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Cup of Joe to Go



Joe Casey

Cup of Joe to Go

Many of us use each new year to create resolutions. Many are perennial. Hopefully some are still in effect by the time you get this newsletter. Sometimes we find humor or optimism when we're no longer in resolution mode. For example, for my church sign I recently put up - "2018 Resolution: Lose 10 pounds; only 20 to go."

Either way, in our roles we are faced with many issues which involve resolutions. A resolution can be defined as firm decision to do or not to do something; or the action of solving a problem, dispute, or contentious matter. Some are formally done as part of our elected official meetings and can range from thanks bestowed to someone or something to serious business matters in which such action defines closure to a long-standing issue.

In our day to day roles, many look to you for resolution. Again, the range of these can be from the mundane to serious issues that fall under your decision-making authority. We are much better at keeping these resolutions over the ones we personally set for ourselves. Perhaps, it's because when others are dependent upon you, you are steadfast to the mission and keep your word. And when we are dependent just upon ourselves we tend to rationalize the many forks in our road. As Yogi Berra stated - "when you see a fork in the road, take it."

Therefore, resort to humor and optimism whenever you can, personally and professionally, as appropriate, to make 2019 a great year for your family, locality,

employees, citizens, businesses, non-profits and especially you.

Please join me in welcoming our newest VLGMA members: Stephanie Straub, County of Orange Director of Management Services; Mark Moore, County of Pittsylvania Director of Parks & Recreation; LaToya Ball-Tate, County of Westmoreland Executive Assistant; Danny Davis (rejoining member), Town of Middleburg Town Administrator; David Street, County of Loudoun Project Manager; Chelsea West, Student Member, William & Mary MPP Candidate and Alexes Chatham, County of Westmoreland Budget Manager.

[Contact Joe Casey.](#)

Position Changes and Other Events

December 2018

- Dan O'Donnell, assistant administrator for Roanoke County since 2000, has been appointed county administrator there.
- Scott Simpson, assistant administrator and engineer for Smyth County, has been appointed Halifax County administrator effective February 1st.
- Brandie Schaeffer, planning director for Warrenton since 2016, has been appointed interim town manager there.
- Mary Price, Shenandoah County administrator since 2013, has announced her retirement effective April 1, 2019.
- Amanda Jarratt, Franklin-Southampton Economic Development Inc. CEO, has been appointed Franklin city manager effective January 28, 2019.
- Brent Robertson, Franklin County administrator since 2015, announced his resignation effective March 31, 2019.
- Steve Nichols, administrator for Fluvanna County since 2012, announced his retirement effective July 5, 2019.
- Edwin "Ed" Whitmore III, former Smyth County administrator, passed away.



Tedd's Take



Tedd Povar

Change is in the Wind

"Often when you think you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else." - Fred Rogers

After much consideration, and 42 1/2 years of credited service in the Virginia Retirement System, I have set an official retirement date of March 24, 2019.

This is a decision made with mixed emotions and with the realization that one cannot move to "phase II" unless you set a hard date to end "phase I." Phase I started in elementary school in Seekonk, Massachusetts in 1957, and I've been in school or full-time work ever since. Phase II isn't in sharp focus yet, but I'm sure it includes continued close connection to all of you in "the profession" through involvement with VLGMA, particularly in the areas of member support and coaching/mentoring and maybe an occasional local government

project. How that all happens and what works for all concerned remain to be determined.

My tenure with the Virginia Institute of Government has been exceptionally fulfilling, and I will be watching with great interest as it evolves under new leadership both at the Weldon Cooper Center and within the Institute. A position that allows almost unlimited professional flexibility and responsibility is rare and very good fortune, and that's what I've had for the last 22 years. If I've been of some assistance to the local governments of Virginia, to organizations like VLGMA, and those looking to move into local government management and other professions over those years, my time with the Institute has been a success.

So, as we move into the promise and uncertainty of 2019, let me say "Thank You" for letting me be part of the remarkable Virginia local government community since 1978. You all are the very best, and I look forward to finding mutually agreeable ways to continue to serve Virginia's localities and my friends and peers for at least a few more years.

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

A DAO in the Life - Jeff Ferrel

A DAO in the Life

Jeff Ferrel, Assistant County Administrator - Operations
County of Louisa



Jeff Ferrel

Working in local government offers a nearly unlimited array of "fun" challenges. As leaders in local government providing guidance and making tough decisions is part of our daily lives. On good days problems are low stress and routine, there are other times where problems or rather the solutions may be more impactful to your community or organization. I have recently completed my first year as an Assistant, promoted from Director of General Services, and during that transition I have almost exclusively lived in unfamiliar territory. Changing from a position that you have comfort and stability into the unknown is always challenging. Particularly because those you work with both expect and need you to provide guidance and answers in areas that, to you, may be very new.

I'm lucky enough to work for a great organization full of smart and capable professionals and now 14 months into my new role the dust is beginning to settle and things are starting to look more familiar again. I thought I might take this opportunity to share a few guidelines I have tried to follow when looking for solutions while living in unfamiliar territory.

First, take a moment to make sure you understand the problem. I know... this seems obvious, but take a step back for a moment and ask why? The root of the problem is not always what you are presented with. Dig into the details and learn to ask the right questions, if you aren't sure what the right question is, keep asking why... you'll eventually get there. Asking questions is the fastest way to create productive conversation with your team, it will lead to creative thinking and new ideas.

Second, recognize you are not always the expert. This can be a tough pill to swallow but it is impossible and unreasonable to expect that you will have all the answers. Seek out and trust those experts you work with and ask for help. You are managing a team of professionals who are ready and willing to work through problems together. Remember its ok to look outside your organization for help too. It is unlikely you are the first group to tackle this issue, there are solutions out there. Get your experts together and start asking questions (see above).

Finally, stick to the facts and start at the beginning. On more than one occasion I have been presented with a "creative solution" to a newly discovered issue. Thinking outside the box and creative solutions are great, provided they are grounded in facts. Avoid the pitfall of falling in love with a plan or jumping to the most attractive solution. It is easy to identify the answer or outcome you want and then find some justification for your hopeful conclusion. More often than not the best solution is not grand or flashy, it's a logical and simple solution... and that ok too.

[Contact Jeff Ferrel](#)

2019 VLGMA Winter Conference - Registration Reminder

Reminder to Register for the 2019 VLGMA Winter Conference

"Communication for Today's Manager" is the theme of the 2019 VLGMA Winter Conference to be held February 20-22, 2019, in Staunton. Our focus will be discussing the various ways we communicate, finding a bridge to opposing views, and meeting new leaders with new visions. From internet communication to annexation discussions to stories from the trenches, how we communicate helps define our success.



Our Wednesday afternoon pre-conference session is a combination of Steve Minor on "Running Effective Meetings" and the American Shakespeare Center (ASC) Leadership Training - "Communication Skills". The workshop will focus on enhancing written and oral presentation skills; understanding non-verbal messages; and constructive criticism and coaching. You may even be asked to showcase your talents on stage.

On Wednesday evening, there will be a reception at the Blackfriars Playhouse next to the hotel. Constructed by the ASC, this is the first modern re-creation of Shakespeare's original indoor theatre. The design is based on plans from other 17th-century theatres and Shakespeare's stage directions.

The conference will touch upon such topics as broadband solutions, a book discussion on "Radical Candor", 2019 General Assembly update, coaching communication, and reflections on communication with your peers.

As always, there will be plenty of time to network and interact with your colleagues. The popular Speed Coaching session returns during lunch on Thursday

facilitated by Matt Lawless. We encourage you to participate in this exercise as a way to collaborate and learn from others.

The pre-conference workshop is included in the full registration. We will also have the one-day Thursday only registration option for those who can't make the entire conference. New last year, is the ability to register for just the pre-conference session on Wednesday which includes the evening reception. This could be a great option to expose other staff to VLGMA in addition to discussing communication in your own organization.

[Registration is open online now!](#)

Committee Co-Chairs --

Rosylen Oglesby, Assistant to the City Manager, City of Portsmouth

Jeffrey Stoke, Deputy County Administrator, Prince George County

Civic Engagement - City of Lynchburg

Community Development and Civic Engagement

In the world of Community Development, Civic Engagement is imperative to neighborhood success. Creation and maintenance of vibrant and functional living spaces helps to grow stronger communities. Recently, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding was utilized to redevelop and update neighborhood centers in Lynchburg, VA.



John Hughes

Two neighborhood centers were remodeled in 2018, with plans to renovate two others in 2019. This may seem a small bright spot to celebrate, however just a few years ago; there was discussion to close neighborhood centers in Lynchburg. The centers were perceived by some as non-functional, underutilized and lacking staff to accommodate consistent interaction with neighborhoods. However, the input of citizens and Parks and Recreation staff worked to persuade City Council against closing centers.

Neighborhood Centers Coordinator, Charlotte Lester, noted that centers have been a part of Lynchburg's history for decades in the City's oldest areas. "Over time," said Lester "[centers] have had an incredible value as far as community engagement goes to the life of the neighborhood."

A crucial part of the allocation from CDBG to renovate centers was the input and support of the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC). This committee is comprised of seven City residents, two of which are Council members, and five others who reside in predominantly low and moderate income neighborhoods. The CDAC members evaluate available CDBG and HOME grant requests, as well as other grants deemed appropriate by City Council. Recommendations are made to City Council after the CDAC votes on specific grant applications.

Neighborhood centers provide a plethora of activities and programs focused on family, education and career development. Centers are also a warm inviting place

for "...senior programming, out of school time programming, community celebrations, [and] meetings" per Lester.

The support of community residents to actively participate in the Civic Engagement opportunity afforded them through CDAC and voicing opinions at City Council strengthened the argument to keep neighborhood centers alive. Thus, these crucial factors in our historic communities are now thriving anchors and an appropriate vital place for local government to have a space. As Lester mentioned, the results and successes of neighborhood center work in communities "don't always have an immediate or obvious payoff" rather they bloom through a "long, slow process" and may not be recognized as frequently as other City services. Therefore it is imperative that neighborhood residents are civically engaged.

The example of Lynchburg's neighborhood centers exemplifies what can be done through Civic Engagement. Empowering residents to become involved in a locality's decisions speaks directly to the heart of true local government management.

Note to all VLGMA members on the April 2019 Local Government Education Week (LGEW): (Excerpt from <http://www.vaco.org/april-1-7-local-government-education-week/>, 2017)

Let's celebrate and share the Virginia local government story with students and the greater community in April. Participating communities are eligible to win a great elementary school level book on local government services and further education on the importance of public service at the same time.

The 2012 General Assembly adopted House Joint Resolution #93 proclaiming the first week of April as Local Government Education week in honor of the founding of the Council-Manager form of government in Staunton, Virginia, in 1908.

The Civic Engagement Committee of the Virginia Local Government Management Association has developed tools for students - our future leaders - regarding good community building work, the services provided at the local level, and to increase awareness of career opportunities in local government. This will help us strengthen knowledge of local government management/public service as a vital part of our democracy, and possibly as a career path.

As part of this effort VLGMA asks each locality's governing body to adopt a proclamation honoring this week. A template is available on the Civic Engagement webpage on the VLGMA website (http://icma.org/en/va/resources/civic_education).

Adopting a proclamation is a good first step, but there are many other activities to engage with the local school district and the young people of our community. We encourage each locality to develop an engagement plan that meets your local need. The Civic Engagement Committee has pulled together numerous resources that are posted on the website that include great elementary school level books, a high school teachers' resource guide with lesson plans, and a report of various civic engagement best practices used by VLGMA members. Activities are not restricted

to the first week of April but can occur throughout the year and be highlighted in April.

Remember to promote civic education and engagement April 1-7, 2019!

[Contact John Hughes](#)

Innovation Edge



Innovation Edge

Happy New Year!!

It's a new year with much promise ahead for local governments. More and more ways are being found to innovate, collaborate, create, start anew, and have a "let's-try-it" approach. Hopefully, we can all say as Habeeb Akande said, "I may not be where I want to be, but I'm thankful for not being where I used to be." With this in mind, we all progress and can look back at the challenges turned to successes that benefit ourselves and our citizens we serve.

The new year brings changes in my role with the Alliance. Through reorganization and restructuring, I'm now the Community Relations Director and will serve all North America in this capacity. You're not losing me! I'm just serving in a broader sense for the Alliance and our members.

Be sure to register for TLG 2019, which takes place April 9-12 in Reno, Nevada. Get more info [here](#).

About the Alliance for Innovation: The Alliance for Innovation is inspiring innovation to advance communities. As the premier resource for emerging practices in local government, we are building cultures of innovation and connecting thought leaders in the profession. We are accessible and valuable to all levels of an organization. You can learn more about the Alliance at www.transformgov.org or contact me at saburnett@transformgov.org.

ICMA Update



**2019 ICMA Southeast Regional Conference Will
Focus on Innovation and Technology**

In 2019, communities around the world will be challenged to keep up with -- and more importantly, keep ahead of -- the dramatic changes technology presents. At this year's 2019 ICMA Southeast Regional Conference, held February 27-March 1 in Greenville, South Carolina, through interactive breakout sessions and workshops, local government leaders will devise ways to evaluate the positives and negatives of these fast-changing technologies to ensure public safety, access and improved quality of life for their residents. Join us in Greenville to build the local government leader's playbook on innovation. [Register today.](#)

Mel's Poetry Corner

Transitioning to...

This interlude, this breath between now and the next unfolding dream is a transition or a hearty push to an unchartered, unanticipated avenue.



Mel Gillies

No need to rush to higher ground.

Transition is not a bad root canal.

It's a sacred life crossing from one identity to another, a new way of being to discover.

Let go of resistance and meet uncanny power within reach.

Transition is a primer to see your next level of potency.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

Calendar

Upcoming Events

2019 VLGMA Winter Conference - Feb. 20-22 in Staunton at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel - [Registration is open!](#)

[More Dates](#)

Update Email Address



Making a change? To continue to receive the monthly eNews and other VLGMA notices, please email [Molly Harlow](#) to update your contact information.

Future Newsletter Articles



A goal of this e-newsletter is to keep you informed on activities relative to our profession. As with any membership-based organization, contributions by members are welcome and encouraged. Topics can range from a recent achievement in your locality to an upcoming event with networking potential to human interest stories about current or retired members. To contribute simply send your brief e-newsletter content (~5 sentences or less) via email to [Molly Harlow](#).

Future Newsletter Articles

[VLGMA Website](#)

[ICMA Website](#)

[Alliance for Innovation](#)

[Virginia Municipal League](#)

[VA Association of Counties](#)

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