

# A message from VML President A.D. "Chuckie" Reid

## A year of walking in larger-than-life footsteps



**A.D. "Chuckie" Reid**

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE it's been almost a year since we were all together in Richmond. So much has happened. For starters, I did not expect to be serving as your President this year. Sadly, Town of Pennington Gap Councilmember Jill Carson passed away just a few short months after being sworn in as VML's President at the 2022 Annual Conference. I very much wish Jill was writing this instead of me, but I have done my best to walk in her footsteps this past year. It has been an honor to finish her term. I am humbled by Jill's example as I think of the year to come during which I will serve my full year as your President.

Given the circumstances, I will keep this message short and say only that VML has had a busy year – hosting events, spending time at the General Assembly, waiting for a budget, rolling out a new website and da-



**Jill Carson**

tabase, and much more that you can read about in the Annual Report in this issue of the magazine. Personally, one of the most fulfilling things I got to do this year as VML's President was to attend the Congressional City Conference held in Washington, D.C. by the National League of Cities. At this event I met local officials from all over the country. It's so inspiring to know that as an elected official you are part of a larger family with similar concerns and everyone is ready to learn from each other – whether you serve in Pennington Gap, Farmville, Norfolk... or Seattle!

I look forward to seeing everyone in Norfolk where we will gather under the banner of "Respect for Local Governments." It is my honor and my pleasure to work on your behalf.

*A.D. "Chuckie" Reid*

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**W**HEN VML MEMBERS gathered in Richmond for the 2022 Annual Conference, it's fair to say that the most emotional moment came during the closing session when Town of Pennington Gap Councilmember and newly installed VML President Jill Carson addressed the gathering. Wearing a shirt that proclaimed her a cancer survivor, she seemed frail in body, but was strong in spirit. President Carson's speech encouraging everyone to nurture civility in their local governments and their own lives was an amazing coda to a great event. Sadly, Jill Carson passed on January 28, 2023 and VML's Vice President and Vice Mayor of the Town of Farmville Chuckie Reid stepped up to complete her term. Of Jill Carson, Vice Mayor Reid observed, "She was a fighter. She spoke her mind and was very respected and loved. I will miss her deeply." Indeed, everyone in the VML community who knew her misses Jill but has found inspiration in her strength to continue the work she held dear.

It would be tempting to describe this past year as "the calm before the storm." Although VML and Virginia's localities had to cool our collective heels while we waited for the General Assembly to finally pass a budget – and although the 2023 session was technically a short one – it was anything but "calm." For starters the 2023 session was incredibly busy with 2,863 pieces of legislation introduced and 1,687 bills passed in just 45 days. During this time, and through the dog days of summer, VML's staff also worked to transition our website and aging database to a new platform. This was a heavy lift over ten years in the making but it's finally completed! And through it all, VML hosted events and Regional Meetings, organized the activities of our various committees, answered questions from our member localities and did everything we could to support our mission of "Better Communities Through Sound Government". Thank you to all the officials and staff in our member localities for the work you do. It's an honor to work on your behalf.

Oh, and about that "storm" – there's certainly something significant in the forecast as the relative stability in General Assembly membership is about to be swept by a surge of new members after the November election. But don't worry, we've got our umbrellas ready and will be here to support Virginia's local governments!

## 2022 Annual Conference

The 2022 Annual Conference held at the Richmond Marriott Downtown was among the best attended in recent memory. Maybe it had something to do with the City of Richmond? Maybe it was because everyone was happy to feel more distant from the



pandemic? Whatever it was, it certainly wasn't the weather because it rained and rained! Fortunately, the rain was not an issue because over the course of three days attendees heard a keynote address from nationally recognized speaker Matt Lehrman (who will be back for 2023), enjoyed a Host City Night at the Virginia Museum of History, went on mobile workshops to housing developments with Virginia Housing, to the Library of Virginia for records retention information, and toured the historic Jackson Ward neighborhood as well as the eclectic Scott's Addition area. VML members attended sessions on everything from FOIA/COIA to ARPA funds, from short term rentals to social media for small towns, and so much more.

## Lobbying & Advocacy 2023 General Assembly Session

In an odd numbered year, we would normally be talking about a "short" session of the General Assembly with everything wrapped up within 45 days. The policy side of the session was indeed completed in that timeframe. However, getting a completed amended budget took somewhat longer.

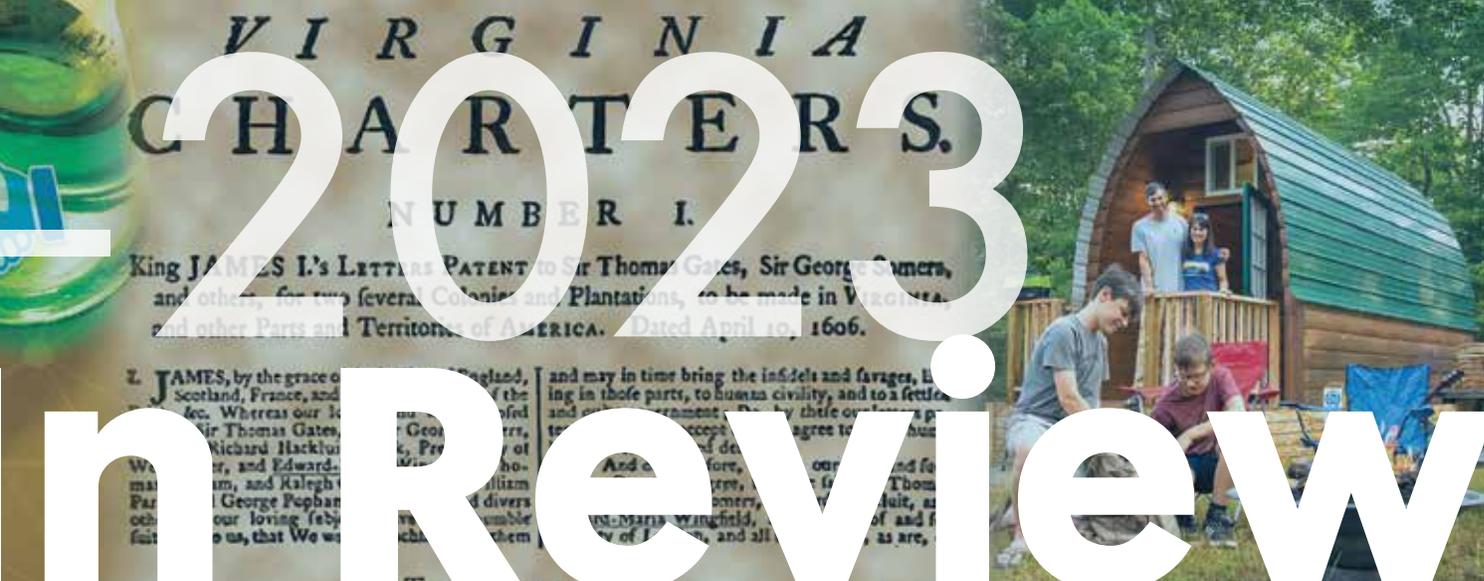
Unable to come to agreement on proposed changes to the current biennial budget by the end of the regular session – particularly additional tax cuts proposed by the Governor – budget conferees instead rolled out (and members approved) a "skinny budget". It's worth noting that "skinny budget" is a new term in Virginia budgeting. As employed by the 2023 General Assembly, the "skinny budget" addressed a few issues, most notably correcting the Basic Aid calculation error that came to light during the session, but left unresolved many, many more issues, including salary increases for teachers, CSB staff and others; behavioral health initiatives to help communities with crisis and other services; and so much more!

After several false starts, General Assembly budget conferees came to an agreement on a more comprehensive package of budget amendments in late August and the General Assembly convened in a special session on Sept. 6 to approve that budget package.

Now everyone gets a short breather – if you can call it that – before the approaching elections in which all General Assembly seats are in play; the moving of General Assembly member offices, staff, agencies, and operations from the Pocahontas Building to the brand new General Assembly buildings at 9th and Broad Streets; and the presentation of the Governor's proposal for the 2024-2026 budget in December.

Then the fun begins again with the 2024 Session in January!





The General Assembly that convenes in January 2024 will look very different given the large number of voluntary and involuntary retirements from both bodies. Gone will be at least 590 years of experience from the body as a whole. New members will face a steep learning curve and fewer experienced colleagues to provide guidance and support with a fast-paced and complex process.

Given these circumstances, it will be more important than ever to educate the members of the General Assembly on all the critical work done by Virginia's local governments. Please review the "How to Communicate with your Legislator" information that will be available at our conference and the website. Also keep an eye out for the VML Regional Events to be held in early December.

Overall, local governments had a decent session in 2023, particularly with the defeat, watering down, or movement to studies of legislation affecting local revenue authority, procedures, and collections as well as local authority regarding waste-related "flow control" ordinances; but localities were dealt a few losses, including the failure of legislation to give local governments the authority to impose a local sales and use tax of up to one percent to use solely for school construction and renovation, and the lack of movement on legislation to address local referendum and zoning authority in regards to commercial marijuana businesses.

On the public safety/behavioral health front, some helpful bills were approved to create a fund and grant program for opioid use reduction/jail-based substance use disorder programs; more definitive direction on the use of alternative transportation during emergency custody/temporary detention situations; and other legislation to give emergency room doctors more flexibility regarding requests for testing/treatment/observation or release of an individual if they no longer meet the criteria for temporary detention. VML's legislative priorities included many of these issues.

The VML team appreciates the assistance of all our local government partners who help us during General Assembly sessions by talking with legislators and educating them on how various bills will affect local governments. It's a never-ending process, and the local government input is so very helpful in keeping legislators and their staff members "in the know" on the many issues facing communities.

## Local Government Day

VML once again co-hosted Local Government Day at the Richmond Omni with the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions. Several legislators and state officials were on hand to chat with local government officials and many members were able to squeeze into small meeting rooms to hear committees and subcommittees address all types of legislation. This will

be improved in the new General Assembly building, with larger meeting rooms and public spaces! Thanks to everyone who came and spoke with their delegation members.

The next Local Government Day will be February 1, 2024, at the Richmond Downtown Marriott.

## Policy & Legislative Committees

VML's Legislative Committee began its work in early June with an update on the 2023 session (sans budget) and a look into issues that may be in play during the 2024 Session. The five policy committees met throughout July to receive presentations on a range of pertinent topics including tax policy, education funding, transportation funding, and housing issues. Each committee chose a limited number of items to forward for further consideration by the Legislative Committee during its September 11 meeting. The priorities include state assistance to local law enforcement, funding of CSBs and BHAs, more money for the stormwater local assistance fund, support for public education funding and the retention of sovereign immunity. The Legislative Committee will meet again (in person this time) on Sunday, October 8, at the VML Annual Conference in Norfolk.

Please review the proposed policy and legislative committee statements which can be found on each committee's page on our website.

## Studies Everywhere

Once again, the number of General Assembly-generated studies and Executive Branch initiated efforts to address current issues kept VML and local government staff scrambling this summer. FOIA, housing, behavioral health reform, tax policy, transportation funding and natural resources issues were all on the table this year. The Virginia Housing Commission created four workgroups to review legislation while the FOIA Council only created two. The road maintenance two-year study will be complete in December and the review of SMART SCALE will produce changes (also in December). The studies have been slow but there will be reports rolling out in the fall so stay tuned to *eNews*!

Notably, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) issued a long-awaited report regarding the state's funding of the Standards of Quality (SOQ). Study findings reinforced many of the concerns VML has been expressing for years; specifically, the refusal by state policymakers to recognize prevailing practices in school divisions. This dogged adherence to artificially low standards for funding put localities – even the most fiscally distressed – into the position of making up for decades of state underfunding to adequately staff classrooms and meet the needs of their communities.

## Education & Training

### Annual Conference

The 2022 VML annual conference held October 2-4 in Richmond was a great success. With close to 600 attendees from all over the Commonwealth it was evident that VML's members and partner organizations were in a mood to get together! This premiere event is the best opportunity for local officials and staff to meet their counterparts from localities near and far, to learn from one another, and to make the connections that can often mean a world of difference down the line.

Over the course of three days, members were able to attend general and breakout sessions that allowed for interaction and Q&A with subject matter experts in a variety of fields. Before, during and after the conference VML members had opportunities to review VML's draft policy and legislative statements. During the Annual Business Meeting these statements as well as an updated VML slate of officers was voted on and approved. Town of Pennington Gap Councilmember Jill Carson became the new VML President, and City of Fairfax Councilmember Jon Stehle handed over the gavel. Sadly, as noted in the introduction, Councilmember Carson passed on January 28, 2023, and Town of Farmville Vice Mayor Chuckie Reid is serving out her term as VML's President.

### Elected Officials Conferences

VML hosted two Elected Officials Conferences in 2023. These were offered as hybrid events with strong turnouts both in Richmond and virtually. The first was held in January with a follow up event in June. The events focused on the nuts and bolts of local government; manager-council relations, budgeting, zoning, and ethics in local government. Not only were they educational but also offered great networking and learning opportunities for local government members and staff. VML will keep hosting these conferences, which will build upon previous offerings to be valuable to both new and experienced local government officials and staff. Please stay tuned for the next event which will be held in early January 2024!

### Mayors Institute

VML's Mayors Institute was held at Richmond's Marriott Downtown during the two days immediately preceding the Annual Conference. This annual event explores issues essential to the responsibilities of mayors and vice mayors as local government leaders. Among other things, attendees heard "A Courageous Conversation About Civility" from Matt Lehrman (the keynote speaker for the Annual Conference), toured the Virginia War Memorial and were updated on "Facebook Best Practices and Instagram Information for Local Officials" by Ashley Aniton from Meta.

### Broadband Together

On May 18-19, VML, VACo and the Broadband Association of Virginia hosted an in-person conference in Richmond that brought together some of the leading voices in Virginia and national broadband. Attendees this year heard presentations on BEAD grants, a 2023 legislative recap, smart technology and farming, digital equity, cybersecurity, digital literacy, and much more.

Evan Feinman, the Director of the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (and formerly the Chief Broadband Advisor for Virginia Governor Ralph Northam), provided an agency update. Later in the program representatives from FirstNet by AT&T provided information on the technology and hardware fueling this innovative communications option for local emergency responders.

## Website and Database

2022-2023 was a big year for VML not just because of the information we put out, but also because of the information we bring in. Specifically, after many years of looking for a technology platform that can handle the complexities of our data and interactions with members, we identified a solution that brings many of our work processes – communications, finances, event registration, data tracking, website (to name a few) – under one roof.

VML's new website and database, built on the Euclid Technologies ClearVantage platform, allows staff to maintain records and make updates in one place where before they were spread across numerous areas. Equally important, we are now able to offer the same kind of user-driven experience that so many of us have come to expect from the organizations and businesses we interact with online every day.

Aside from the changes to the layout of the site, users are now able to create a profile and access resources, register for VML events, opt-in/out of our newsletter, create and manage job postings, and more!

The work to accomplish all this began in late 2022 with the new platform going live in July 2023.

## Communications

With the launch of VML's new website and membership platform (outlined above), there were some changes over the past year in how VML staff are now able to send electronic messages to our members. Most of these changes were "behind the scenes" and have increased the efficiency of our work. Changes our members might have noticed are explained below.

### Magazine: Virginia Town & City

As part of our database transitions, VML updated the subscriber records for our magazine and now have a more effective way to track changes to subscriptions. Beginning in 2023, VML's magazine is now published nine times a year (with Oct/Nov combined). This was done in part due to the rising cost of printing and in part to align the schedule of the magazine with work created by VML events. What hasn't changed is that each issue in 2022 and 2023 kept our members apprised of the latest comings and goings in local government officials and staff, highlighted the fun events and important achievements of member localities and delivered feature articles on a theme, including:

- Priority Transportation (November 2022)
- A Pennington Gap Conversation with VML's new President Jill Carson (December 2022)
- Perspectives on Public Safety (Jan/February 2023)
- The Ingredients for a Successful Mayor/Council-Manager Relationship (March 2023)
- Legislative Summary for Localities from the 2023 General Assembly (April 2023)
- The Education Issue (featuring the winners of VML's essay contest) (May 2022)
- Chart a Course for Charters (June 2022)
- Outdoor Spaces That Do More (July/August 2022)

### Newsletters: eNews and Legislative Bulletin

Prior to 2022-2023 VML's electronic newsletter *eNews* had been our primary channel for distributing information to members and anyone interested in the issues, opportunities, and events that matter to Virginia's local governments. Published bi-weekly during most of the year, and much more often during General Assembly Sessions (sometimes several times a day!), *eNews* and the legislative "Action Alerts"

distributed via the platform during sessions are a critical component of VML's communications.

During the 2023 General Assembly session, however, VML staff determined that the reports and alerts being developed through their work should be available only to members of the league. Knowing that VML would be implementing a holistic change to our communications and website environment later in the year, we began distributing information to members through a *Legislative Bulletin* while continuing to publish general news and opportunities via *eNews*. Beginning in August 2023, VML fully transitioned to providing *eNews* as a members-only publication but added a News Board to our website for the general public to find notices about events and opportunities relevant to Virginia's local governments.

## VML News Board

It's new. It's on the website. It's got great information everyone can enjoy. Check back often because we're always adding new items!

## Podcast: The VML Voice

With all the work that needed to be done to get VML set up on our new website and database, the VML Voice didn't get as much love this year. That will change for 2023-2024. However, during 2022-2023 we were pleased to provide these episodes:

**At the Broadband Together, Together (Parts I and II) (September 2023)** – On May 18 and 19, VML, VACo and the Broadband Association of Virginia hosted an in-person conference in Richmond that brought together some of the leading voices in Virginia and national broadband. The VML Voice was there talking to some of the leading voices in broadband.

**Dream Big Bristol: A new council brings fresh perspectives (April 2023)** – This episode of the VML Voice came at the suggestion of City of Bristol Manager (and VML Board Member) Randy Eads. Bristol's city council members are all relatively young and new to local government. But we think you'll find, as we did, that though they may be young and new they are also enthusiastic and bring a lot of the table.

**A New Center of the Center of the Universe: Ashland's Town Hall Project (December 2022)** – The VML Voice travels to the Town of Ashland (aka "The Center of the Universe") to chat about their new town hall. What was wrong with the old town hall? How did the staff and PMA architecture make the case for a new town hall? What makes the new town hall fantastic? And...who paid for it? These, and other questions, are answered in glowing detail. Guests include Town Manager Josh Farrar, Town Engineer Ingrid Stenbjorn, and PMA Architecture's Proposal Manager Pam Manager.

## Awards and acknowledgements

### Innovation Awards

In September, the Virginia Municipal League was pleased to announce the winners of its annual awards for excellence in local government. The statewide competition recognizes innovative problem-solving, excellence in management, citizen participation, and improved services to citizens.

The judges selected one winner in each of the eight categories. VML President and City of Fairfax Councilmember Jon Stehle selected the City of Williamsburg's entry in the Risk Management category as the 2022 winner of the President's Award for Innovation.

The winners of the 2022 VML Innovation Awards were:

### COMMUNITY HEALTH

**Town of Blacksburg** – Aging in Place Planning Resources

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Town of Marion** – "Road Trip Marion" Great Gas Giveaway!

### ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

**Town of Warsaw** – The Bounds Redevelopment Project

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**City of Newport News** – Community Assistance Response (CARE) Program

### WORKING WITH YOUTH

**City of Newport News** – YouthBuild Program

### COMMUNICATIONS

**City of Virginia Beach** – The Ripple Effect: Navigating an Approach to Coastal Resilience

### LOCAL CHAMPION\*

**City of Roanoke** – Director of General Services Jeffrey Powell

### RISK MANAGEMENT AWARD and PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR INNOVATION

**City of Williamsburg** – Reserve Protection

\*Category retired after 2022

## "If I Were Mayor" essay contest

Promoting good local government is important to VML, and our annual essay contest provides students the opportunity to reflect on the important role of elected officials in their locality. This year, students demonstrated a grasp of an issue affecting their community and developed persuasive proposals to mitigate the problem. In every case, it was apparent that these students cared about the people in their town or city and wanted to help them. If these young people are any indication, then Virginia will have a talented group of local leaders to draw upon in the future!

Regional winners selected from around the state each received a \$150 prize and plaque. The statewide winner received a \$250 prize and plaque. The runner-up from the region that received the statewide award became that region's winner.

VML staff were pleased to attend council meetings to present the awards to the 2023 winners.

2023 VML "If I Were Mayor" essay contest winners:

- Statewide winner: **Jayden McCraw** of Fries School in Fries
- Region 1: **Billie Hall** of Marion Middle School in Marion
- Region 2: **William Wall** of Martinsville Middle School in Martinsville
- Region 3: **Avery Diette** of Lylburn Downing Middle School in Lexington
- Region 5: **Talia Forster** of Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School in Falls Church
- Region 6: **Zohair Zaman** of Walker-Grant Middle School in Fredericksburg
- Region 8: **Viktorija Gobush** of St. Clare Walker Middle School in Locust Hill (resident of Urbanna)

**Note:** VML did not receive any entries from Regions 4 or 7 this year.



# Annual Briefings from VML's Affiliate Organizations



**Chair: Stephen Burr, Arlington County**

**Secretary/Treasurer: Sue Mellen,  
VML Chief of Staff**

THE VIRGINIA ENERGY PURCHASING GOVERNMENTAL ASSOCIATION (VEPGA) is a joint powers association created in 2002 pursuant to authority provided in the Virginia Code. VEPGA negotiates multi-year electricity contracts with Dominion Energy on behalf of its members. VEPGA also keeps its members informed of energy developments in Virginia and offers opportunities for members across the Dominion service area to collectively promote their interests and learn from each other. VEPGA's membership includes over 170 Virginia local governments, public school systems, authorities, and other governmental entities. VEPGA is governed by a Board of Directors elected by its members. VEPGA's Joint Action Committee meets quarterly

with Dominion to identify and resolve operational issues, including those involving construction and streetlighting. VEPGA's annual spring meeting offers sessions that address educational, technical, and policy topics, as well as opportunities to meet and network with energy professionals from across the Dominion Energy service area. The VEPGA contract includes rate schedules designed to offer electrical service options for facilities that range from a small, house-sized office building to large school campuses. Schedules address small, medium, and large accounts according to energy usage, all-electric buildings, pumping stations, and traffic control, street, and roadway lighting. The contract also provides a low-cost option for the purchase of renewable energy credits.

Learn more at [www.vepga.org](http://www.vepga.org).



**President: Durwin Joyce, Electric Director,  
City of Martinsville**

**VML Support Staff: Josette Bulova,  
Policy Communication Coordinator**

THE MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC POWER ASSOCIATION OF VIRGINIA (MEPAV) consists of 16 localities that operate their own electric systems across the Commonwealth. Founded in 1954, MEPAV provides its members with the information and support needed to provide reliable and low-cost energy to their customers.

Members include Bedford, Blackstone, Bristol, Culpeper, Danville, Elkton, Franklin, Front Royal, Harrisonburg, Manassas, Martinsville, Radford, Richlands, Salem, Virginia Tech, and Wakefield. MEPAV and its members are affiliates of the American Public Power Association (APPA), an organization that advocates for over 200 municipal utilities across the Nation.

One of the main purposes of MEPAV is to foster a continuing spirit of cooperation among Virginia municipalities that operate their own utilities. Utility members within MEPAV greatly benefit from the knowledge and experience

of one another regardless of if the subject matter is technical in nature or not.

MEPAV meets several times throughout the year to continue promoting knowledge and experience within its membership. In addition to meeting on a quarterly basis, MEPAV also hosts engineering and operations workshops (E&O) and an annual business meeting. The E&O is a series of training courses for members to learn and share vital information. Held in Virginia Beach, the annual business meeting focuses on trends within the industry on a broader scale while offering networking opportunities.

MEPAV is supported by its associate members which consist of persons, firms, or corporations engaged in or closely allied with the generation, transmission, or distribution of electric energy. Members of manufacturers and suppliers of utility equipment and members of municipalities not engaged in the operation of electric systems are among the list of associate members.

Learn more at [www.mepav.org](http://www.mepav.org).



**President: W. Patrick Pate, City Manager,  
City of Manassas**

**Executive Secretary: Janet Areson,  
VML Director of Policy Development**

THE VIRGINIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION, (VLGMA) is a statewide association of local government management professionals with more than 300 members. VLGMA supports professional local government management who work to build great communities through inclusion, innovation, and leadership. Our strategic priorities include providing professional information and networking, supporting the next generation of local government managers, facilitating civic engagement in our communities, supporting members of the profession through professional development, and promoting principled leadership and ethical behavior in ourselves and our organizations.

VLGMA offers members opportunities for professional development and support, networking, and information sharing through two statewide conferences each year and a monthly newsletter. The Association provides access to a network of regional support coordinators, senior advisors and a coaching program that allows for professional mentoring and the ability for one-on-one meetings with seasoned members as requested.

VLGMA's commitment to developing the next generation of local government management professionals takes several forms. One is the Association's support of the Local Government Certificate Program at Virginia Tech. Initiated by VLGMA in the early 2000s. The Certificate Program is an established part of Virginia Tech's academic curriculum targeted to individuals already working in local government and students who want to learn more about local government management. All courses are taught by current or retired Virginia local government management professionals. Several current managers and administrators in Virginia have completed the program. We are also working to enhance connections with universities across the Commonwealth (with an emphasis on HBUs) as well as developing resources for use in our local school systems to enhance civic knowledge and promote careers in public service.

The Association's "deputies, assistants and others" or DAO

group, is also very active in promoting professional development for individuals who are key non-CAO leaders in our organizations. The group offers professional development sessions in the fall and spring, hosted by DAOs in communities around the state. These sessions focus on specific topics or issues and give members opportunities to network with one another. The Association also supports the Women's Leadership Institute which operates in cooperation with Virginia Tech and is specifically targeted to women working in Virginia local governments and programs at the Virginia Institute of Government like the Senior Executive Institute.

Each year, VLGMA recognizes an outstanding assistant or deputy manager/administrator with its Marcia Mashaw Outstanding Assistant Award. This year's recipient was Angela Hill, deputy county administrator and CFO for Montgomery County, who was recognized during the summer conference and has recently been selected as the next CAO for the county.

The Association is led by a Board consisting of seven officers and 12 executive committee members. We are a state affiliate of the International City-County Management Association (ICMA) and an affiliate association of VML. To learn more about VLGMA, visit its website at [www.vlgma.org](http://www.vlgma.org).

"If you are an elected leader, I hope that you will ask your CAO if they are a VLGMA member and that you will actively support their involvement in VLGMA. Your organizational staff leaders need an opportunity for professional growth and networking that allows them to bring back best practices and new ideas to improve your community. Encouraging your CAOs and senior staff members to join and participate in VLGMA is one of the best ways to show your commitment and help them be their best!"

**Executive Secretary Janet Areson**



**President: John Broughton, Building Official,  
Franklin County**

**VML Support Staff: Josette Bulova,  
Policy Communication Coordinator**

THE VIRGINIA BUILDING AND CODE OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION (VBCOA) is a network of more than 1,000 building safety professionals from across the Commonwealth dedicated to the protection of health, safety, and welfare. Founded in 1929, VBCOA has worked to foster relationships with groups dedicated to the promotion of safety and enforcement of regulations.

VBCOA continues to have a strong partnership with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Virginia Fire Prevention Association (VEPA), Women in Code Enforcement (WICED), the International Code Council (ICC), and other organizations involved in the codes industry.

The past presidents, now including Mike Eutsey, of VBCOA have worked diligently to ensure the goals of VBCOA and the strategic plan are met. This includes ensuring members are included in decision-making processes, the Executive Board upholds their oath, and members gain a certain level of knowledge to implement in their localities. VBCOA does this twice a year during their conferences focusing on leadership development, technical training, and networking opportunities. Monthly training opportunities are also available in any of the eight regions throughout the Commonwealth.

Learn more at [www.vbcoa.org](http://www.vbcoa.org).

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BETTER COMMUNITIES THROUGH  
SOUND GOVERNMENT



The VML Voice is the official podcast of the Virginia Municipal League. Each episode explores a different locality or issue but the focus is always on Virginia and the local governments that make the Commonwealth work for everyone.

Contact Rob Bullington, [rbullington@vml.org](mailto:rbullington@vml.org) to suggest topics, ask questions, or inquire about sponsorship opportunities.

**Subscribe now at [www.vml.org](http://www.vml.org) and listen to our newest episode.**

# 2023 VML Local Government Members

## Cities

- City of Alexandria
- City of Bristol
- City of Buena Vista
- City of Charlottesville
- City of Chesapeake
- City of Colonial Heights
- City of Covington
- City of Danville
- City of Emporia
- City of Fairfax
- City of Falls Church
- City of Franklin
- City of Fredericksburg
- City of Galax
- City of Hampton
- City of Harrisonburg
- City of Hopewell
- City of Lexington
- City of Lynchburg
- City of Manassas
- City of Manassas Park
- City of Martinsville
- City of Newport News
- City of Norfolk
- City of Norton
- City of Petersburg
- City of Poquoson
- City of Portsmouth
- City of Radford
- City of Richmond
- City of Roanoke
- City of Salem
- City of Staunton
- City of Suffolk
- City of Virginia Beach
- City of Waynesboro
- City of Williamsburg
- City of Winchester

## Towns

- Town of Abingdon
- Town of Accomac
- Town of Alberta
- Town of Altavista
- Town of Amherst
- Town of Appomattox
- Town of Ashland
- Town of Bedford
- Town of Berryville
- Town of Big Stone Gap
- Town of Blacksburg
- Town of Blackstone
- Town of Bluefield
- Town of Boones Mill
- Town of Bowling Green
- Town of Boydton
- Town of Boykins

- Town of Branchville
- Town of Bridgewater
- Town of Broadway
- Town of Brodnax
- Town of Brookneal
- Town of Buchanan
- Town of Burkeville
- Town of Cape Charles
- Town of Capron
- Town of Cedar Bluff
- Town of Charlotte Court House
- Town of Chase City
- Town of Chatham
- Town of Cheriton
- Town of Chillhowie
- Town of Chincoteague
- Town of Christiansburg
- Town of Claremont
- Town of Clarksville
- Town of Clifton
- Town of Clifton Forge
- Town of Clintwood
- Town of Coeburn
- Town of Colonial Beach
- Town of Courtland
- Town of Craigsville
- Town of Crewe
- Town of Culpeper
- Town of Damascus
- Town of Dayton
- Town of Dillwyn
- Town of Drakes Branch
- Town of Dublin
- Town of Duffield
- Town of Dumfries
- Town of Eastville
- Town of Edinburg
- Town of Elkton
- Town of Exmore
- Town of Farmville
- Town of Fincastle
- Town of Floyd
- Town of Fries
- Town of Front Royal
- Town of Gate City
- Town of Glade Spring
- Town of Glasgow
- Town of Gordonsville
- Town of Gretna
- Town of Grottoes
- Town of Grundy
- Town of Halifax
- Town of Hallwood
- Town of Hamilton
- Town of Haymarket
- Town of Haysi
- Town of Herndon
- Town of Hillsboro

- Town of Hillsville
- Town of Hurt
- Town of Independence
- Town of Iron Gate
- Town of Irvington
- Town of Ivor
- Town of Jarratt
- Town of Jonesville
- Town of Keller
- Town of Kenbridge
- Town of Keysville
- Town of Kilmarnock
- Town of La Crosse
- Town of Lawrenceville
- Town of Lebanon
- Town of Leesburg
- Town of Louisa
- Town of Lovettsville
- Town of Luray
- Town of Madison
- Town of Marion
- Town of McKenney
- Town of Middleburg
- Town of Middletown
- Town of Mineral
- Town of Monterey
- Town of Montross
- Town of Mount Crawford
- Town of Mount Jackson
- Town of Narrows
- Town of Nassawadox
- Town of New Castle
- Town of New Market
- Town of Newsoms
- Town of Occoquan
- Town of Onancock
- Town of Onley
- Town of Orange
- Town of Painter
- Town of Pamplin
- Town of Parksley
- Town of Pearisburg
- Town of Pembroke
- Town of Pennington Gap
- Town of Phenix
- Town of Port Royal
- Town of Pound
- Town of Pulaski
- Town of Purcellville
- Town of Quantico
- Town of Remington
- Town of Rich Creek
- Town of Richlands
- Town of Ridgeway
- Town of Rocky Mount
- Town of Round Hill
- Town of Rural Retreat
- Town of Saint Paul
- Town of Saltville

- Town of Scottsville
- Town of Shenandoah
- Town of Smithfield
- Town of South Boston
- Town of South Hill
- Town of Stanardsville
- Town of Stanley
- Town of Stephens City
- Town of Stony Creek
- Town of Strasburg
- Town of Stuart
- Town of Surry
- Town of Tappahannock
- Town of Tazewell
- Town of The Plains
- Town of Timberville
- Town of Toms Brook
- Town of Troutville
- Town of Urbanna
- Town of Victoria
- Town of Vienna
- Town of Vinton
- Town of Virgilina
- Town of Wachapreague
- Town of Wakefield
- Town of Warrenton
- Town of Warsaw
- Town of Washington
- Town of Waverly
- Town of Weber City
- Town of West Point
- Town of White Stone
- Town of Windsor
- Town of Wise
- Town of Woodstock
- Town of Wytheville

## Counties

- County of Albemarle
- County of Alleghany
- County of Arlington
- County of James City
- County of Loudoun
- County of Prince George
- County of Roanoke
- County of York

## Allied Member

Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC)

*If your locality is a full dues-paying VML member and is not on the list above, please contact VML at e-mail@vml.org or call 804-649-8471.*

## 2023-2024 Legislative and Policy Committees

Local officials from diverse localities are appointed each year by the VML president to serve on VML's legislative committee. Committee members develop positions on legislation and urge the enactment, amendment, or opposition to a variety of legislative initiatives. Over 160 local officials work on the VML policy committees. They help to shape the broader policies and make specific legislative recommendations to the Legislative Committee.

All localities are encouraged to participate on policy committees. Nomination forms are sent to each locality in the spring. Let a VML staff member know of your interest or send an email to [e-mail@vml.org](mailto:e-mail@vml.org) and we will follow up with you.



### Legislative Committee

**Chair:** Deanna Reed, Mayor, City of Harrisonburg

**Vice Chair:** Terry Short Jr., Council Member, City of Waynesboro

Nancy Bailey, Vice Mayor, Town of Big Stone Gap

Curtis Bethany, Vice Mayor, City of Newport News

Mary Beth Connelly, Council Member, City of Falls Church

Michelle Davis-Younger, Mayor, City of Manassas

William Patrick Dent, Vice Mayor, City of Williamsburg

Frank Friedman, Mayor, City of Lexington

Shannon Glover, Mayor, City of Portsmouth

James Gray, Vice Mayor, City of Hampton

Keith Harless, Town Manager, Town of Pennington Gap

John Hodges, Vice Mayor, Town of Ashland

N.D. "Rocky" Holcomb, Council Member, City of Virginia Beach

Amy Jackson, Vice Mayor, City of Alexandria

Alonzo Jones, Mayor, City of Danville

Andria McClellan, Council Member, City of Norfolk

Sara McGuffin, Town Manager, Town of Amherst

Edward Owens, Mayor, Town of South Boston

Stephanie Reed, Mayor, City of Lynchburg

S. Z. (Debbie) Ritter, Council Member, City of Chesapeake

John David Smith, Mayor, City of Winchester

Jason Tyree, City Manager, City of Buena Vista

Brian Vincent, Mayor, Town of Farmville

Patricia White-Boyd, Council Member, City of Roanoke

### Community & Economic Development Policy Committee

**Chair:** Sara McGuffin, Town Manager, Town of Amherst

Andreas Addison, Council Member, City of Richmond

Susan Anderson, Vice Mayor, Town of Blacksburg

Matt Arcieri, Director of Planning & Comm Dev, City of Manassas

Brad Arrowood, Council Member, City of Staunton

Sharon Ebert, Deputy CAO - Planning & Econ Dev, City of Richmond

Karen Epps, Economic Development Officer, City of Colonial Heights

Mamie Johnson, Council Member, City of Norfolk

Keven LeBlanc, Council Member, Town of Herndon

Keith Liles, Council Member, Town of Vinton

Stephanie Lillard, Council Member, Town of Luray

So Lim, Council Member, City of Fairfax

Lisa Lucas-Burke, Vice Mayor, City of Portsmouth

Susan Mattingly, Council Member, Town of Blacksburg

Phillip Miller, Council Member, Town of Middleburg

Stephanie Moon Reynolds, Council Member, City of Roanoke

Amber Morris, Council Member, Town of Front Royal

Benjamin Nicely, Council Member, Town of Clifton Forge

Tammy Pearson, Council Member, City of Martinsville

Richard Peters, Town Manager, Town of Vinton

Donielle Scherff, Council Member, Town of Herndon

N. Janie Schmidt, Council Member, Town of Culpeper

Vernon Tillage, Council Member, City of Portsmouth

Tina Vick, Council Member, City of Newport News

Joseph Waltz, Town Manager, Town of Front Royal

Lue Ward, Vice Mayor, City of Suffolk

Mark Wolfe, Council Member, City of Manassas

### Finance Policy Committee

**Chair:** Patricia White-Boyd, Council Member, City of Roanoke

**Vice Chair:** Kevin Greenleaf, Assistant Director Finance/Revenue, City of Alexandria

Diane Bergeron, Finance Director, City of Manassas

Curtis Bethany, Vice Mayor, City of Newport News

Dale Burdette, Vice Mayor, Town of Clifton Forge

John Bush, Council Member, Town of Blacksburg

Shannon Glover, Mayor, City of Portsmouth

Susan Goodwin, Finance Director, City of Newport News

Bradley Grose, Mayor, Town of Vinton

Linwood Johnson, Council Member, City of Franklin

Gregory Kochuba, Mayor, City of Colonial Heights

Bridge Littleton, Mayor, Town of Middleburg

Amelia Merchant, Finance Director, City of Roanoke

John Rector, Council Member, City of Suffolk

Mark Robertson, Council Member, City of Staunton

Duane Rogers, Council Member, Town of Front Royal

Thomas Ross, Council Member, City of Fairfax

Cody Sexton, Assistant Town Manager, Town of Vinton

Jeffery Shupe, Finance Director, City of Norton

Ralph Smith, Council Member, City of Manassas

Michael Stallings, Town Manager, Town of Smithfield

Leon Towarnicki, City Manager, City of Buena Vista

BJ Wilson, Finance Director, Town of Front Royal

**General Laws  
Policy Committee**

**Chair:** Jason Tyree, City Manager, City of Buena Vista

Theresa Coates Ellis, Council Member, City of Manassas

Matthew Dotson, City Attorney, City of Norton

Kate Doyle Feingold, Council Member, City of Fairfax

Roger Fawcett, Council Member, City of Suffolk

Bryan Foster, Deputy City Manager, City of Manassas

Leslie Hager-Smith, Mayor, Town of Blacksburg

Wayne Hall, Council Member, Town of Smithfield

Clark Hedrick, Vice Mayor, Town of Herndon

Morris Jacobs, Council Member, Town of Middleburg  
 Monica Johnson, Council Member, Town of Saltville  
 Lawrence Mitchell, Councilmember, City of Martinsville  
 Laurie Mullins, Council Member, Town of Vinton  
 Luke Priddy, Council Member, City of Roanoke  
 Wayne Sealock, Vice Mayor, Town of Front Royal  
 Joe Short, Council Member, Town of Culpeper  
 George Sonnett, Town Attorney, Town of Front Royal  
 Timothy Spencer, City Attorney, City of Roanoke  
 Caryn Self Sullivan, Council Member, Town of Colonial Beach  
 Steven Trivett, Mayor, Town of Ashland  
 Chuck Unroe, Town Manager / Clerk, Town of Clifton Forge  
 John Wood, Council Member, City of Colonial Heights  
 Alice Woods, Council Member, City of Staunton

## Human Development & Education Policy Committee

**Chair:** Mary Beth Connelly, Council Member, City of Falls Church  
 Naila Alam, Council Member, Town of Herndon  
 Leroy Bennett, Council Member, City of Suffolk  
 Joseph Cobb, Vice Mayor, City of Roanoke  
 Donna Collins, Human Resources Director/ Risk Manager, Town of Vinton  
 Lauren Colliver, Council Member, Town of Blacksburg  
 J. Kevin Daly, Council Member, Town of Middleburg  
 Melissa DeDomenico-Payne, Council Member, Town of Front Royal  
 Traci DeShazor, Deputy CAO, City of Richmond  
 Michele Edwards, Council Member, City of Staunton  
 Marcellus Harris, Council Member, City of Newport News  
 LC Jones, Mayor, City of Martinsville  
 Sabrina McCarty, Council Member, Town of Vinton  
 Laura Poe, Council Member, City of Colonial Heights  
 Ellen Robertson, Council Member, City of Richmond  
 Abe Rutherford, Director of Social Services, City of Norton  
 Pamela Sebesky, Vice Mayor, City of Manassas  
 Jon Stehle, Council Member, City of Fairfax  
 J. Alex White, Council Member, Town of Luray  
 Carl Wolfé, Council Member, Town of Clifton Forge

## Infrastructure, Transportation & Environmental Quality Policy Committee

**Chair:** Andria McClellan, Council Member, City of Norfolk  
 Chris Bernard, Council Member, Town of Middleburg  
 Christopher Blakeman, Environmental Manager, City of Roanoke  
 Robbie Boyer, Director of Public Works, Town of Front Royal  
 Shelley Butler Barlow, Council Member, City of Suffolk  
 Linda Jane Colbert, Mayor, Town of Vienna  
 Amy Darby, Vice Mayor, City of Staunton  
 Todd Flippen, Director of Public Works, City of Colonial Heights  
 Jerry Ford, Council Member, Town of Blacksburg  
 William Herndon, Public Works Director, Town of Vinton  
 Katherine Jordan, Council Member, City of Richmond  
 Debbie Lauder milk, Council Member, Town of Clifton Forge  
 Kathy Lawson, Council Member, City of Martinsville

Cleon Long, Council Member, City of Newport News  
 Steve McElroy, Public Works Director, City of Norton  
 Cindy Mester, Deputy City Manager, City of Falls Church  
 Sheila Olem, Mayor, Town of Herndon  
 Tom Osina, Council Member, City of Manassas  
 Bruce Rappaport, Council Member, Town of Front Royal  
 Catherine Read, Mayor, City of Fairfax  
 Howard Springsteen, Council Member, Town of Vienna  
 Bob Steidel, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, City of Richmond  
 Michael Stovall, Vice Mayor, Town of Vinton  
 Michael Sutphin, Council Member, Town of Blacksburg  
 Sonia Vasquez Luna, Council Member, City of Manassas  
 Peter Volosin, Council Member, City of Roanoke  
 LeOtis Williams, Council Member, City of Suffolk  
 Patricia Woodbury, Council Member, City of Newport News

## 2023-2024 Community Business Members

### Diamond Members

Dominion Energy  
 Virginia Housing

### Gold Members

EzVoltz  
 Lumos  
 MissionSquare Retirement  
 SteraMist by TOMI  
 Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation

### Silver Members

Aetna  
 Amazon Web Services  
 American Public University System  
 Blue Line Solutions  
 Center for the Study of Economics  
 Comcast  
 Community Heart & Soul  
 Cunningham Recreation/GameTime  
 Custom Tree Care, Inc.  
 DePorter Dominick Associates  
 Downey & Scott, LLC  
 F.H. Paschen  
 General Code  
 GrantMatch Corp.  
 JJM Associates  
 Mattern & Craig  
 McGuireWoods Consulting  
 Moseley Architects  
 Northeastern University - Arlington  
 PMA Architecture

Segra  
 Siemens  
 Southern Software, Inc.  
 Sparks@Play  
 Spatial Data Logic  
 Spring City Electrical  
 The Berkley Group  
 The Decor Group  
 The Mid-State Group  
 The MITRE Corporation  
 Timmons Group  
 Tremco Roofing and Building Maintenance  
 Utility Management Services, Inc.  
 VACORP  
 Virginia American Water  
 Virginia Institute of Government - Weldon Cooper Center  
 Virginia Resources Authority  
 Vortex Aquatic Structures International  
 VCU L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

### Bronze Members

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield  
 FirstNet, Built with AT&T  
 Glave & Holmes Architecture  
 Hurt & Proffitt  
 Potesta & Associates, Inc.  
 United Concordia Dental  
 Virginia Manufactured and Modular Housing Association (VMMHA)  
 Virginia Tech Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management Program