaminants at feasibly achievable levels when supported by relevant scientific and technical standards that are broadly accepted by peer review and cost-benefit analyses, when coupled with appropriate state or federal funding.

NHMA opposes:

- Enactment of stricter drinking water, wastewater, or stormwater regulations for municipalities unless any costs of compliance are funded by the state or federal government.

Solid Waste Management

NHMA recognizes the need for cost-efficient solid waste disposal mechanisms that allow municipalities to protect, control, and manage efficiently and safely solid waste. NHMA believes any new mandates that impose additional costs on municipalities must be funded by the state or federal government.

NHMA supports:

- Programs that support municipal, regional, and state efforts to handle solid waste disposal through reduction, reuse, recycling, resource recovery, composting, and other measures, while maintaining local control;
- Comprehensive state programs to deal with existing and emerging contaminants at no additional cost to municipalities.

NHMA opposes:

- Increased tipping fees to pay for solid waste programs unless they are fully reimbursed by the state.

Housing

NHMA recognizes the need for diverse and affordable housing in New Hampshire and the responsibility of each municipality to afford reasonable opportunities for the development of diverse and affordable housing. NHMA believes municipalities should have discretion in how to satisfy this responsibility and supports legislation that enables municipalities to find innovative ways to ensure an adequate supply of housing.

NHMA supports:

- Legislation that allows municipalities to require the inclusion of affordable and diverse housing opportunities as part of new housing developments;
- Financial and other incentives to municipalities to encourage development of diverse and affordable housing;
- Statewide efforts to provide housing for those recovering from substance misuse, subject to reasonable municipal regulation;
- Policies that encourage documentation and financial traceability of cash and bartered rental transactions;
- Legislation and policies that encourage creative and flexible approaches to meeting housing needs of current and future demographics in different regions.

NHMA opposes:

- Legislation and policies that allow for or encourage housing practices that exclude people from and decrease the availability of quality, affordable housing;
- Legislation that erodes local control over land use decisions.

Land Use

NHMA supports the long-standing authority of municipalities to regulate land use matters with minimal interference from the state.

NHMA supports:

- Legislation authorizing municipalities to regulate short-term rentals of residential properties, including licensing requirements and health and safety protections;
- Legislation enabling municipalities at their discretion to adopt more recent editions of national/international building and fire codes than the current state-adopted editions.

NHMA opposes:

- Legislation that limits municipal control in implementing statewide priorities in zoning and land use regulation;
- New state mandates requiring municipalities to allow specific types of housing;
- All other statewide land use mandates.

Information Technology, Communications, and Cybersecurity

NHMA supports initiatives to make the most current information and communication technology accessible to New Hampshire communities, so long as local authority over land use regulation and safety issues is not compromised.

NHMA supports:

- Legislation that increases the ability of municipalities, especially those in rural and remote areas, to facilitate and advance access to reliable broadband technology to the premises in their communities;
- Legislation that provides flexibility for municipalities in accessing poles and pole attachments, including legislation that directs the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission to adopt the FCC rule on access to poles called “One-Touch-Make-Ready” in order to facilitate bringing high-speed fiber optic cable to service all New Hampshire communities, homes, and businesses by internet service providers (ISPs) in an expedient and cost-effective manner;
- Legislation that provides state and federal investment, including grants, for installation of high-speed fiber optic broadband technology to serve all New Hampshire communities, homes, and businesses;

- Legislation that requires or encourages and incentivizes providers to disclose information to local government relative to access and broadband connections provided in the municipality to help municipalities better understand and address the needs of their community;
- State investment in cybersecurity assistance to municipalities to protect data and infrastructure.

NHMA opposes:

- Legislation that limits municipalities' ability to prevent or regulate deployment of technologies that would impede vehicular or pedestrian passage on roadways or sidewalks;
- Statewide mandates on cybersecurity practices unless any associated costs are funded by the state or federal government.

Transportation

NHMA supports state policies that ensure access to convenient, efficient, reliable, and safe multi-modal transportation in New Hampshire as cost effectively as possible.

NHMA supports:

- Appropriate funding for state and local modes of transportation, including but not limited to roads, culverts, and bridges;
- Continued state and federal investment in public transit projects designed to reduce traffic on New Hampshire's roads.

NHMA opposes:

- Any action or inaction by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation that results in the downshifting of road, bridge, culvert, or drainage maintenance responsibilities from the state to municipalities.

Economic Development, Recovery, and Vitality

NHMA supports allowing municipalities to implement measures to foster economic development which allows for the preservation and creation of jobs and vitality within our communities.

NHMA supports:

- Legislation that allows for local adoption of more options and more flexibility to provide incentives for economic recovery and development;

- Expansion and more flexibility of state tax credit and exemption programs to foster economic recovery, development, and vitality.

NHMA opposes:

- Legislation that makes it more burdensome to implement economic recovery, development, and vitality measures.