

# VLCT NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES & TOWNS

SERVING AND STRENGTHENING VERMONT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

November 2008

## '09 MUNI POLICY ADOPTED

Tired of propping up an educational funding system that elected officials in Montpelier have been tinkering with for more than a decade, local officials are calling on the state to assume all responsibility for billing, collecting, and administering state education property taxes.

Taking an unprecedented and strong stance that essentially says "enough is enough," representatives of municipalities throughout the state adopted the position as part of the 2009 VLCT Municipal Policy. The Municipal Policy serves as the foundation for VLCT's advocacy efforts on behalf of local government at the Statehouse.

The Municipal Policy was adopted during a Town Meeting-style forum held at VLCT's annual Town Fair. Town Fair rotates between Barre City, Essex Junction, and Killington, where this year's event was held on October 2.

For more than a decade now, VLCT has actively pursued improvements to or replacements of the education funding system, often submitting lengthy and detailed proposals for change. Last year, for example, local officials endorsed a proposal to shift education funding away from the property tax to an income tax-based system instead. Most of VLCT's

*(Continued on Page Eight)*

## HOW TO HANDLE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS IN SELECTBOARD MEETINGS

**Situation 1: A speaker talks about multiple topics and continues past the formal or informal time limit.**

Occasionally a speaker goes on and on and thereby causes a problem for the selectboard, which has an entire agenda to get through. In such a situation, simply showing that the selectboard has heard and understands the citizen's comments can sometimes help keep the comments focused and bring them to a close. The presiding officer may choose to try to cut off a speaker, especially when a time limit has been announced, but doing so can upset the speaker. Other approaches should be tried before the presiding officer uses that option, as follows:

*(Continued on Page Twelve)*

## 2008 TOWN FAIR

In this, my 10<sup>th</sup> year of planning, I look back fondly on all the Town Fairs that have come before this one. From the themes, to the speakers and guests, each has been its own unique experience. And as usual at this time of year, it's safe to say that all of us at VLCT are thrilled to wrap up another Town Fair!

Attendees at the 2008 Town Fair were greeted by a cool, dark morning and fall foliage near its peak at the Killington Grand Hotel on October 2. More than 300 local officials made their way to the summit to enjoy a multitude of activities including workshops, training, and the annual business meetings of VLCT, PACIF and Unemployment. In addition, they were tempted by more than 60 exhibitors on our trade show floor showcasing a variety of products created to make municipal employees' work easier. A biennial favorite, the Candidates Forum, gave Gubernatorial Candidates Douglas, Symington and Diamondstone a chance to respond to questions from the League. Guests were treated to a fabulous turkey dinner prepared by the chefs at the Killington Grand, a long-time tradition of the

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A PUBLICATION OF THE VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES & TOWNS

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# GREEN COMPUTING: A ROADMAP TO REDUCING YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT & SAVING MONEY

In today's economy, what city or town could say "no" to saving money or turn down an opportunity to reduce its environmental footprint?

A new, free program called the State Electronics Challenge (SEC) is available to Vermont cities and towns interested in green computing. The SEC provides municipalities with an action plan and tools that yield measurable results in reducing energy consumption, greenhouse gases, hazardous materials, and solid waste by focusing on three critical areas for change: the purchase of "green" computers, reducing the impact of computer use, and finding environmentally friendly ways to dispose of unwanted equipment.

An interested city or town that signs up for the SEC becomes a "Partner" in the effort, and may choose to focus on any (or all) of the areas for change listed above. For example, municipal partners will be encouraged to purchase computers meeting environmental performance standards established by the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (or EPEAT™). In order for a product to be EPEAT™ approved, they must be made with fewer toxic materials (such as lead and mercury), incorporate the ENERGY STAR® standard for energy efficiency, be easier to recycle, and

utilize recycled content when possible.

The SEC action plan also encourages participants to enable energy saving features on both computer processors and monitors, resulting in both monetary and energy savings.

The Brattleboro-based Northeast Recycling Council, Inc. (NERC) developed and now administers the SEC with funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The program is modeled after the very successful Federal Electronics Challenge, which has dramatically changed how federal agencies purchase and manage computer equipment. In Vermont, the Town of Brattleboro and the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District, along with the Vermont Agency for Natural Resources, are already taking advantage of the opportunity to participate.

Working together, local, state, and regional entities can make a difference in reducing Vermont's environmental footprint and greenhouse gas emissions. For additional information on the SEC, a list of current partners, and an online form to join the SEC, visit the website at [www.stateelectronicschallenge.net](http://www.stateelectronicschallenge.net). If you'd prefer to

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# LEGAL AND REGULATORY NOTES



## FMLA EXPANDED; WIRELESS SERVICE ZONING PETITION

### FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT EXPANDED

Municipal employers subject to the Family Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") should be aware that the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, signed into law on January 28, 2008, has expanded the FMLA. It now allows leave for certain "qualifying exigencies" arising out of the fact that the spouse, or a son, daughter or parent of the employee is on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation. The Act also increases the standard 12-week FMLA leave to 26 weeks for a spouse, son, daughter, par-

ent or next of kin to care for a "covered service member." A covered service member is defined as a member of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is on the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury or illness.

The U.S. Department of Labor has been charged with developing regulations to implement the newly-expanded FLMA, including defining "qualifying exigency." As of early October, the department has not done so. In the interim, the department is encouraging employers to provide this type of leave to qualifying employees. To learn more about

this expansion of FMLA benefits, visit [www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla/ndaa\\_fmla.htm](http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla/ndaa_fmla.htm).

- Jim Barlow, Senior Staff Attorney,  
VLCT Municipal Assistance Center

### PETITION FILED TO RESTRICT LOCAL ZONING AUTHORITY UNDER TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1996

On July 11, 2008, CTIA – The Wireless Association (CTIA), a trade association of the cellular telephone industry, filed a petition requesting that the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) clarify provisions of the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 relating to local regulation of wireless

*(Continued on next page)*

# it's time

*to make it better for them.*



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## LEGAL/REG. NOTES -

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telecommunication facilities. In the petition, CTIA asserts that the local zoning approval process is a “substantial impediment to the provision of wireless service in many areas.” The petition asks the FCC to rule as follows:

1. Impose a 45- or 75-day deadline for action on certain wireless facility applications. If the deadline isn't met, the local zoning board will be in violation of Section 332(c)(7) of the Telecommunications Act, which requires a municipality to act on an application for a wireless facility in a reasonable period of time.
2. If the deadline is met, the wireless carrier's application will be deemed granted. Alternatively, failure to meet the deadline would establish a presumption that an applicant is entitled to an injunction ordering the municipality to grant the application approval unless it can justify the delay.
3. Clarify that Section 332(c)(7) of the Telecommunications Act bars any local decision that has the effect of prohibiting a new wireless carrier from offering service in an area where another wireless carrier already provides service.
4. Rule that Section 253 of the Telecommunications Act preempts local ordinances that subject wireless siting applications to unique, burdensome requirements, such as treating all wireless siting requests as requiring a variance.

Readers are likely to be aware that Vermont law already imposes 30- and 45-day “shot clocks” on zoning administrator appeals and zoning board decisions. See 24 V.S.A. §§4448(a) and 4464(b)(1). Regardless of the success of CTIA's petition, these deadlines apply to all zoning applications for wireless telecommunication facilities in Vermont. Therefore, the petition's first two requests are unlikely to have much effect here. Likewise, with regard to the third request, the Federal District Court for Vermont has previously held that a Vermont zoning board's denial of a permit on the grounds that a gap in an applicant's service area that the facility was intended to fill was already covered by the applicant's competitors had the effect of prohibiting service, which violated the Telecommunications Act. *Independent Wireless One Corp. v. Town of Charlotte*, 242 F. Supp. 2d 409 (D. Vt. 2003).

The most significant potential impact from the petition could come from CTIA's fourth request. Several municipalities have imposed significant setback requirements on telecommunication facilities – sometimes several hundred feet. These requirements could require telecommunication facility applicants to request a variance in or-

der to receive zoning approval, an action that the petition would seek to prevent. A copy of the petition is available at [http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/prod/ecfs/retrieve.cgi?native\\_or\\_pdf=pdf&id\\_document=6520038471](http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/prod/ecfs/retrieve.cgi?native_or_pdf=pdf&id_document=6520038471).

- Jim Barlow, Senior Staff Attorney,  
VLCT Municipal Assistance Center

## GREEN COMPUTING -

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speak to NERC staff, please contact Lynn Rubinstein, Executive Director, at [lynn@nerc.org](mailto:lynn@nerc.org) (telephone: (802) 254-3636), or Patricia Dillon, Program Manager, at [patty@nerc.org](mailto:patty@nerc.org) (telephone: (978) 346-9462).

## ACTION STEPS TO REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT TODAY: TIPS FROM THE STATE ELECTRONICS CHALLENGE

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- Purchase EPEAT™-registered computer equipment, which feature the latest ENERGY STAR® technology + other environmental benefits such as reduced toxicity. Visit [www.epeat.net](http://www.epeat.net) for a listing of qualified products.
- Unplug equipment and power cords (or turn off power strips) when not in use, since they continually draw power even when “off” or not in use.
- Plug electronic equipment and chargers into power strips that can be easily unplugged and plugged-in again to minimize hassle.
- Remove screen savers that prevent computers from going into “sleep” mode.
- Purchase computer equipment and other supplies that contain recycled content. Recycled content products require less energy to produce than materials made from raw material.
- Consider whether you really need to replace your computer, since extending the life of a computer avoids the environmental impacts of producing a new unit. For example, if your organization has four computer desktop systems (processor + LCD monitor) in service, and extend the life of each unit from three years to four years, you avoided the production of one new computer system.
- Consider replacing desktop systems (processor + LCD) with notebook computers, which consume less power. While this might not be a viable solution for all employees, it might fit the needs and use patterns for some.
- Recycle computers at the end of life to get materials back into productive use, reducing the mining and production of new materials.
- Set default settings on printers and copiers to print double-sided copies. Saving paper saves energy + trees!
- Whenever possible, don't print hard copies of documents. Instead, store documents electronically.



# ASK THE LEAGUE

## AD HOC MEETINGS; ZONING OF POs; VILLAGE SPEED LIMITS

### Is an ad hoc group subject to the open meeting law?

Not necessarily. You must first determine if the group is considered a "public body." A public body is defined in 1 V.S.A. § 310 (3) and includes state government commissions, boards, and councils; municipal government boards, commissions and councils; and any ad hoc committees or subcommittees of state or municipal government created by charter, motion, or resolution.

An informal group that convenes to discuss an issue of town importance with key stakeholders is not a public body and would not be subject to the open meeting law. This informal group may even include members of a public body, such as a selectboard or a planning commission. Only when a quorum of the members of a public body is present and discusses the business of the body would a meeting be considered public and, hence, subject to the open meeting law.

- *Stephanie Smith, Senior Associate, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center*

### Are post offices exempt from zoning?

The answer to this question turns on who owns the property. If the federal government owns it, then the doctrine of preemption applies and the project is exempt from local land use regulation. If the federal government is merely leasing the property from a private landowner, then preemption does not apply and a local land use permit will be required.

Preemption is a legal principle derived from the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution (Article VI, Section 2) that laws of the federal government supersede inconsistent state or local laws. In the land use context, preemption authority is also derived from the Property Clause of the U.S. Constitution (Article IV, Section 3), which grants Congress the authority to regulate federal property. Together these clauses give Congress preemptive power over state and local control of federal property. *Mayo v. United States*, 319 U.S. 441 (1943). Despite this authority, the U.S. Postal Service, in striv-

ing to be a good neighbor, usually tries to work with local officials to comply with local zoning.

If the U.S. Post Office is merely leasing the space from a private landowner, the property is not exempt. While there appears to be a difference of opinion amongst courts around the country on this point, here in Vermont the Supreme Court has determined that "where a governmental agency which may be entitled to exemption from state and local land use regulations is a lessee from a private lessor, the private lessor cannot claim governmental exemption, in the absence of contrary legislative intent." The Court reasoned that allowing otherwise would result in the private lessor "avoiding local planning considerations and disregarding community sensibilities." *Montgomery v. Town of Sherburne*, 147 Vt. 191 (1986).

- *Garrett Baxter, Staff Attorney, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center*

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## ASK THE LEAGUE -

(Continued from previous page)

### Can a village set speed limits?

It can if it has jurisdiction over the highway it seeks to regulate. "The legislative body of a municipality may establish, on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation, a speed limit on all or part of any city, town or village highway within its jurisdiction ..." 23 V.S.A. § 1007(a).

So what exactly constitutes having jurisdiction over a highway? In this context, jurisdiction refers both to a highway that is within a village's geographical borders and one over which the village has legal responsibility. This is based on a 1990 opinion issued by the Office of the Vermont Attorney General. Although opinions of the Attorney General are advisory and accorded no binding effect upon a court, they do carry persuasive authority. This particular opinion (No. 90-8) dismisses the argument that the phrase "within its jurisdiction" applies in the geographical sense by reasoning that if 23 V.S.A. § 1007(a) (cited above) was intended by the Legislature to grant municipalities the authority to set speed limits on all highways within their geographical borders, then this would not only be in direct conflict with the Vermont Traffic Committee's authority to regulate speeds on state highways (23 V.S.A. § 1003), but there also would be no reason to grant this authority independently to cities. 23 V.S.A. § 1007(b). Consequently, the opinion concludes that "the term 'within its jurisdiction' as applied to municipalities other than cities is intended to apply in the sense of those highways over which the municipality has responsibility. It is not intended to apply in the geographical sense."

Legal responsibility for highways can be express, as in the case of a village charter, or implied, as in the case of a prolonged pattern of control demonstrated by maintenance, repair and taxing efforts. Typically, however, unless a village charter places the control of highways under the direction of its trustees, it will be the town that is legally responsible for setting the speed limits on the highways within a village's geographical boundaries.

- Garrett Baxter, Staff Attorney, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center

## UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

PRESENTED BY

### VLCT'S MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

#### Municipal Budgeting and Financial Management

Thursday, November 13, Montpelier

*This annual workshop provides an introduction to governmental accounting, strategies for developing the annual operating budget, tips for managing the politics of the budgeting process, and best practices for reconciling generally accepted finance practices and Vermont law.*

#### Municipal Personnel Administration Forum

Tuesday, November 18, Bennington

Wednesday, November 19, Middlesex

Thursday, November 20, Milton

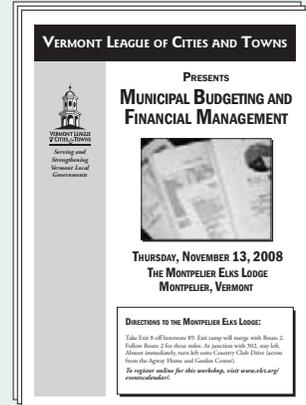
*This indispensable, half-day regional workshop will cover the fundamentals of personnel administration in a municipal setting. Particular attention will be given to state and federal employment laws, employee termination, and administering personnel policies.*

#### Municipal Zoning Bylaws after September 1, 2011

Wednesday, December 17, Montpelier

*Delivered in the evening via interactive television, this workshop will focus on the 2004 "permit reform" law, Act 115, and the effect the expiration of the savings clause on September 1, 2011 will have on a community's zoning bylaws. Co-sponsored by the Regional Planning Commissions.*

For registration fees, on-line registration, directions to workshop locations, etc., please visit the Events Calendar on our website at [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org). You may also call (800) 649-7915 or email [info@vlct.org](mailto:info@vlct.org) for information.



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## '09 MUNI POLICY -

(Continued from Page One)

past proposals, however, have failed to gain legislative traction. The frustrations of local officials and property taxpayers have continued to mount, and those more detailed policy positions were replaced by a simpler, three-sentence proposal that reflects the mood of those most directly involved: "Municipal government should no longer be responsible for administering a state education property tax. The state must bill, collect and administer all education taxes. We should maintain local control of curriculum, administration and staffing."

If the state assumes responsibility for all aspects of the education funding system, local officials – such as town clerks, treasurers, and listers – will be free to concentrate on municipal business, thus better serving residents instead of implementing and operating a complex and ever-changing state system.

The 2009 Municipal Policy contains a number of sections that fit under a larger theme for the local and state government relationship first identified last January. That theme – known as "shift and shaft" – bubbles up from the economic realities facing government at all levels. The *shift* comes as the state dumps its responsibilities on to lo-

enges facing government officials across all levels in Vermont have been well documented, as roads and bridges – along with transportation revenues – have steadily and drastically deteriorated in recent years. During that same period, material and energy costs went in the opposite direction, skyrocketing by double-digit percentages. The transportation section of the 2009 Municipal Policy calls on the administration and legislature to look at additional transportation revenues and bonding, increases in efficiency (through more local control of projects), and the continued reduction of Transportation Fund monies to the General Fund

*"If the state assumes responsibility for all aspects of the education funding system, local officials – such as town clerks, treasurers, and listers – will be free to concentrate on municipal business, thus better serving residents instead of implementing and operating a complex and ever-changing state system."*

This radical departure from past policy positions is viewed by VLCT members as the only way to show legislators and the governor the depth and breadth of local government's dissatisfaction with an ailing system that has severely constrained local decision making while also insulating policymakers in Montpelier from angry taxpayers.

cal government; the *shaft* occurs when state (or even federal) funding does not accompany the new task. Avoiding "shift and shaft" scenarios, along with a long-standing position opposing unfunded mandates, is the undercurrent of all aspects of VLCT's 2009 legislative platform.

The transportation infrastructure chal-

for non-transportation purposes in order to meet the varied and dire needs of Vermont's "invisible backbone."

Looking at the continued trend of double-digit health care cost increases, the Municipal Policy contains a set of goals to address one of the fastest growing portions of nearly all municipal budgets. The first goal, "Transparency and Fairness," addresses the \$90 million Medicaid cost shift to private insurance, which has had the effect of driving up premiums for years. That goal also illuminates the dangers of merging association (including the VLCT Health Trust), small group, and non-group insurance markets, a move which could further drive up health care costs for local government by

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Although we feel strongly that PACIF is the best overall solution for Vermont municipalities' risk management and coverage needs, we understand that sometimes municipalities find it necessary to put their insurance program out to bid. The PACIF program has been custom-tailored to best suit our membership's risk exposures and it is not easily duplicated in the commercial insurance marketplace. In an effort to facilitate the comparison of alternative bid proposals to the PACIF program, we have designed a model Request for Proposals (RFP). This is a model template that members can customize to suit their specific purposes. It allows for an "apples to apples" comparison of coverages and services, and asks for disclosure of areas where the competition does not measure up to PACIF. A copy of the model insurance RFP is available on the VLCT website, [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org). If you have any questions, please call your VLCT Group Services Member Representative or the Underwriting Division.

### REMINDER TO HEALTH TRUST MEMBERS – JANUARY 1 IS OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR HEALTH AND VISION PLANS

This is an important reminder to VLCT Health Trust members that the January 1 Open Enrollment period for health and vision insurance is fast approaching. This is the time of year when Health Trust member groups and subscribers may switch plans, employees may join coverage, if they have not already done so, or existing subscribers can add dependents to coverage. ***Please note all group or subscriber plan change requests must be submitted by December 1<sup>st</sup> in order to implement a January 1 effective date of change.***

For groups wishing to add, change or cancel plans, a request must be submitted in writing from an authorized official clearly stating which plan the group wishes to add, cancel and/or change for a January 1<sup>st</sup> effective date. For subscribers changing health insurance plans, an enrollment/change form must be submitted with "Plan/Benefit Option Change" selected under the Reason for Form, and the new plan should be selected under the Benefit Plan section. Keep in mind your employees may only choose from the plans that you offer as a Health Trust member group. Therefore, your subscribers are restricted to switching to plans only among those that you offer.

As a reminder, the Delta Dental Open Enrollment period does not take place at this time. It takes place on July 1 of each year.

If you have any questions regarding the above information or want to learn more about the various health or vision insurance benefit plan offerings available through the VLCT Health Trust, please call 800-649-7915 to speak with your Member Relations Representative.

### IMPORTANT REMINDER – VLCT HEALTH TRUST ANNUAL MEETING

Please join us for the Health Trust Annual Meeting on Friday, November 14, at the Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center in South Burlington, Vermont. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. All Health Trust member groups should have already received the annual meeting announcement in the mail. If you have not received your packet, please contact VLCT at 800-649-7915.

We look forward to seeing you there!

### PACIF MEMBERS – RENEWALS ARE PAST DUE

The deadline for returning your 2009 PACIF renewal applications was October 17, 2008. If you have not returned your renewal application yet, please send it in as soon as possible. We appreciate your cooperation!

## VLCT PACIF GROUP PURCHASING PROGRAM NOW FEATURES YAKTRAX®

The VLCT PACIF Group Purchasing Program is a way for VLCT PACIF members to receive fair pricing on products and services through collective buying.

Our newest feature is the Yaktrax bulk purchasing program that takes 55 percent off the retail price. Yaktrax are simple winter footwear devices for walking on packed

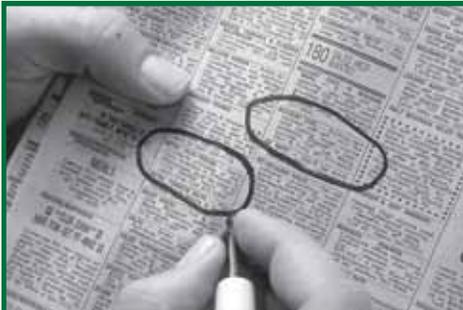
snow and ice. Yaktrax create a solid, secure grip with a patented Skid-Lock coil system. As you step, each tiny Skid-Lock coil presses downward, becoming embedded in the ice below. As you transfer weight onto your foot, hundreds of Skid-Lock surfaces squeeze into the ice, providing you with stability in all directions. You will move about

naturally. There is nothing new to learn – just walk as you normally would. When you lift your foot, the Skid-Lock coil system stays snugly with your shoe, offering unhindered movement and stability on ice and snow.

Note: This product is to be worn outdoors and should be removed when working indoors. Indoor surfaces may become more slippery when this product is worn.

This program is open to PACIF members and their employees. There is a \$100 minimum order requirement per municipality. Members that offer personal purchasing to their employees should consolidate all orders and submit to VLCT one Yaktrax order form (available at [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org)) and one check for the total amount due made out to Implus Footcare LLC by October 31, 2008.

If you have questions about the Yaktrax purchasing program, please contact VLCT Administrative Assistant Shawna O'Neill at (800) 649-7915 or [sonell@vlct.org](mailto:sonell@vlct.org).



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## DIFFICULT SITUATIONS -

(Continued from Page One)

- 1. Summarizing.** If the speaker is talking about several topics, the presiding officer can volunteer to summarize the points made so far. In general, a speaker should not be interrupted, but breaking in to summarize a rambling presentation is one way to show that the speaker is being heard. Sometimes it can also prompt the speaker to return to his or her most important point. For example, "Mr. Sampson, excuse me. I want to be sure I understand what you have said so far. You are concerned about trash collection, loose animals, loud noise from your neighbors, and spending on the new library. It seems that you are frustrated that this selectboard and town staff have not done more to address problems you see in these areas. Is this right? Thanks. Please continue."
- 2. Clarifying what the speaker seeks.** This task may be difficult, since the person's comments may range from complaints about situations beyond the selectboard's jurisdiction to general criticism about government rules, spending, or responsiveness.
- 3. Acknowledging the person's goals and feelings.** Even when the selectboard disagrees with the speaker's opinion or argument or is unable to address the citizen's concern, recognizing the person's frustration, anger, or anxiety may help provide relief for someone with many apparently disconnected concerns.

- 4. Clarifying how a citizen can have her or his concern addressed.** Individuals and groups often believe that it is entirely up to the selectboard to solve the problems they bring before them. But as the selectboard clarifies what a speaker wants, it can suggest perhaps several ways of addressing the problem. Pointing out several options helps people understand that their concerns have been heard and that they do indeed have influence. The following statement might be helpful: "Ms. Jordan, your concern is that people are driving too fast through your neighborhood and endangering children. Let me suggest a way to address your concerns under existing town policy. Our policy allows citizens to request additional police cruisers in the area at particular times, as you suggest. Another policy provides for crossing guards at either end of the street, since going and coming from school places the greatest number of children on the street. A Neighborhood Watch group in your area also provides parents and other adults at certain times of the day. Finally, we can ask the transportation department to check on traffic flow and see whether the timing of traffic signals in your neighborhood contributes to people driving too fast down your street."
- 5. "Reality-checking."** When a speaker asks for a particular action, the selectboard can help that person understand that it may not be able to grant the request by reminding him or her that there may well be serious objections from citizens if it does so.
- 6. Reminding the speaker.** The selectboard should again state its time limits for public

comment and (when appropriate) which matters can and cannot be discussed publicly. The speaker should be asked to understand the selectboard's need to address at least one of the person's complaints.

- 7. Offering the speaker a way to be more involved.** Perhaps the selectboard can connect the speaker with a group – among the town's many formal and informal committees, task forces, neighborhood associations, and other organizations – that address at least one of the person's complaints.

But some speakers may still continue past the time limit, or repeat points, or bring up new topics. At that point, telling them they must stop is usually considered appropriate. Still, treating such people firmly but courteously shows respect for them and helps build confidence throughout the town in its local government officials.

### **Situation 2: A large group of people attend, express strong views and feelings, and demand action.**

The presence of a large group of angry citizens can be stressful for selectboard members. This kind of gathering can be anticipated when the issue is important, when the number of pre-meeting telephone calls increases, or when group leaders say they are organizing their supporters to attend the meeting and press their concerns. How should an agitated group like this be handled?

It is important to allow extra time at the meeting for this kind of situation. By reconsidering which business is essential and which

(Continued on Page Nineteen)



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# Tech Check



## MORE GREEN COMPUTING SOLUTIONS

*Editor's note: This article is the second in a two-part series. In last month's issue, we defined three areas of green computing. This month, we explore some ways to implement greener computing.*

As we explained last month, three practices can result in more environmentally friendly – or green – computing: contaminant reduction, power reduction, and paper reduction.

**Contaminant reduction.** This involves making sure hazardous chemicals, such as

lead, do not get into landfills. There are several things you can do. For starters, send all computer equipment to a recovery/recycling facility instead of throwing it into the trash. Even something as small as a USB drive can contain hazardous materials.

Educate staff on proper disposal of keyboards, mice, USB drives, PDAs, headsets, printers, etc. If possible, set up a central location for staff to drop off these types of items, but make sure the location is large enough to hold all of the equipment in a safe manner. If

it's a closet or storage area, for example, don't let small devices sit on the floor where people could trip over them.

Once you've accumulated these items, you will need to find safe disposal or recycling. Many vendors offer pick-up services for a modest fee. Most charge on a per-pound or per-computer basis, but the rates are usually not much more than you would pay for regular trash service. Plus, there are often discounts for government agencies.

Before you dispose of old computers, make sure to use a software-based disk scrubbing utility to ensure data cannot be taken from the drive after disposal. You could physically perform this, but taking a sledge hammer to hard drives, or using them as clay pigeons at a shooting range makes it more difficult to recycle the hard drive components.

**Energy reduction.** The second opportunity is in the area of energy reduction. As energy costs continue to rise, it's more important than ever to make sure you use servers and computers efficiently. I'll start with servers. Most server rooms consist of several servers, each of them with its own power supply, set of fans, and set of hard drives. These run constantly regardless of how many people are using the server. The logical solution would be to combine as many servers together as possible, but like people, some server applications don't play well with others.

Over the past several years, a solution to this has emerged. It's called server virtualization. Essentially this allows you to create virtual servers within servers. Think of it as a duplex or multiplex for computers. All of the virtual servers use the same hardware (land) but have separate space (apartments) to carry on with their daily duties.

*(Continued on Page Sixteen)*



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## '09 MUNI POLICY -

(Continued from Page Eight)

lumping the Health Trust together with the state-run Catamount Health program. Other goals are "Prevention," "Accountability," and "Cost and Quality."

The Quality of Life and Environment section of the 2009 Municipal Policy includes sections on local control, land use, growth, housing, and Act 250. Water issues – especially stormwater and wastewater – could become prominent topics at the Statehouse in the coming session. Sensing the potential for costs, programs, treatment plant upgrades, and enforcement activities to be shifted to local governments without any corresponding funding, the policy endorses legislative action that recognizes the vital role local government plays in finding the most efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally sound solutions.

Much of the Public Safety section of the Municipal Policy focuses on the potential for this area to become a quintessential "shift and shaft" battleground by opposing mandates for municipalities to create and maintain police departments and any shift in responsibility from the state to supervise offenders in community settings.

Two new additions include the call for some kind of statewide retirement system for police officers to aid in the recruitment and retention of qualified law enforcement professionals, and enactment of primary enforcement of the seat belt law (meaning that motorists can be pulled over by police for failing to wear a seat belt).

From the four sections (Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations; Transportation; Public Safety; and Quality of Life and Environment) of the adopted policy, the VLCT Board of Directors will pull a set of legislative priorities for 2009. For a copy of the approved 2009 Municipal Policy, please visit [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org) and click on the "Advocacy" page, or contact Trevor Lashua ([tlashua@vlct.org](mailto:tlashua@vlct.org)) or Karen Horn ([khorn@vlct.org](mailto:khorn@vlct.org)) at 1-800-649-7915. Look for additional announcements on regional legislative preview meetings where you'll have the opportunity to discuss the 2009 Municipal Policy and the 2009 legislative session with VLCT's Advocacy staff.

- Trevor M. Lashua, VLCT Senior Associate, Advocacy and Information

# LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION BUSINESS PLAN

MONTPELIER – The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) will hold a series of public meetings to discuss and gather feedback on the draft Long Range Transportation Business Plan (LRTBP).

The comprehensive 25-year transportation plan lays out strategies to provide increased mobility, economic efficiency, orderly economic development, safety, and environmental quality for all transportation modes including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, highways and roadways, public transportation, railroads, and airports.

The LRTBP planning process included the input from a wide variety of stakeholders, including:

- An Advisory Committee comprised of key stakeholders representing various state agencies, local governments (including VLCT), regional planning commissions and the Metropolitan Planning Organization, and business and environmental groups.
- A public opinion survey that gathered input from Vermont residents about transportation issues.
- A scenario planning session where participants developed policies and actions in response to four possible scenarios that may play out in the next 25 years.

The draft of the plan uses current VTrans goals and policies developed through the LRTBP planning process to develop strategies to meet the state's current and future transportation needs and also provide a financial analysis of Vermont's transportation system.

An executive summary as well as the full draft plan are available for public review on the LRTBP website (<http://vtplan.rsginc.com/>), at any regional planning commission, and at the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Commission.

VTrans is holding five public meetings to take comments on the draft plan. The meetings are the second round of public meetings conducted as part of the preparation of the plan. The dates and locations for the remaining meetings are:

- **Tuesday, November 18, 2008**, 5 p.m.-6:30 p.m. on Vermont Interactive Television (VIT). Several sites around the state will host this interactive television presentation. Please call (802) 728-1455 or go to [www.vitlink.org](http://www.vitlink.org) for location information.
- **Wednesday, November 19, 2008**, 5 p.m.-6:30 p.m. in South Burlington, Vt., at the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Main Conference Room, 30 Kimball Avenue, Suite 206, South Burlington.
- **Thursday, November 20, 2008**, 4 p.m.-5:30 p.m. in Norwich, Vt. at Tracey Hall (located on the corner of US 5 and Main Street), downstairs multi-purpose conference room.

John Zicconi  
Communications Director  
Vermont Agency of Transportation

Written or email comment on the plan will be accepted until November 30, 2008 and can be sent to:

Scott Bascom, Planning Coordinator  
Vermont Agency of Transportation  
Policy & Planning Division  
1 National Life Drive  
Montpelier, VT 05633-5001  
Email: [Scott.Bascom@state.vt.us](mailto:Scott.Bascom@state.vt.us)  
Tel: (802) 828-5748



# TOWN FAIR 2008 -

*(Continued from Page One)*

VLCT Town Fair. We recognized three individuals for their service to the League: Representatives Donna Sweaney from Windsor and Richard Hube from Londonderry, who shared the 2008 Legislator of the Year Award; and Stuart Hurd, Town Manager in Bennington, who was voted Municipal Person of the Year. And speaking of winners ...

### ***\$50.00 Gift Card winners from the Health Risk Assessment (HRA) survey***

Chris Adams  
*Weathersfield Town Accountant*

Chris Ryan  
*Putney Town Manager*

Jill Kearney  
*Town of Norwich Recreation*

Clarissa Holmes  
*Hartford Town Assessor*

### ***Two 2009 Boston Red Sox tickets, courtesy of HUB International***

Linda Drummond  
*Pittsford Town Manager Assistant*

Claire Stan  
*Fair Haven Selectperson*

### ***2008 Best Booth Competition***

Vermont Municipal Employees Retirement System (VMERS)

### ***\$100.00 Grand Raffle Gift Card winners***

Becky McGailliard  
*Orange County Sheriff's Dept.*

David McShane  
*Roxbury Selectperson*

Stuart Hurd  
*Bennington Town Manager*

Robert Schlachter  
*Rutland Fire Chief*

Ray Belair  
*South Burlington Administrative Officer*

Bob Thompson  
*Rockingham Selectperson*

Bill Ellis  
*Mendon Road Commissioner*

Sandra Pinsonault  
*Dorset Town Clerk*

John Haverstock  
*Pittsford Town Manager*

Dick Horner  
*Killington Planner*

As is customary for the post-turkey dinner festivities, prizes were raffled off to attendees. Congratulations to this year's winners!

VMERS has won a free booth for 2009 thanks to their creative use of our baseball theme in their exhibit. Congratulations to VMERS and thank you to all of the companies who used our theme to tie the exhibit hall into the larger picture.

Staff is already busy making plans for 2009. Please mark your calendars now and save the date of October 1. Town Fair will return to Barre and the Municipal Civic Center, making a full rotation around the

state after the 2007 event in Essex Junction and this year's event in Killington. We typically start planning in April for this one-day event. Workshop topics and speakers are selected as is the theme that will shape the entire event. We are always looking for ideas for training. Give your suggestions on our Local Government Day survey in February or email them anytime to [jhill@vlct.org](mailto:jhill@vlct.org).

For those of you who were not able to join us, we would love to know why. Please take a moment to contact Jessica Hill, Manager of Administrative Services, [jhill@vlct.org](mailto:jhill@vlct.org) with your feedback. We genuinely hope to see you at a future event!

*Jessi Hill, Manager,  
Administrative Services*

# TOWN FAIR 2008





## TECH CHECK -

(Continued from Page Thirteen)

Server virtualization allows servers to share the same power supply, fans, and hard drives, saving money on both hardware and, more importantly, on electricity used to run and cool the servers.

To ensure computer efficiency, it's important to ensure your desktop computers are set up to consume less power when not in use for longer periods of time. This is a trickier area to configure because you don't know when someone will need his or her computer quickly after stepping away for a meeting. Also, in many organizations, computers are set to update themselves at night when no one is using them.

It comes back to the question of do you turn your computer off at night to save electricity, or leave it running so it can install updates and reboot without decreasing the employee's productivity. Unfortunately there's no easy answer. However, there are options.

One option is to configure computers so monitors shut off after 10 or 15 minutes of inactivity. This is a simple step that provides energy savings, without a lot of inconvenience to the person using the computer.

Another option is to put the computer into sleep mode after inactivity. However, this can create issues with database-intensive programs. Finally, consider whether a computer really needs to be turned on for the entire work day. (GASP!)

*Paper reduction.* The final area of opportunity is paper reduction. One of the simplest ways to reduce paper is to pause before printing and ask yourself, do I really need a paper copy of this? Another simple way to reduce paper consumption involves meeting agendas. It's great when someone sends you a meeting agenda via e-mail. You have an opportunity to review the agenda ahead of time and prepare for the meeting. But how often have you printed that agenda, and then when you arrived at the meeting, found the organizer also printed agendas? The solution here is if you send an agenda via e-mail, let the attendees know if they're expected to print copies or if you're planning on bringing the copies.

These ideas just scratch the surface of working toward greener computing, but it's a beginning.

*Greg Van Wormer is assistant technology services director with the League of Minnesota Cities. Phone: (651) 281-1211. E-mail: [gvanwormer@lmc.org](mailto:gvanwormer@lmc.org).*

## STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Stephanie Smith, Senior Associate with the Municipal Assistance Center, recently achieved the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) designation. This is a great attainment for Stephanie and increases the capacity of MAC and VLCT to provide professional planning and land use services to its members.

AICP is the professional institute of the American Planning Association. AICP provides recognized nationwide leadership for professional planners in the areas of professional certification, professional development, ethics, planning education, and the standards of planning practice.

Now you know what those new letters following Stephanie's signature mean!

## GOODBYE AND GOOD LUCK

VLCT recently bid goodbye to Communications Coordinator **Katherine Roe**, who left the League to take up a challenge in the field of education. Katherine will be greatly missed, along with her ability to take a few words and string them into creative and thought-provoking sentences.

We wish Katherine luck in her new endeavor, and thank her for all her contributions to VLCT over the past 17 years.



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# Classifieds

Please visit the VLCT website to view more classified ads: <http://www.vlct.org/marketplace/classifiedads/>. You may also submit your ad via an e-mail link on this page of the site.

## VLCT NEWS CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING POLICY

The *VLCT News* welcomes classified advertisements from municipal entities, public agencies, businesses and individuals. This service is free for VLCT members (regular, contributing and associate); the non-member rate is \$41 per ad.

Ads are generally limited to 150 words and run for one issue. Ads are also placed on the VLCT website for up to one month.

The *VLCT News* is published eleven times per year and reaches readers by the third week of the month. (The August/September issues are combined.)

The copy deadline for advertisements is the first Friday of the month for the next month's issue. However, space is often available for late additions. Please feel free to check with the editor for availability.

For more information on placing classified ads in the *VLCT News*, contact David Gunn at [dgunn@vlct.org](mailto:dgunn@vlct.org). For details on display advertising, email Allyson Barrieau at [abarrieau@vlct.org](mailto:abarrieau@vlct.org). Instructions for ad requirements may also be downloaded at <http://www.vlct.org/aboutvlct/vlctnewsletter/advertisinginformation/>.

## HELP WANTED

**Recreation Director.** The City of St. Albans, Vt. (pop. 7,500) seeks an energetic manager for the position of Recreation Director. This position is responsible for developing creative recreation programming, managing the recreation budget, identifying new opportunities and ensuring quality programming. Recreation facilities include a municipal pool, two large parks, gymnasium, community

center, tennis and basketball courts, the Hard'ack Ski Hill, and Aldis Hill Forest. Previous experience in parks and recreation management preferred. Strong public service ethic required. Salary commensurate with qualifications. A full job description is available at [www.stalbansvt.com](http://www.stalbansvt.com). To apply, send cover letter and resume to Dominick Cloud, City Manager, at [d.cloud@stalbandsvt.com](mailto:d.cloud@stalbandsvt.com). Resume review begins November 3, 2008. (10-15)

### Executive Assistant to the City Manager.

The City of Lebanon, New Hampshire seeks a responsible senior level administrative/secretarial professional to provide services to the City Manager. Duties include preparing and advertising agendas for City Council meetings, coordinating work with city departments, acting as liaison to the community, dealing with the public on various topics and more. Requirements: Associate's degree, plus 5-7 years experience in an advanced secretarial field dealing with the public. Must be able to work independently in a fast-paced environment, exercise good judgment, and be proficient in general office software applications. Must be able to work a weekly flexible schedule. May

be required to work evening meetings. For a complete job description and employment application, go to [www.lebcity.com](http://www.lebcity.com). Salary: \$21.62 to \$29.20 commensurate with experience. To apply, send a cover letter, resume, completed City employment application, and one letter of reference via email to [human.resources@lebcity.com](mailto:human.resources@lebcity.com) or by surface mail to Mitzi Baron, HR Division, City of Lebanon, 51 North Park Street, Lebanon, NH 03766. **Deadline: 8 a.m., October 23, 2008.** E.O.E. (10-7)

**Town Administrator.** The Town of Jericho, Vt. (pop. 5,000+) seeks a full-time Town Administrator as it opens its exciting, restored new Town Hall municipal center. We are looking for a proven, dynamic leader who can skillfully interrelate and communicate with staff and the public. The Administrator reports to a three-member selectboard. Understanding and knowledge of financial systems, highway administration and budgets are vitally important. Candidates must have an applicable degree and at least five years of related experience. Grant knowledge is an additional plus. This outstanding oppor-

*(Continued on next page)*



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## CLASSIFIEDS -

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**Town Manager.** The Town of Dorset, Vt. (pop. 2,039) is accepting applications for a Town Manager. Dorset is a picturesque community in southwestern Vermont that is surrounded by mountains and which offers a high quality of life to both residents and visitors. The Manager is responsible for the daily operations of the Town and reports to a five-member selectboard. Primary responsibilities include developing and managing a \$1.4 million budget, grant writing, supervision of six employees, community relations, care and maintenance of town roads and facilities, and intergovernmental relations. Salary commensurate with experience. Excellent benefits. To apply, please send resume to Town of Dorset Selectboard, PO Box 715, East Dorset, VT 05253-0715. (9-29)

**Superintendent of Solid Waste.** The Department of Public Works of the City of

Nashua, N.H. seeks a professional to provide leadership, knowledge and managerial abilities necessary for the operation, maintenance, upgrade and any construction associated with 100,000 tons per year at a solid waste landfill facility and 40,000 tons per year at solid waste and recycling collection programs. Other duties include being responsible for environmental management, final closure and monitoring of various former landfill and asbestos disposal sites throughout the city. The landfill currently has approximately 30 full-time employees. Requirements: Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering/Business Management or Administration (solid waste, chemical, biology, environmental studies, recycling management) plus at least five years relevant work experience; NH DES Level IV Landfill Operators License; experience working in a union environment; proficiency in the use of personal computers and software applicable to this position; Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) management certification; Landfill Gas Management and SWANA Manager of Landfill Operations (MOLO) certifications; a valid driver's license. A combination of equivalent education and experience will be considered. Salary, \$62-\$70K. For an application, call (603) 589-3230, or email [jobs@nashuanh.gov](mailto:jobs@nashuanh.gov). To apply, submit application and resume to City of Nashua, HR Dept., 229 Main Street, Nashua, NH 03060, or via email to [jobs@nashuanh.gov](mailto:jobs@nashuanh.gov). Position open until filled. Equal Opportunity Employer. M/F/H. (9-24)

**Public Works Division Director.** The City of Nashua, N.H. seeks a Director to provide the overall leadership and development of all Public Works functions (engineering, traffic, streets, parks and recreation, wastewater, solid waste and business administration) for the City. Other primary duties include ensuring that programs, policies, and operational responsibility of the Division are carried out in an efficient and cost effective manner within the approved budgets. The Public Works Division currently has approximately 175 full-time employees. The Director reports to the Mayor and the Board of Public Works. Requirements: Master's degree in Civil Engineering or Environmental Sciences, or an MBA/MPA with at least eight years of progressively responsible technical knowledge and management experience in the Public Works area; experience working in a union environment; working knowledge of budget development, public bidding process and employee relations; effective oral, written and interpersonal communication skills; proficiency in the use of PCs and Microsoft Windows/Professional Office Suite; a valid driver's license. A combination of equivalent education and experience will be considered. Salary, \$75K-\$95K. For an application, call (603) 589-3230, or email [jobs@nashuanh.gov](mailto:jobs@nashuanh.gov). To apply, submit application and resume to City of Nashua, HR Dept., 229 Main Street, Nashua, NH 03060, or via email to [jobs@nashuanh.gov](mailto:jobs@nashuanh.gov). Position open until filled. Equal Opportunity Employer. M/F/H. (9-24)

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## DIFFICULT SITUATIONS -

(Continued from Page Twelve)

agenda items it can handle quickly or defer, the selectboard can sometimes revise the agenda to accommodate the group(s) of citizens who wish to share their views on an important issue.

One option is to ask that a single speaker address the selectboard. When a single speaker presents the group's concerns before the selectboard and audience, everyone can hear the same general concerns and information. Often, agitated citizens' groups gain some degree of satisfaction simply by venting their feelings in an official setting. The selectboard can help to accommodate this desire by suggesting that the group offer a few high-energy, articulate people to speak on the group's behalf.

Depending on the specific situation (for example, what the nature of the issue is, who is affected, and whether the situation involves great risk), it may be necessary to agree on some short-term steps and schedule another meeting devoted solely to the problem. This meeting might take the form of a public hearing; it might lead to the formation of an advisory group, or it might result in some other approach.

### Situation 3: A speaker verbally attacks or insults one or more selectboard members.

Probably the most difficult situation a selectboard member can face is a personal attack in a public setting. Sometimes the line between defending a policy or a decision and defending oneself is very thin. Personal attacks must be dealt with, but as constructively as possible. The presiding officer, while acknowledging the person's underlying concern, should tell the offending speaker that she or he has crossed the line of acceptable speech. Still, the selectboard needs to remember that unless the person is using obscene language or "fighting words," the speaker's remarks attacking one or more selectboard members, while uncomfortable to the selectboard, may be constitutionally protected free speech.

Five strategies can be helpful in this situation:

1. **Taking a deep breath.** This old piece of advice still makes good sense. Harsh personal criticism causes stress. Stress automatically causes the body to bring up its defenses. Muscles tighten, palms become sweaty, and breathing rate increases. These

physiological changes are natural, understandable, and useful in preparing for fight or flight. But unless the speaker threatens physical harm and the selectboard member actually wants to flee, the body's reaction may cause the selectboard member's verbal response to be unnecessarily defensive. Taking the time to breathe deeply helps counteract the fight-or-flight syndrome and focuses attention on analyzing what the person is saying rather than on immediately defending oneself.

2. **Summarizing.** One way to disarm an upset person is to summarize his or her strong, critical views. The target selectboard member will not agree with the speaker, but summarizing the remarks so as to reflect the depth and the strength of the speaker's feelings will help the selectboard member control his or her own emotions. If possible, another selectboard member should make the summary, for two reasons. First, the selectboard member being criticized or attacked gains more time to prepare a response. Second, summarizing helps determine whether the attack arose from a perceived malfeasance on the part of the entire selectboard or on the part of only one selectboard member.
3. **Asking for clarification.** Agitated people often speak in generalizations: "You're all crooks!" "You don't listen to people!" Asking for specific examples may produce a more fruitful exchange than trying to reply to general statements.
4. **Expressing one's own feelings.** No one likes being attacked and put on the defensive, and the target selectboard member

should say so in a direct, controlled fashion. The reply may help the selectboard refocus on how best to conduct the public's business.

5. **Examining the speaker's main concerns.** Setting aside the unpleasantness of the speaker's remarks, the selectboard may want to explain its decision-making process if that process is relevant to the angry citizen's concerns. Finally, it may wish to consider whether to open the matter at issue for further discussion at this or a later meeting.

### SUMMARY

People on selectboards face citizens' comments and criticism in many public meetings. Encouraging citizens to share their views in a constructive way helps rebuild trust in public institutions. Local government officials are on the front lines of improving civic engagement in their cities. Helping citizens – including harsh critics – feel welcomed and valued is an important way to create and maintain trust in public service and preserve its legitimacy.

*Adapted from an article titled "Public Comment at meetings of Local Government Boards, Part One: Guidelines for Good Practices" by John Stephens, Associate Professor of Public Administration and Government; and A. Fleming Bell, II, Professor of Public Law and Government, University of North Carolina Institute of Government.*

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**TAKE NOTE:**  
VLCT NEWS IS TAKING A BREAK  
FOR THE DECEMBER ISSUE. SEE  
YOU IN JANUARY 2009!

## Calendar

*For more information about the following workshops or events, please contact Jessica Hill, Manager, VLCT Administrative Services, tel., (800) 649-7915; e-mail, [jhill@vlct.org](mailto:jhill@vlct.org). Or visit [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org)'s Events Calendar and select a workshop for more information or to register on-line. For non-VLCT events listed below, please contact the individuals directly. (The on-line registration option is available for VLCT workshops and events only.)*

**Planning and Zoning Forum.** Thursday, October 30, 2008, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Montpelier. Planning officials from around the state will gather to talk about hot topics in planning and zoning regulation. Please join us for a discussion of topics ranging from successful public participation strategies to stormwater and alternative energy source regulation. Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center.

**Municipal Budgeting and Financial Management.** Thursday, November 13, 2008, Montpelier Elks Lodge. Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center. This annual workshop will provide an introduction to governmental accounting, strategies for developing the annual operating budget, tips for managing the politics of the budgeting process, and best practices for reconciling generally accepted finance practices and Vermont law.

**VLCT Health Trust Annual Meeting.** Friday, November 14, 2008, Sheraton Hotel Burlington. Members and directors of the VLCT Health Trust will gather to hear annual financial and performance reports as well as information about new rates and service changes.

**Municipal Personnel Administration Forum.** Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, November 18, 19 or 20. Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center,

this training will be held in at the Bennington Fire Station, Middlesex Town Hall and the Milton Town Office, respectively, to better serve VLCT members around the state. This indispensable, half-day regional workshop will cover the fundamentals of personnel administration in a municipal setting with particular attention given to state and federal employment laws, employee termination, and administering personnel policies.

**Municipal Zoning Bylaws after September 1, 2011.** Wednesday, December 17, 2008. Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center and Vermont's Regional Planning Commissions. Delivered in the evening via interactive television, this workshop will focus on the 2004 "permit reform" law, Act 115, and the effect the expiration of the savings clause on September 1, 2011 will have on a community's zoning bylaws.