

August 2020 eNews

Mester's Message



So how do we serve our community during these challenging times? Following up on the July article, let's start with the VLMGA "V = leading with our **Vision, Values**" as informed by the ICMA Code of Ethics, specifically two tenets:

Tenet 2. Affirm the dignity and worth of local government services and maintain a deep sense of social responsibility as a trusted public servant

Tenet 3. Demonstrate by word and action the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity in all public, professional, and personal relationships in order that the member may merit the trust and respect of the elected and appointed officials, employees, and the public.

Each of us lead with vision and values, in formulating our recommendations and decisions, which fosters that deep sense of professional social responsibility. Daily we earn the trust and respect of our community through our words and actions. So how do these tenets translate into our daily efforts? Consider a few examples, in response to current challenges, have you committed and followed through on actions such as:

- Recommend work plan specifics to implement the governing body's vision statement for inclusion and diversity?
- Prepare an inventory of all facilities, parks and roads named for persons associated with the confederacy as well as a process for community engagement to decide on changes or not?
- Collaborate with the Police Chief and Sheriff to recommend a Criminal Justice Review Commission? Supported community dialogs on social justice?
- Provide leadership on workforce culture development that ensures diversity and anti-racism in personnel policies, recruitment and training? Do you openly address racial bias in the organization?
- Prepare a strategic plan for programs and staffing responsive to the pandemic crisis with consideration for the most vulnerable at-risk citizens? Recommend CARES Act funding strategic and prioritize spending plan?
- Facilitate the new COVID-19 virtual public meeting formats that provide "live" public hearing comments so all voices are still heard?
- Respond to employees COVID-19 reopening concerns regarding facility environment safety, day care, pay-leave, telework that ensure effective but safe public service delivery?

Can we achieve "yes" to all the above questions and so many more? Of course! VLMGA member are doing just that and with intentionality on the "A = **Action**" in collaboration with our community and elected governing bodies, to change our culture to one of true equity and equality.

As we work these challenging issues, we are not alone and there are numerous resources for our members to respond to the difficult histories and pandemic crisis community conversations we are experiencing. VLGMA's civic engagement resources as well as AFI, VML, VACo, VGFOA, VRSA and VACorp are just a few of the great sources. For now let me highlight some ICMA website links for tool kits, articles and best practice models:

- <https://icma.org/topics/equity-inclusion>
- <https://icma.org/social-justice-systemic-racism>
- <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/tools-resources/>
- <https://icma.org/coronavirus-crisis-response>

Click on the link for ICMA's mask wearing article and video link featuring VLGMA President Cindy Mester.
[Link to mask article and video.](#)

Welcome to our newest VLGMA members Hunter Anderson, Graduate Fellow and Beth Simms, Director of

Stay safe, healthy and remain strong, Cindy

[Contact Cindy Mester](#)

A DAO in the Life



A DAO in the Life

Mandy Belyea, Deputy County Administrator, Shenandoah County, Virginia

This may be one of the most challenging times to work in local government, across the nation, the Commonwealth, and in my county – a beautiful, rural community in which I grew up and have devoted most of my career. Like other communities, we have been faced with a confluence of crises – a public health crisis that unfortunately has disproportionately impacted our County compared to others in our health district, primarily given our large number of long-term care facilities; economic uncertainties and the hefty responsibility to quickly and appropriately distribute federal funding that will best aid our citizens, businesses, and non-profits suffering as a result of the pandemic; educational uncertainties with which our School Divisions are grappling as they make decisions to provide a safe and valuable education for our students this school year; and nationwide unrest that has continued to highlight and advance important conversations about systemic racism, and more specifically in my community the discussions and actions surrounding our public schools that contain names and mascots associated with the Confederacy. Moreover, sprinkled in with all of this, it seems more prevalent that non-political matters, such as public health recommendations, have become politicized enabling further angst and division to infiltrate our local realm and potentially distract from the meaningful work that we do. Undoubtedly, local government administrators, deputy/assistant administrators, and other departmental leaders have been consumed trying to confront these crises while also continuing to be effective in managing the important public services that we provide on a daily basis.

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Civic Engagement - Chesterfield County



Civic Engagement: Innovative Approaches Becoming Part of Every Day

Matt Harris, Chesterfield Deputy County Administrator for Finance

Civic engagement can take on many forms and, undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic has led localities down varying paths. Despite the hardship the pandemic has caused, it's opened new routes to develop innovative solutions as we strive to connect with residents and the workforce.

This is particularly true for Chesterfield County. When Chesterfield reduced in-person operations to a very limited model, an opportunity presented itself to reinvent programs and services, as well as communication efforts across the organization and, in some cases, throughout our region.

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VLGMA Membership Renewal Reminder



Remember to renew your VLGMA membership!

Those in the local government profession benefit from connections with one another at any time, but we are living through a time like no other in our lifetime. We need one another at this time, and we need to stay connected with one another.

VLGMA gives you that opportunity to stay in tune and stay in touch with your colleagues, be it in a virtual format conference, through committees, or through the newsletter. Professional development and networking will happen this year in whatever format works best for everyone.

About a quarter of our members have renewed for the current membership year. If you haven't already done so, take a few minutes to renew your VLGMA membership today. All membership renewal is being done on-line; the membership form has been updated from last year to make the process easier than ever.

Here's the link to the membership page: <https://vlgma.vml.org/vlgma-membership-information/>

If you want to share information about VLGMA with colleagues, the following information offers more light on VLGMA activities and membership.

Institute of Government Update



As we all continue to navigate the challenges of not being able to travel for in-person professional development and networking opportunities, please remember that we have a great resource in our ICMA senior advisors and regional support coordinators available to CAOs. If you are not sure who to contact in your area, click [here](#) or feel free to reach out to me directly for assistance. These two groups bring a wealth of knowledge and experience for you to take advantage of no matter your situation.

[Contact Charles Hartgrove](#)

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ICMA Update



On behalf of the ICMA **UNITE** Planning Committee Co-Chairs, Melissa Valadez-Cummings and Marc Landry, please allow this notice to serve as a reminder that on WEDNESDAY, JULY 15 registration launched for **UNITE**!

Here is info on the new [UNITE Marketing Toolkit](https://unite.icma.org/unite-marketing-toolkit/) (link: <https://unite.icma.org/unite-marketing-toolkit/>). The purpose of this toolkit is to invite attendees, sponsors, speakers, and friends to help us create buzz surrounding **UNITE**, our new digital event taking place on September 23–26, 2020.

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Tedd's Take



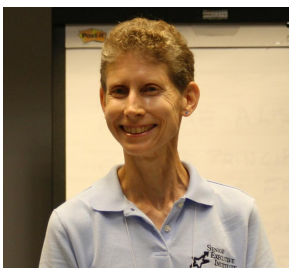
What Happened to Citizenship?

Soon after Americans became aware of our country's growing COVID pandemic, medical experts began reminding us of the 3 W's: Wear a mask. Wash your hands. Watch your distance. We certainly can't follow people into their homes to make sure they wash their hands; but, when we're out in public, it's easy to observe how well each of us is heeding the other two recommendations.

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

[Read More](#)

Mel's Poetry Corner



Summer Relief

This summer day of heat and humidity
and lethargic, dormant inactivity.
No breeze of inspiration
for motivation is drowned in perspiration.

An oppressive stagnancy settles in
and even the birds do not sing.
Every moment put on hold.

Inertia of body, mind, and soul.

Distant rumblings become
heralds of relief from boredom.

Watching, waiting patiently,
for the grace of a rain fulfilled prophesy.
Life aroused, grumbles and peeks
at a vision beyond belief.

In a grand thunderous in-lightning display,
Mother Nature saves the day.
Soul awakens and welcomes in
the rainbow Light where once all was dim.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)



Position Changes And Other Events

July 2020

- Barry Thompson, town manager of Vinton since June 2016, announced his retirement. His last day in the office will be July 31 and Pete Peters, assistant town manager/economic development director, will serve as interim town manager starting August 1. Barry had previously made public his plans to retire this past February. He began his service to Vinton in 2004 as finance director/treasurer and previously served as assistant city manager of Bedford.
- Kim Payne, an executive manager with the Berkley Group, has been appointed to serve as interim town manager of Amherst while town manager Sara Carter continues to recover from an accident. He previously served as city manager of Lynchburg and county administrator of Spotsylvania.
- Bob Childress, Warren deputy county administrator since 2010, has announced his retirement effective August 31. Prior to his local government service, he worked for VDOT as the assistant resident engineer and assistant resident administrator for the Luray Residency.
- Monica Spells, assistant county administrator of Beaufort County, South Carolina, has been appointed assistant county administrator of Loudoun County effective September 3. Her experience also includes service in the private and public sector, including the South Carolina Military Department.
- Samia Byrd, Arlington deputy county manager, has been appointed as the chief race and equity officer. She joined Arlington County in 2007 and has also previously served as assistant county manager and principal planner.
- Doug Stanley, Warren County administrator since 2000, involuntarily resigned his position effective July 31. He has served Warren County since 1994: first as zoning administrator and then planning director.
- Melissa Rollins has been appointed as the Surry County administrator effective June 11. She had served as the acting county administrator since January. Melissa previously served as the Surry assistant county administrator and director of finance and technology. She also was the director of finance for the city of Franklin.
- Derek Stamey has been appointed as the Goochland interim county administrator. He joined the county in 2009 as the director of parks, recreation, and facilities management and has served as the deputy county administrator of operations since 2016.

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