



2021-2022 NHMA Legislative Policy Process Questions & Answers

1. What is the purpose of establishing NHMA legislative policy? The New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) is the voice of New Hampshire’s cities and towns before the state legislature and state agencies. Adoption of legislative policy allows your municipal voice to be heard through the actions of your organization – NHMA. By adopting legislative policy, local officials can tell elected representatives what they feel are the major concerns of cities and towns.

The NHMA Board of Directors oversees NHMA’s advocacy activities. Legislative policy positions direct the board and NHMA staff in representing municipalities before the legislature and state agencies.

2. How are legislative policy recommendations prepared? In the spring of each even-numbered year, NHMA forms legislative policy committees addressing different aspects of municipal government. The three committees this year are:

1. General Administration and Governance;
2. Finance and Revenue; and
3. Infrastructure, Development, and Land Use.

These three policy committees consider issues and problems derived from their own experience as local officials, issues sent in by other members or brought to them by staff, past policy positions, and issues resulting from the most recent legislative session. Each committee holds several meetings during the spring and develops policy recommendations to be voted on by member municipalities at the Legislative Policy Conference.

3. Who votes on adoption, amendment, or rejection of these recommendations, and when?

The 2021-2022 NHMA Legislative Policy Conference will be held on Friday, October 2, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. This will likely be a “virtual” conference; we will send final details later this summer. ***Each member municipality will be asked to appoint a voting delegate to cast its vote at this conference.*** Each member municipality, regardless of size, has ***one vote*** on all policy matters.

In the absence of any other designation by the board of selectmen, aldermen, or council, NHMA will recognize one official as a municipality’s voting delegate in the following order of priority:

Mayor/Chair of Board of Selectmen/Council Chair

OR

Mayor Pro Tem/Vice or Assistant Mayor/Council Vice Chair

OR

Selectman/Alderman/Councilor

OR

City or Town Manager/Town Administrator/Administrative Assistant

4. Will other policy proposals be voted on at the conference? Yes, municipalities will have the opportunity to submit floor policy proposals for consideration at the conference. Each floor policy proposal must be approved by the governing body of the municipality submitting it, but the proposals will not be reviewed or recommended by NHMA's legislative policy committees. Floor policy proposals will be voted on separately at the conference.

5. How does our voting delegate determine a position on these recommendations? We urge each municipality's governing body to discuss the recommendations in advance of the Legislative Policy Conference and vote to take a position on each one, to give direction to the voting delegate. Otherwise, your voting delegate is free to cast your municipality's vote as he or she desires. ***You do not need to notify NHMA of your positions on the policy recommendations; just provide that information to your voting delegate.***

6. How are the policy recommendations presented and voted on at the Legislative Policy Conference? The chair of the board of directors, as the presiding officer of the Legislative Policy Conference, introduces the entire set of recommendations of each policy committee, one committee at a time, as a slate. The chair and vice chair of each committee will be available to address questions. Any voting delegate may ask that a recommendation be set aside to be debated and voted on separately. The remaining recommendations are voted upon as a slate. After the slate from each policy committee has been voted, the voting delegates will return to those items set aside for separate debate and vote. It is at this time that individual items can be killed, amended, passed over, laid on the table, etc.

7. Are policies adopted by a simple majority vote? No. NHMA's by-laws require a two-thirds affirmative vote of those members present and voting for approval of any NHMA legislative policy.

8. Why is the Legislative Policy Conference separate from the November annual meeting? The Legislative Policy Conference must be held before the annual conference and the annual membership meeting to meet the legislative deadlines for the filing of new bills. The staff needs time after adoption of policies to draft bills and secure sponsors.

9. How will I know what policies are adopted if I don't go to the Legislative Policy Conference? The final 2021-2022 NHMA Legislative Policies will be printed as a supplement in the November/December 2020 issue of *Town & City* magazine. We will also post them on NHMA's web site at www.nhmunicipal.org.

10. What happens if an issue that is not covered by any of these policies comes before the legislature? The NHMA Board determines the position that the staff will advocate on issues not covered by specific NHMA legislative policies. The policy conference also endorses a set of Legislative Principles, which augment the specific legislative policy positions by setting forth general principles that guide staff in their advocacy efforts.