

September 2019 eNews

Presidential Musings From James



I had already penned and mailed the August newsletter piece before the horrible weekend unfolded. “Another mass shooting” are three words that just don’t belong together. So here we are doing nothing but counting and shoveling heaps and heaps out of the “thoughts and prayers” bucket.

So here is a different reaction: I rarely step out on the thin ice of absolute advocacy. ICMA ethics keep me out of that zone. I am to “Refrain from all political activities which undermine public confidence in professional administrators”. In this case I think the ethical restraint keeps us on the sideline saying “please solve this” versus saying “here is how we can solve this”. The concept of a firearm and the second amendment has made attempts to address gun violence political. Just like the FDA is prohibited from studying gun violence, by it having a political overtone we as local government leaders seem stymied just like the FDA. Honestly, I think it is time we toss this issue out of the political world and officially take an advocacy position and we recommend solutions at the local level. So, when your citizens are at risk of being gunned down while shopping, you should be able to talk about solutions. If homelessness is a local issue, why isn’t gun violence a local issue?

One side of the political fence says we don’t have a gun problem, but that we have a mental health problem (but they also actively work to limit universal insurance coverage for mental health issues). The other side says that certain types of guns should not be available, and that more scrutiny should be given gun buyers. Not mentioned is a large powerful lobby sitting in the middle. Let’s take the best of each approach and admit we have a mental health issue and follow that to its logical conclusion: that we need a better environment for mental health and that mental health is a factor in firearm acquisition and ownership. Here is the hard pill though, since each side acknowledges we are grappling with a mental health issue, you have to logically conclude that hatred for others based on race, religion, sexual orientation or any other factor is THE mental health issue. Yes this is a thin shaky bridge and many would say the issue comes before the manifestation.

So my recommendation and approach is to own the mental health side, be free to advocate for coverage and services for your citizens and call out the hate. That hate has struck close to home for all of us in the past few years. Virginia is a Dillon rule state and you can’t create any rules related to firearms, but you can strongly advocate for mental health services and availability and be a cheerleader for a hate free community. Me? I am going to become a much louder advocate for basic health care for our citizens and like superman in 1949, start reminding people every day and in every way that hate is un-American.

I hope VLGMA can give our localities some tools to help on this front. Rather than wring our hands at the hate enhancing national dialogue, perhaps we can do something? Perhaps if we

connected the dots of our stop the hate campaigns across the country, we could make a dent?

[Contact James Ervin](#)

Fall 2019 DAO Meeting



Registration is open for the next VLGMA Deputies, Assistants and Others (DAO) meeting.

Date: Friday, October 11, 2019

Host: Albemarle County, VA

Url: <https://www.albemarle.org/>

Location: Jefferson Madison Regional Library (Central), 201 E. Market Street, Charlottesville, VA 22902

Theme: Productive Partnerships – Work Better, Together.

We will explore the theme through two case studies in how local governments can work better, together.

- Equity & Inclusion
- Project Management

Lunch will be included at the cost of \$20 per person. The invitation letter and agenda are online. Please register to attend if you are a DAO! We look forward to hosting you in Albemarle County!

DAO Meeting Website - <https://icma.org/vlgma/deputies-assistants-others>

Online registration - <https://commerce.coopercenter.org/ccps/login.php>

Tedd's Take



Fixing America: A Local Responsibility

In my last article, I talked about the degradation of values and acceptance of this disturbing trend that have become pervasive in this country. The America we thought we knew, the progress we thought we had made in race relations, acceptance of people who may not sound or look like us, and the ability to discuss difficult issues objectively seem distant goals once again.

So what can we do at the local level to counter these negative perceptions and realities? *Lead by example...*

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

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Civic Engagement



Civic Engagement in Rural Broadband Deployment

Orange County is predominately a rural community that has limited high-speed broadband availability. Currently private sector broadband companies are unable to provide affordable, high-speed broadband service due to large upfront capital expenses with a relatively small potential customer base for producing profitable revenue. Orange County residents, however, are increasingly demanding

access to affordable and reliable high-speed broadband. In addition, the Board of Supervisors, the Orange County Broadband Authority (OCBA) and County staff recognize the inescapable need to use broadband to deliver efficient and effective local government services and promote economic development.

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Certificate News

THE Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management



*"Preparing the Next Generation of
Local Government Leaders"*

The graduate certificate in local government management continues to prepare the next generation of local government managers and leaders! We started classes the week of August 26th with a full cohort of students from across the State. Thank you to Kim Payne, Cindy Mester, Kathleen Guzzi and Sara Carter for serving as adjunct faculty for the fall classes. The local government certificate program is supported by a MPA student, Lucas Hodge. Lucas worked as an intern in the Town of Pearisburg this summer and was the recipient of the Jerry Cox Scholarship for local government management. Lucas is very excited to continue his studies and achieve the local government certificate. Lucas will serve as the VT ICMA student chapter president and will be arranging guest speakers and webinars throughout the semester. If you are interest in serving as a student mentor or guest speaker, please email him lhodge1417@vt.edu.

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Mel's Poetry Corner



Will I Have to Pause?

This traffic light, green, yellow, red,
will I be able to go or do I have to stop instead?

Green, the message to simply go
harmoniously moving in Life's flow.

Red, the chance to stop and reflect
which direction I might go next.

But yellow catches me unawares—
be cautious or take an impulsive dare?

This yellow gap in both time and space
is a moment for the heart to race.

Suspension in in-decisiveness,
Will it be concession or defiance?

And I also need to be
sensitive to those around me.

Red lets me hesitate, contemplate
in unity with others of a similar fate.

Green encourages acceleration
to my chosen destination.

While yellow just may serve
to remember I may be observed.

By going, a little envy I might find
unless there's a policeman watching behind!

Next traffic light you come to,
reflect a moment inside of you.

Let green be symbolic of the choice
to express gratitude and rejoice.

And if red interrupts the day,
in peace, take a mini holiday.
And if attuned to your inner voice,
yellow can be a pivotal choice.
A hiccup in which to awaken
to the road, life has serendipitously taken.
Even a prophetic moment to
become unglued.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)



Position Changes And Other Events

August 2019

- Leslie Beauregard, assistant city manager for Charlottesville for the past 4 years, has been appointed assistant city manager for Staunton effective October 7th.
- Dr. Larry "Chip" Filer, associate vice president for entrepreneurship and economic development at Old Dominion University, has been appointed city manager for Norfolk.
- Aaron Gisdale, director of zoning and inspections for the city of Winchester, has been appointed deputy town manager for Woodstock effective September 30th.
- Gerald Spates, Farmville town manager for the past 41 years, and Virginia's longest serving town manager, announced his immediate retirement. Assistant town manager Scott Davis was appointed interim town manager.
- Charles Hartgrove, chief deputy commissioner for the Virginia Department of Taxation, and former deputy city manager for Lynchburg and former town manager for Ashland and Gate City, has been appointed associate director of the Virginia Institute of Government, effective September 3rd.
- David Hansen, Virginia Beach city manager since 2015, announced his retirement effective September 4th. Hansen named deputy city manager Tom Leahy acting city manager pending city council action.
- John Burton, the first administrator for Northumberland County, holding that post for 28 years, passed away at the age of 89.

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