

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

Welcome to the 2017 Legislative Bulletin!

Bulletin 01, 2017 Session
December 28, 2016

The NHMA *Legislative Bulletin* is a weekly publication designed primarily to communicate with municipal officials, but it also serves to keep legislators, the Governor's office, and the media informed about municipal legislative priorities. The *Bulletin* will be published next on Friday, January 6, and each Friday after that until the legislative session ends in June. The *Bulletin* generally contains:

- A brief analysis of key legislative developments during the past week;
- An update on any action on NHMA policy bills;
- The legislative calendar, listing municipal bills to be heard in the next two weeks;
- A call for action on critical legislation when municipal input is necessary; and
- Periodic updates of federal issues of interest to municipal officials.

Early editions of the *Legislative Bulletin*, including this one, will also contain a brief description of bills introduced for the session that we have identified as being of municipal interest, along with the name of the prime sponsor and the committee to which the bill has been referred.

To serve our members more efficiently, we post the *Legislative Bulletin* on our website (www.nhmunicipal.org) each Friday and send an e-mail notice and link when it is posted, to provide it electronically to as many as we can. However, local officials and legislators may choose to receive the *Bulletin* by U.S. mail if they prefer. (See article on page 3 for more on this subject.)

This publication is designed to inform and update. If you have ideas about providing information in a different format or a more understandable fashion, please let us know. You can reach us at governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org or the phone number on the *Legislative Bulletin* letterhead.

Invite Your Legislators to Your Next Meeting!

If you want to have a positive effect on municipal legislation in 2017, one of the best things you can do **right now** is to invite your legislative delegation to your next board of selectmen/council/aldermen meeting. This applies whether your legislators are veterans, rookies, or a combination of the two.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

House and Senate to Meet	2
Bulletin Delivery Options	2
Municipal Advocate of the Year	3
New Bills, New Committees	4
Glossary of Abbreviations	11
NHMA Workshops, Webinars	12

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Over the next several months, there will be occasions when we will ask you to contact your legislators (or you will want to contact them, even without being asked) to discuss pending legislation. Making a cold call to someone you've never met is no fun for even the hardest extrovert, and for many people it is downright intimidating.

That is why it makes sense to invite your legislators to a meeting **now**, before you need to call them to ask for support on a particular issue. If you have a get-acquainted session with your legislators, in which you talk generally about legislative priorities and concerns without asking anything specific of them, you will feel much more comfortable, and will almost certainly get a better reception, when you call them in a few weeks or months to ask them to support or oppose a particular bill.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Invite all of your representatives and your senator. (If you don't know who they are, go to [this page](#) and click on your county, then your city or town—or call us.)
- Set aside time at the meeting for all of the legislators and all members of your governing body to introduce themselves.
- Make it a two-way exchange. Share your concerns with them, but also ask them about their priorities and what they expect from this year's legislature.
- Remember that municipal issues are mostly non-partisan. You do not have to share your legislators' views on guns, immigration, or U.S. Supreme Court nominees in order to find common ground on issues that affect your city or town.
- Exchange contact information, and ask them what is the best way to contact them: phone, e-mail, or something else.
- Remember that they work for you, and with rare exceptions, they **do** want to hear from their local government leaders.

House and Senate to Meet January 4; Committees to Follow

The House and Senate will meet (separately) in session at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 4. Although no schedule has been published yet for the day's activities, they are expected to adopt rules, introduce bills, and attend to other administrative details. The House and Senate will meet in joint session at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 5, for the inauguration of the Governor.

Legislative committees will begin meeting the week of January 9; meetings that week will likely be limited to committee orientations. We expect that hearings on bills will begin the week of January 16.

How Do You Take Your Legislative Bulletin?

Each week last year we sent an electronic link to the *Legislative Bulletin* to approximately 880 recipients, and sent approximately 270 paper copies by U.S. mail. A number of municipal officials received both the hard copy and the electronic version.

We want to make sure the *Bulletin* is being sent to you in the most effective way. Our primary concern is that you get to read the *Bulletin* in a timely way and have an opportunity to contact your legislators on matters that are important to your municipality and local government. The e-mailed *Bulletin* gets to you on Friday, while the hard copy will not arrive until Saturday or even Monday. This can make a big difference, given that the *Bulletin* usually provides notice of events that will occur the following Tuesday through Thursday. Another factor is that it is considerably less expensive for NHMA to distribute the *Bulletin* electronically. With those thoughts in mind, please consider switching from a hard copy to the electronic version.

For those who still prefer to receive a hard copy, we want to make sure we have your best mailing address. If elected municipal leaders receive their hard copy of the *Bulletin* at the town or city hall, they may not actually see it for a week or more after it's distributed. Again, the whole point of the *Bulletin* is timeliness.

Therefore, if you would be willing to have the *Bulletin* mailed to your home so that you can receive it more promptly, we hope that you will give us your home mailing address. If you choose to receive the *Bulletin* at your home, it will not change where you receive other NHMA mailings.

Your preference. With that background, please take a moment to consider how you are currently receiving the *Bulletin* and whether you want to change how it is distributed to you.

If you would like to make a change in the delivery of your *Bulletin*, whether it is to go from hard copy to electronic or to change the address to which we mail your *Bulletin*, please contact us by calling or e-mailing Pam Valley at 1-800-852-3358 ext. 3408 or governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org.

Portsmouth City Council Receives Municipal Advocate of the Year Award

Each year, the NHMA staff awards the Russ Marcoux Municipal Advocate of the Year award based on interactions with municipal officials during the legislative session. We established this award in 2011 to recognize an elected or appointed local official(s) for his or her non-partisan contributions toward the advancement of NHMA's legislative policy goals and for the advocacy of municipal interests generally.

In 2011, NHMA staff selected Russ Marcoux, town manager in Bedford, as the first-ever recipient of the Municipal Advocate of the Year award because Russ did all the things we encourage members to do to enhance the success of our legislative agenda. Russ passed away just days before the 2011 Annual Conference, and he never knew we had created such an award or that he had been selected the first recipient. In his honor, the NHMA board of directors renamed this recognition as the *Russ Marcoux Municipal Advocate of the Year* award.

At its recent annual conference in November, NHMA recognized the **Portsmouth City Council** with its 2016 *Russ Marcoux Municipal Advocate of the Year* award. This was the first time the award was given to an entire governing body, rather than an individual, but it was not a difficult choice, because the council in recent years has served as a model for legislative advocacy:

- It has created a legislative subcommittee that meets regularly to review legislation and make recommendations for policy positions by the council.
- The subcommittee meets regularly with the city's senator and representatives to discuss legislation and inform them of the council's positions.

- The council encourages municipal staff to provide necessary information to the legislative delegation.
- The city regularly sends staff to the state house to follow what is going on and testify when necessary.
- The city's staff keeps NHMA's staff informed about their legislative efforts to enhance coordination.

Not every city council or board of selectmen has the capacity to do all of this, but it is something to aspire to; if every local governing body could move a few steps in this direction, it would greatly increase the influence of city and town governments on state policy. For a first-hand description of the city's legislative efforts, see [this article](#) from the January/February 2016 issue of *Town and City* magazine.

Congratulations and thank you to the Portsmouth City Council!

New Bills, New Committees

As of this writing, several dozen bills for the 2017 legislative session have been released, and about 800 more are being drafted or reviewed. All of them will become available on the legislature's website, www.gencourt.state.nh.us, as they are completed and released over the next few weeks. As they are released, we will publish lists of the bills of municipal interest in the *Bulletin*, beginning with the current issue.

Committee assignments have been made in both the House and the Senate, and you can find the complete listing on the legislative website. Below are the committees that are of particular interest to municipal officials. If you know, or have a special relationship with, any of the members of these committees, please let us know. Making connections is an important way to make sure municipal interests are understood and taken into account. Please contact the Government Affairs staff at governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org.

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New 2017 House Bills

HB 80 revises the administration of building code enforcement. Rep. Roberts of Wilton; **ED&A-H.**

HB 83 prohibits family members from being elected to or being appointed to the same town, city, or school district board or committee. Rep. Byron of Litchfield; **M&CG.**

HB 85 provides that any rule adopted by the state building code review board relative to applications for permits under the International Residential Code shall require only such information as is reasonably required for the building inspector to act on the application. Rep. Proulx of Manchester; **ED&A-H.**

HB 86 establishes requirements for zoning boards of adjustment voting on variances. Rep. J. Belanger of Hollis; **M&CG.**

HB 87 revises the method of appointing a moderator pro tempore. Rep. J. Belanger of Hollis; **M&CG.**

HB 88-FN allows a veteran who is an amputee, paraplegic, or blind as a result of a service-connected disability to select which special number plate he or she is eligible for without having to pay registration and number plate fees. Rep. Baldasaro of Londonderry; **TRANS-H.**

HB 89 expands the public safety services for which a town may establish a revolving fund. Rep. Avellani of Wakefield; **M&CG.**

HB 92 updates the definition of the state building code to include the 2015 editions of various codes and ratifies changes to the state building code adopted by the state building code review board in 2015 and 2016. Rep. Roberts of Wilton; **ED&A-H.**

HB 97-FN regulates the use of drones by government agencies and individuals. Rep. Kure of Weare; **ED&A-H.**

HB 101-FN lengthens the time a solid waste operator certificate is valid from one year to 3 years and exempts volunteer solid waste operators from the certification requirement. Rep. Manley of Bennington; **E&A-H.**

HB 108 permits a municipality to scan paper records that are to be retained less than 10 years into PDF/A format and also permits the governing body to dispose of the original paper records. Rep. Williams of Wilton; **M&CG.**

HB 109 exempts building plans and construction drawings in connection with a local building permit process from disclosure under the right-to-know law. **NHMA Policy.** Rep. Kurk of Weare; **JUD-H.**

HB 115-FN establishes a state minimum hourly wage and provides for annual readjustment of the minimum wage and also establishes a training wage for employees under the age of 18 years. Rep. D. Ley of Jaffrey; **LABOR.**

HB 117 extends the property tax exemption for improvements to assist persons with disabilities to the elderly and applies the exemption to the installation and use of a standby generator system. Rep. McGuire of Epsom; **M&CG.**

(New Bills — Continued from Page 9)

HB 118 eliminates the requirement that a governing body recommend an appropriation in a special warrant article submitted by petition. Rep. Hennessy of Littleton; **M&CG**.

HB 119-FN-A-LOCAL makes appropriations to the department of environmental services for funding specific water and wastewater projects. **NHMA Policy**. Rep. Buco of Conway; **F-H**.

HB 121 increases the maximum optional fee for transportation improvements that may be charged by municipalities when collecting motor vehicle registration fees. **NHMA Policy**. Rep. Higgins of Hanover; **W&M-H**.

HB 122 amends the procedure for withdrawal from a cooperative school district. Rep. J. Belanger of Hollis; **EDUC-H**.

HB 123 authorizes a zoning board of adjustment to continue a public hearing to a specified time and place with no additional notice required. Rep. J. Belanger of Hollis; **M&CG**.

HB 124-FN repeals certain aircraft registration fees and service fees collected by the department of transportation. Rep. LeBrun of Nashua; **TRANS-H**.

HB 130 establishes the Employee Credit Privacy Protection Act which prohibits employers from using credit history in employment decisions, with an exception for certain local government agencies. Rep. Cushing of Hampton; **LABOR**.

HB 131 requires parties submitting certain zoning amendment petitions to pay the costs of notification. Rep. Massimilla of Littleton; **M&CG**.

HB 142-FN-A makes a capital appropriation to the department of administrative services for construction of a new tenth circuit district court facility in Hampton. Rep. Cushing of Hampton; **PW**.

HB 145 prohibits high voltage transmission lines from being located in any municipality without a vote of approval by the municipality. Rep. Burton of Durham; **M&CG**.

**Glossary of Abbreviations Used in
Bill Descriptions and the
Legislative Process**

CACR	Constitutional Amendment Concurrent Resolution
CAP BUDGET	Capital Budget Committee (Senate)
CJ&PS	Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee (House)
COM-S	Commerce Committee (Senate)
COM-H	Commerce and Consumer Affairs Committee (House)
E&A	Environment & Agriculture Committee (House)
ED&A-S	Executive Departments & Administration Committee (Senate)
ED&A-H	Executive Departments and Administration Committee (House)
EDUC-H	Education Committee (House)
EDUC-S.....	Education Committee (Senate)
EL	Election Law Committee (House)
EL&IA	Election Law and Internal Affairs Committee (Senate)
ENR	Energy & Natural Resources Committee (Senate)
F-S	Finance Committee (Senate)
F-H	Finance Committee (House)
F&G	Fish & Game and Marine Resources Committee (House)
FN	Fiscal Note
HB	House Bill
HHS	Health and Human Services Committee (Senate)
HHS&EA	Health, Human Services & Elderly Affairs Committee (House)
JUD-S	Judiciary Committee (Senate)
JUD-H.....	Judiciary Committee (House)
L	Local
LABOR	Labor, Industrial & Rehabilitative Services Committee (House)
LEGIS ADMIN	Legislative Administration Committee (House)
LOB	Legislative Office Building
M&CG	Municipal & County Government Committee (House)
PMA	Public and Municipal Affairs Committee (Senate)
PW	Public Works & Highways Committee (House)
RR&D	Resources, Recreation & Development Committee (House)
RULES.....	Rules Committee (House)
RULES&EB	Rules and Enrolled Bills (Senate)
SB	Senate Bill
S-FR	State-Federal Relations & Veterans Affairs Committee (House)
SH	State House
ST&E	Science, Technology & Energy Committee (House)
TRANS-S	Transportation Committee (Senate)
TRANS-H	Transportation Committee (House)
W&M-S	Ways & Means Committee (Senate)
W&M-H.....	Ways & Means Committee (House)

Upcoming Events for NHMA Members

NHMA Workshops

- January 7, 2017 2017 Moderators Workshop for SB 2 Town Meeting: [Register](#)
- February 11, 2017 2017 Moderators Workshop for Traditional Town Meeting: [Register](#)

NHMA Webinars

- January 11, 2017 NHMA Webinar — 2017 State Legislative Preview: Now What?
- February 8, 2017 NHMA Webinar — Right-to-Know Law: Open to the Public - A Primer
on Public Meetings

Webinars are 12:00—1:00 p.m.

We ask that you register one day prior to each webinar (at the latest) because we are unable to register you the same day as the event.

For more information please access our website: www.nhmunicipal.org and scroll down on the left to CALENDAR OF EVENTS and Click *View the Full Calendar*.

Contact us by phone at 1-800-852-3358 x3350 or email us at NHMAregistrations@nhmunicipal.org