



2021 Annual Report



Laura Buono,
Board Chair, Town
Administrator,
Hillsborough

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!

As we approach town meeting “season” 2022, we did not expect to still be talking about masks, social distancing, and COVID-19 cases in our communities. The pandemic is still with us, and although we learned so much in 2020, 2021 featured both continuing and new challenges for local governments, including strains on the municipal workforce, difficulty returning to in person meetings, misinformation surrounding the integrity of our well-run election process, and an overall uncertainty on so many fronts.



Margaret Byrnes,
Executive Director

That being said, 2021 was full of positives and silver linings. A major highlight (and focus) of 2021 was an unprecedented investment in local governments across the country: The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) passed by Congress provided direct relief funds to cities and towns for a wide variety of projects and purposes. And despite starting the state legislative session with a slew of anti-local government bills, we were incredibly pleased that the session ended, overall, with success. As you will see in the annual report, NHMA continued to provide virtual training and digital resources for our members, but we also were able to take a small step back into the world of in-person events with our successful “hybrid” annual conference in November. And last (but certainly not least!) we welcomed two new members to our staff last year: Government Finance Advisor, Katherine Heck, and Municipal Services Counsel, Jonathan Cowal. NHMA’s Natch Greyes stepped into the role of Government Affairs Counsel with the retirement of Cordell Johnston, 18-year NHMA veteran.

The year is off to a busy start, but we’re ready for another great year of serving our members and associate members!



Membership

Representing all municipalities (234 cities and towns) in New Hampshire

31 Affiliate Group members representing municipal professions comprised primarily of municipal officials serving a particular position, such as assessors or road agents

38 Associate Members, including **6** counties, **9** regional planning commissions, **5** fire districts, **11** water and sewer districts, **10** village districts and more

Through the collective power of cities and towns, NHMA promotes effective municipal government by providing education, training, advocacy and legal services.



Legal Services



Attorneys handled over 3,397 legal inquiries

Top 5 legal inquiries were Selectmen's Authority, Right-to-Know Law, Planning board, Town Meeting, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and COVID-19 issues

25 workshops (21 held virtually) with over **1,600** attendees

Presented 6 webinar programs with over 530 attendees

Hosted 7 *On-Demands* covering topics including Right-to-Know Law, planning board roles and responsibilities, and road and land law issues

Filed an Amicus Brief , Motion for Reconsideration , in the case of *Hampstead School Board v. SAU #55*, filed May 29, 2021

Presented to 18 outside agencies on remote meetings, planning board basics, social media, borrowing, downshifting, governance, budgeting and more



Additional Resources

Second class of the *Academy for Good Governance* attended by 49 municipal and school officials

Maintained dedicated webpage to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, including quick links on eligible uses, reporting and compliance and other resources

Developed joint collaboration, the Broadband Planning Network, with the National Collaboration for Digital Equity (NCDE) for members interested in the opportunity to undertake broadband investment planning together

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Advocacy



Through the budget process, the meals and rooms tax statute was amended to require distribution of 30 percent of the revenue to municipalities—not the 40 percent that was originally guaranteed, but far better than what has actually been distributed over the past several decades



969 subscribers to *Legislative Bulletin*

After a disturbing supreme court decision threatened the confidentiality of communications between municipalities and their legal counsel, the legislature quickly amended RSA 91-A to clarify that those records are exempt from disclosure

A broadband matching grant initiative was established to help municipalities expand broadband coverage

The net metering capacity limit for “municipal hosts” was increased from one megawatt to five megawatts

A pilot program for the use of electronic poll books to check in voters at state and municipal elections was made permanent



Communications

Reduced the number of print copies of *Town and City* from 2,200 to 1,750 via a direct “Go Green” campaign with members



1,750 print subscribers to *New Hampshire Town and City*



1,029 subscribers to *NewsLink*

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Education and Training



19 webinars; 1,336 registrants; 961 attendees; on variety of topics including Excel training, cyber security, municipal solar and net metering opportunities, infrastructure funding, state aid and revenue sharing, and more

Over 600 members accessed NHMA's webinar archive in 2021



57,300 local government employees in New Hampshire
(NH Employment Security, Economic & Labor Market Information Bureau, October, 2021)

Developed a series of seven tutorials to assist members and Account Administrators in managing wage data, classifieds, website users, municipal officials and organization, via the member portal

Did you know that New Hampshire is a state largely comprised of small towns? In fact, over 70 percent of the 234 cities and towns have populations less than 5,000



Virtual Annual Conference & Exhibition

Over 260 members from 104 cities and towns attended our first-ever "hybrid" Annual Conference and Exhibition

Received generous support from over 50 sponsors and exhibitors

Please visit our website regularly to take advantage of all our member resources and stay up-to-date on NHMA events

Thank you for your commitment to local government and for your support of NHMA!

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