

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

Bulletin #21

2014 Session

May 23, 2014

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Highway Funding Bill</i>	2
<i>Processing Absentee Ballots</i>	3
<i>NHACPM Scholarship</i>	4
<i>Webinar: Legislative Wrap Up</i>	5

NHMA Government Affairs Contact Information

Judy A. Silva
Executive Director

Cordell A. Johnston
Government Affairs Counsel

Barbara T. Reid
Government Finance Advisor

Timothy W. Fortier
Communications & Member
Services Coordinator



25 Triangle Park Drive
Concord, NH 03301
Tel: 603.224.7447/Fax: 603.415.3090
NH Toll Free: 800.852.3358

Email: governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org
Website: www.nhmunicipal.org

Committees of Conference Begin

The legislature finished establishing committees of conference yesterday, and the committees have begun to meet. There are not a lot of bills of municipal interest going to committees of conference, but there are a few significant ones. They include:

- **HB 1210.** As passed by the Senate, this includes the language from **SB 228**, requiring a municipality to send notice by first-class mail to all owners of “affected properties” whenever a hearing is scheduled on a proposed zoning amendment if the amendment would affect 500 or fewer properties. We wrote in [last week's Bulletin](#) about the extreme hardship this would create for municipalities. We will encourage the conference committee to either adopt NHMA’s proposed compromise or kill the bill.
- **HB 498.** The underlying bill makes an exception to the law restricting the discharge of a gun in the compact area of the town. We are not concerned about that (because it is a reasonable exception), but are concerned about the Senate amendment, creating a veterans’ preference in hiring for public employment positions. As explained in [last week's Bulletin](#), we expect the bill to be amended to clarify that the requirement does not apply to municipalities.
- **HB 1282.** Again, the underlying bill (relative to prepaid contracts for home heating fuel) is not of municipal interest, but the Senate amendment would reimburse the municipalities in the Merrimack River Flood Control Compact that did not receive full flood control reimbursement for fiscal years 2012 and 2013.
- **HB 1494.** The bill as passed by the Senate would eliminate the requirement that employers report monthly to the New Hampshire Retirement System (NHRS) the time worked and compensation paid to elected state and local officials (such as selectmen, school board members, city councilors, treasurers, and others) who happen to also be NHRS retirees. The 32-hour per week limit on retirees working in part-time positions does not apply to time served as an

Committees of Conference - continued

elected official, nor do employers track the time elected officials actually perform their “elected official” duties. We are hopeful that the conferees can agree on language that will provide this very limited exemption to the reporting requirement.

A few committees of conference have met this week; the rest will meet next week. Since Monday is a holiday, those committees will have four days to reach agreement, as the deadline for signing committee reports is next Friday, May 30.

Governor Signs Highway Funding Bill

On Tuesday Governor Maggie Hassan signed into law **SB 367**, an **NHMA policy bill** that raises revenue to increase highway block grant funding to municipalities, increase municipal bridge aid, resurface and reconstruct secondary roads, and complete the I-93 expansion. Attending the official signing ceremony at an I-93 construction site in Windham were NHMA Board Chair Steve Fournier (far left, below) and bill sponsors Senator Jim Rausch, Representative Candace Bouchard, and Representative David Campbell, along with Department of Transportation Commissioner Christopher Clement and other supporters of the bill.

NHMA worked hard over the session to get its members accurate information about the bill and urging members to speak with their legislators about what the needs were at the local level. NHMA and the Municipal Managers Association of NH hosted a meeting with DOT Commissioner Clement to discuss the state of the state’s roads and bridges. Please be sure to ***thank*** your representatives and senators for passing this modest increase and helping to maintain local roads.



Processing Absentee Ballots Will Remain a Nightmare

The Senate this week killed two bills that would have given moderators more time to process absentee ballots at state and local elections. This was an unfortunate end to a two-year effort to achieve what should be a simple, uncontroversial change, and it means election officials will have to endure at least one more season of unnecessary late-night ballot-counting sessions.

Last year, both houses passed **HB 183**, which would have allowed the moderator to begin processing absentee ballots two hours after the polls opened. The Governor, however, vetoed the bill, apparently based on last-minute concerns pressed by someone who had not raised those concerns in the legislative process. This year, the Senate attached similar language to **Senate Bill 183**, but softened it to address the concerns that had led to the Governor's veto. The House, meanwhile, addressed the issue with an amendment to **HB 1543**, but was somewhat less accommodating than the Senate. When **SB 183** came to the House, the House amended it to make it closer to what it had passed in **HB 1543**. Meanwhile, the Senate removed the language about processing absentee ballots from **HB 1543**, because it had addressed the issue in **SB 183**. Because both bills were amended, **HB 1543** then went back to the House, and **SB 183** went back to the Senate.

If you're still following this . . .

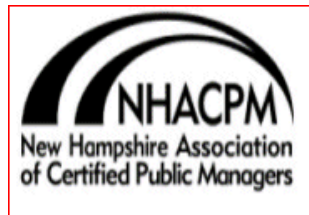
Two weeks ago, the House rejected the Senate's amendment on **HB 1543** and requested a committee of conference. This week the Senate rejected that request, thus killing the bill. The Senate also refused to concur with the House's changes to **SB 183** and did not request a committee of conference, so that bill also died.

The bottom line . . .

Moderators at this fall's elections will again be required to delay the processing of absentee ballots until 1:00 p.m., for no intelligible reason. This result might have been avoided with better cooperation between the House and Senate, because both chambers clearly wanted to do the right thing; but even if they had agreed, there was still the possibility of last-minute efforts to sabotage the bill, just like last year. At least we know that won't happen this year—not on this bill, anyway.

We expect this legislation to be back next year, and we will continue to support it.

Training Opportunity Scholarship



The NH Association of Certified Public Managers is sponsoring a scholarship to the **Certified Public Supervisor Program**, which is the first year of the two-year Certified Public Manager Program. This scholarship has been set aside for a municipal supervisor or manager.

The program is provided the NH Bureau of Education and Training:

- The Certified Public Supervisor (CPS) program is designed for supervisors and individuals planning to enter supervision. The program takes 10 months to complete. It requires approximately 150 hours of core course work. With successful completion of the program, participants earn the designation of *Certified Public Supervisor (CPS)*. Tuition: \$1,200.
- Instruction: Courses combine lecture, films, readings, written responses, exercises, group discussions, and projects.
- Class schedule: Program classes run from August-May. Participants generally attend two classes per month, from 9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. at the BET training center, 130 Pembroke Rd. in Concord.
- College credit: CPS/CPM students seeking degrees can earn undergraduate and graduate credit, upon completion of the program. Colleges offering credit for completion of CPS/CPM include New England College, Franklin Pierce University, Springfield College, University of New Hampshire, and Granite State College.

Applicants are due by June 13, 2014. For an application form and more information, click [here](#).

NHMA Webinar

Legislative Wrap Up

Date: June 11, 2014

Time: 12:00 noon - 1:00 PM

Contact Phone: 603.224.7447

Join us on Wednesday, June 11 at noon!

Join Government Affairs Counsel Cordell Johnston and Government Finance Advisor Barbara Reid for a review of the highlights of the 2014 legislative session. This will be one week after the legislative session ends, so except for possible vetoes, all legislative action will be final.

This webinar will discuss the most significant bills of municipal interest that made it through the legislature this year, as well as a few that failed but may be back next year. The discussion will include, among others, legislation on highway funding, municipal charters, town meeting issues, the retirement system, planning and zoning issues, and tax rate setting.

This webinar is open to members of the NH Municipal Association.

[Click here to Register Today!](#)