

2017-2018 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. Finance and Revenue;
2. General Administration and Governance; 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?

On Friday, September 23, 2016, at 9:00 a.m., the 2017-2018 NHMA Legislative Policy Conference will be held at NHMA offices (25 Triangle Park Drive) in Concord. ***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, a voting delegate card will be issued at the door (in order of priority determined by the NHMA Municipal Officials Directory) to:

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/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, in order to give direction to the voting delegate. Otherwise, your voting delegate is free to cast your municipality's vote as he or she desires.

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 co-chairs 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. When the slate from each policy committee has been voted, the voting delegates will then 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. Votes are by a display of special voting delegate cards.

7. Are policies adopted by a simple majority vote? No. NHMA's by-laws require a two-thirds affirmative vote of all 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 in order 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 2017-2018 NHMA Legislative Policies will be printed as a supplement in the November/December, 2016 issue of *Town & City* magazine. We will also post them on the 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 Policy. The policy conference also endorses a set of 10 Legislative Principles, which augment the specific legislative policy positions by setting forth general principles that guide staff in their advocacy efforts.