

# STATE LEAGUE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

## October 25, 2008 – San Diego, California

This document summarizes actions taken by the State League Steering Committee at its Oct. 25 meeting in San Diego, CA and discussions on items that were not described with supporting materials in the Steering Committee's meeting agenda book that all league executive directors received prior to the meeting.

**Present:** Geoff Beckwith, MA for James J. Finley, Jr., CT; Sylvia Lovely, KY, **Acting Chair**; Perry Roquemore, AL for Margaret Mahery, TN; Larry Frang, IL for Sue Cave, OH; Bill Fulginiti, NM for Tom Ed McHugh, LA; Lynn Rex, NE; Sam Mamet, CO; David Fraser, NV. **Also Present:** Bill Heberton, President, NLC Mutual Insurance Co. **NLC Staff:** Don Borut, Cathy Spain, Scott Morris.

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chair Lovely at 8:05 a.m., and the summary of the Steering Committee meeting of May 3, 2008 in Tucson, Arizona was approved.

### Actions Taken by the Steering Committee:

1. Voted to shorten the first full day of the League Directors Summer Meeting so that it ends at the conclusion of the luncheon program (usually at 1:30 or 1:45 p.m.).
2. Approved the location of the Doubletree Hotel San Diego Mission Valley in San Diego, California as the location for the 2011 State League Staff Development Workshop, which is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, July 13 through Saturday, July 16, 2011.
3. Voted to discontinue sending paper copies of *Nation's Cities Weekly (NCW)* to state league boards of directors. Each league will be encouraged to forward electronic copies of *NCW* to their boards.
4. For service on NLC's Advisory Council as one of three state league director representatives:
  - a) Approved the nomination of Ken Strobeck, Arizona for the three-year term, 2009-2011,
  - b) Approved the nomination of Stan Finkelstein, Washington for a two-year term, 2009-2010.

### Discussion of Meeting Agenda Items:

1. **Presumption Project Update.** Heberton reported on the status of NLC's Presumption Project. He said that NLC and the consultant, TriData Corporation, are more than halfway through the project, with the final study due to be published in January. After the report is published, NLC will consult with state leagues to decide the next steps on this issue. Borut said that presumption, together with the NFPA Standards on firefighter turnout and response times, has a very large effect on the financial bottom line of cities. Heberton agreed that the dollar shift to cities could be very onerous, presenting an unjustifiable burden to local taxpayers; presumption would be a very expensive unfunded mandate that local taxpayers would have to bear.
2. **NLC Executive Director's Report.** Borut reported on NLC's budget, staffing, programs, conferences, and legislative activities. Key items discussed were:
  - **NLC's Finances and Staffing** -- Borut said that although NLC faced financial challenges at the beginning of FY 2008, NLC ended the fiscal year in good financial shape. As NLC starts Fiscal Year 2009, it will be in a good financial position because of more revenue from the Corporate Partners program and NLC's office building. Although delegate attendance is somewhat down for the Congress of Cities (CoC) in Orlando, and some cities are not renewing their NLC memberships, NLC is starting the current fiscal year with a "good enough cushion." Staff positions are being filled, especially in the Center for Federal Relations, which is now fully staffed. Other previously-vacant positions at NLC have also recently been filled.
  - **Inside NLC** -- NLC's senior management team has been working with an organizational consultant to help them strengthen their collective ability to better their resources to respond to and address Board and membership priorities. Borut said that this process has already had a very constructive impact on the organization and on the senior management team's ability to better coordinate and draw on staff talents.

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- City Fiscal Conditions -- With the downturn in the economy impacting cities, NLC has been speaking out in the media about current fiscal conditions in municipalities through Policy and Research Director Chris Hoene; he has appeared on several news programs, making NLC the “go-to source” for information on cities and towns and raising the profile of cities. Borut added that for the first time since the early 1980s, cities are experiencing a decrease in revenues from all their major revenue sources -- property taxes, user fees, and sales and use taxes.
- Mayors’ Action Challenge for Children and Families -- Twenty-six large city mayors, led by Joe Riley of Charleston, South Carolina and R.T. Ryback of Minneapolis, Minnesota have launched a new initiative through NLC’s Institute for Youth, Education, and Families to promote city leadership and action on behalf of young people and their families. Borut emphasized that this national call to action will bolster the progress that cities have made in several areas, such as school readiness, violence prevention, afterschool programming, access to post secondary education, community wellness, and family economic success.
- Emergency Management Preparedness and Planning -- NLC has been working with ICMA to develop a nationwide training program that will help state municipal leagues to provide training seminars, resource guides, and sample agreements to help their local government members prepare for and respond to a broad range of emergencies. League Directors Connie Sprynczynatyk of North Dakota and Ellis Hankins of North Carolina are the co-chairs of the NLC Department of Homeland Security Project Advisory Council, and will be giving a briefing on this program to league directors at the upcoming Congress of Cities.
- Prescription Drug Card Program -- This program was discussed at the previous steering committee meeting in May and at NLC’s 2008 league directors summer meeting. Twenty to 30 cities currently participate in the program, and NLC member cities will be offered this service, too. State leagues can also help promote the program, which has proven to be a great service to cities.
- U.S Green Building Council and ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives)-- NLC has been working with these two environmental organization on developing an index that cities can use as a tool to meet sustainability objectives and to share best environmental practices.
- Long-Term Revenue Study -- Revenues come from Corporate Partners, and entrepreneurial programs are sources of revenue growth for NLC. NLC is looking to the private sector to help in terms of growth, but will not compromise its position on priority issues. The long-term revenue study is looking at all potential revenue sources for NLC and improvements to all current revenue-producing programs and products.
- NLC Leadership Elections -- There are five candidates for NLC Second Vice President and several candidates for 14 NLC Board positions. Borut stressed that state league endorsements for the Board are important. Committee members discussed changing the deadline for submitting candidate data forms.
- NLC Committee Application Process – Manager of Governance Programs Martha Moss is compiling the list of committee and panel chair, vice chair, and member candidates, from which NLC president Kathie Novak will make appointments for 2009.
- Elected Officials Handbook -- NLC and ICMA recently produced a new edition of “A guide for Local Elected Leaders,” a publication that is indispensable to all local elected leaders. In addition, the state leagues can purchase the handbook in bulk for use at their conferences and training sessions. Steering committee members felt this book would be an excellent publication for use in the training of newly elected officials.
- NLC’s January Officers and Board Meeting -- This is a critical meeting for the NLC Board to plan NLC’s legislative priorities for 2009 and NLC’s strategies for dealing and working with the new Administration. A conference call is being scheduled in mid February with NLC committee and panel chairs to discuss NLC’s legislative priorities and strategies.
- Election 2008 -- NLC is keeping in contact with the transition teams of both Presidential candidates. A surrogate of the winning candidate will be invited to attend the Wednesday Board meeting at the Congress of Cities and discuss the transition process.

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- Legislative Report -- Borut said that the Big 7 state and local government associations are collectively in support of an economic stimulus package on funding critical infrastructure needs for transportation, renewable energy, and clean water. He is asking all league directors to help identify “ready-to-go” infrastructure projects in their respective states. A process has not yet been developed to distribute the necessary funding for important infrastructure projects. Also, the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve are trying to assist cities and towns in selling their municipal bonds. Rex said that the Federal Home Loan Bank Board is reaching out to cities in Nebraska through the league. Other issues mentioned by Borut included additional funding for Amtrak and the red flag rules.
  - GASB Update -- Spain said that NLC is supporting Cynthia Eisenhower, formerly the Chief of Staff for Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack and now a consultant with the Public Strategies Group, as a new voting member of the GASB Board to replace Girard Miller. She discussed a proposal for the states funding GASB, but consideration of this proposal has been delayed due to the global financial crisis. Also, there will be a GASB hearing at the Congress of Cities on GASB’s Service Efforts and Accomplishments Reporting Project.
  - Southern Municipal Conference IT Group -- This group will be meeting in Tallahassee, Florida on November 10-11, and the meeting has now been opened to leagues and pools in the other states around the country. Retired South Carolina league director Howard Duvall is the group coordinator.
  - Analog Television Transition – The NLC website has information about how Comcast can assist cities and towns in the transition to analog television. Borut said that he would contact Juan Otero, Vice President, Government Affairs at Comcast.
3. **NLC Business Solutions for Cities.** Spain discussed some entrepreneurial programs that NLC is involved and partnered in. Information about these various program is contained in Section 4 of the Oct. 25 meeting agenda book.
4. **State League Staff Report.** Spain discussed the following key items:
- NLC-RISC (Staff Conference) -- The attendance figures were good for this year’s just-completed staff conference. There was a track at the conference for pool administrators, and NLC-RISC had a marketing awards program for the first time. The keynote speaker for the Opening General Session, David Horsager, discussed trust and included illusion in his presentation; he was very well received. The NLC-RISC Staff Conference will be held in New Orleans in 2009. NLC-RISC board members revised the NLC-RISC strategic plan, reviewed the Tenant Users Liability Insurance Program (TULIP), launched a certificate program, and asked Pete Tritz, Minnesota Pool Administrator, to chair a committee on benchmarking for pools. The NLC-RISC bylaws were amended to have the Board evenly split between pool administrators and league directors; Susan Smith, Pool Administrator in Texas, is the new RISC Board Chair, and Perry Roquemore, Executive Director of the Alabama League of Municipalities, is the new Vice Chair.
  - Public Finance Consortium Training Workshop/Business Meeting -- NLC’s Public Finance Consortium held its first-ever full-day training session, followed by a half-day business meeting. The training session was very well received by attendees. The agendas for both the training session and business meeting are contained in Tab 5 of the meeting agenda book.
  - NFPA 1710 -- Spain discussed the proposed revision to NFPA’s firefighter response time and turnout standard from 60 seconds to 80 seconds 90 percent of the time. A report on this change to the standard is contained in Tab 5 of the meeting agenda book.
  - National Performance Management Advisory Commission -- Thirteen national organizations, including NLC, GFOA, and ICMA, are participating in this commission. Jackie Nytes, a member of the Indianapolis – Marion County Council is the commission chair. The commission is developing a comprehensive, conceptual framework for public sector performance management.
  - State League Events at Congress of Cities -- Morris reviewed the listing of events for state municipal league directors and staff at the Congress of Cities, which is contained in Tab 5 of the meeting agenda book. He said that 12 state league staff volunteers would be assisting NLC staff at the CoC in Orlando in November.

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5. **State League Programs and Services.** Morris presented a list of state league programs and services that are currently are under review and evaluation, and that are contained in Tab 7 of the meeting agenda book. He asked those in attendance at the meeting to consider the three questions that are also in Tab 6 before the listing of programs and services. The goal is for NLC's State League Programs staff to better serve the state leagues and to be more effective and efficient in delivering services and programs to the league directors and staff.
6. **League Directors Summer Meeting.** Morris reviewed the evaluations of this year's summer meeting in Monterey, CA (see evaluation summary in Tab 7); presented proposed changes to the summer meeting program (see page 1 of this meeting summary); and gave a brief update on preparations for the 2009 league directors summer meeting in Rockport, Maine.
7. **League Directors Winter Meeting.** Lovely provided an update on the program and arrangements for NLC's 2<sup>nd</sup> League Directors Winter Meeting, which is scheduled for January 23-25, 2009 in Phoenix, Arizona. The program was developed in cooperation with the Arizona State University School of Public Affairs. She said that this program would be a wonderful opportunity to look to the future, think about leadership and what is involved in leadership, and take advantage of the knowledge and talent of all who attend. Each league director in attendance at the Steering Committee pledged to make calls to fellow league directors in their respective regions to urge them to attend the Phoenix meeting. Lovely said that she would talk further about the program at the league directors luncheon roundtable at the Congress of Cities in Orlando.
8. **State League Staff Workshop.** Morris reviewed the evaluations from the 2008 staff workshop in Denver (see evaluation summary in Tab 9); gave a brief update on preparations for the 2009 state league staff workshop in Louisville, Kentucky on July 16-19; and recommended the Doubetree Hotel San Diego Mission Valley as the site of the 2011 staff workshop (see page 1 of this summary).
9. **Advisory Council Appointments.** See page one of this meeting summary.
10. **Updates from Regional League Meetings.** Beckwith said that the Region I League directors would be meeting in Portland, Maine on Friday, October 31; among the items to be discussed are federal and state fiscal issues. Lovely discussed the Southern Municipal Conference Board of Directors Meeting in early September in Hot Springs, Virginia; the meeting agenda is contained in Tab 11 of the meeting agenda book. She also said there have been no meetings in the mid Atlantic region. Rex said that there had recently been a conference call of Region VI league directors on the immigration issue. Mamet said that the Western Municipal Conference (WMC) would be having a luncheon and program at the Congress of Cities. The WMC is producing a quarterly newsletter, has a website, and has developed useful contacts with the Western Governors Association. In addition, articles written by WMC Coordinator Kevin Ritchie on the activities of the WMC have appeared in *League Letter*.
11. **Spring 2009 Steering Committee Meeting.** The Steering Committee voted to schedule its spring 2009 meeting on Saturday, May 9 near the conclusion of the NLC-RISC Trustees Workshop.
12. **Other business.** Mamet mentioned former University of Colorado President John Buechner as a speaker at future league or NLC meetings and some of the books that he has authored.
13. **Adjournment.** The Steering Committee adjourned at 1:45 p.m.