

Metro Cities' Policy Committees Begin Week of July 20

Metro Cities' policy development process is quickly approaching and will begin the week of July 20. If you haven't yet signed up for a committee, and are interested, see below—your participation is welcome and encouraged! All meetings will be conducted remotely. **To sign up, click [here](#)**. If you have specific topics of interest to suggest, please feel free to email:

jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org

- Committees, dates and times are listed below and on our [website](#).
- Please be sure to sign up for the committee(s) you wish to attend. This will help us keep our rosters current and accurate.
- All meetings will be conducted virtually.
- Packets will be emailed next week.

Transportation & General Government

Mondays: July 20, August 17, September 21 / 9-11:30a.m.

*Chair: **Jason Gadd**, Mayor, Hopkins*

Municipal Revenues

Tuesdays: July 21, August 18, September 22 / 9-11:30a.m.

*Chair: **Patrick Trudgeon**, City Manager, Roseville*

Metropolitan Agencies

Wednesdays: July 22, August 19, September 23 / 9-11:30a.m.

*Chair: **Gary Hansen**, Councilmember, Eagan*

Housing & Economic Development

Wednesdays: July 22, August 19, September 23 / 1-3:30p.m.

*Chair: **Bryan Hartman**, HRA Program Manager, Bloomington*

Federal CARES Act Funding for Local Governments: Update

The MN Department of Revenue issued a [report](#) this week showing the distribution amounts of federal Coronavirus Relief funding to local governments. The Department of Revenue has to date distributed approximately \$600 million of the \$841.4 million distribution. Metro Cities and other city organizations are working with state officials, and will be doing so on an on-going basis, to address questions and information needs by city officials as they certify local COVID-19 expenses for the federal funds. Agency officials have asked that city officials submit questions to their local government lobbying associations. Please continue to email patricia@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions you have as you certify expenses for the funds.

Public Meeting for Draft TIP Comments Monday

The Metropolitan Council is conducting a virtual public meeting to give the public an opportunity to provide feedback on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) this Monday, July 13th at 4:00. To

register to comment during the meeting, click [here](#). The draft TIP includes highway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects proposed for federal funding in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Urbanized Area and the seven-county metropolitan area in the next four years. To view the draft

TIP, click [here](#). Comments will be received until 5:00 pm August 10th. Comments can be submitted as follows:

- Mail: Metropolitan Council, 390 Robert St. N., St. Paul, MN 55101
- E-mail: public.info@metc.state.mn.us
- Public Comment Line: 651-602-1500

The final document will be considered at the August 19 Transportation Advisory Board meeting and the Council will consider final adoption of the program on Sept. 23.

Senate Committees Hold Hearings on Civil Unrest

This week the Senate Transportation and Judiciary and Public Safety Committees held two joint hearings on the civil unrest that took place May 26th to June 10th, following the killing of George Floyd. The Wednesday hearing focused on security of the State Capitol complex, and the state response to the toppling of the Christopher Columbus statue on the grounds of the Capitol. The committees heard testimony from Colonel Matt Langer from the MN State Patrol and Department of Public Safety Commissioner John Harrington. Colonel Langer informed the committees that the State Patrol received a credible threat during the unrest and testified that the plan to handle the situation was based on working to mitigate making a volatile situation worse. He also testified that no troopers or protesters were injured during the incident. A charging decision for participants involved in the removal of the statue is being considered by the Ramsey County Attorney. Much of the discussion during the hearing was around when and why decisions were made in response to the removal of the statue.

At the Thursday hearing, members heard testimony from Major General Jon Jensen, Adjutant General of the MN National Guard as well as DPS Commissioner John Harrington. Major General Jensen testified to the operations of the MN National Guard and activities of the National Guard during the unrest. He explained the guard is used as a supporting entity and follows the lead of local and state authority unless marshal law is declared. The Governor has the authority to activate the guard, but county sheriffs and mayors of cities of the first class may request national guard assistance. 7,123 national guard soldiers were activated during the unrest. Commissioner Harrington provided information on when and how the state was involved in aiding local governments and coordinating the state response to the civil unrest. Commissioner Harrington told the committee that 13 felony arrests have been made for arson so far and that the BCA is continuing to investigate looting and arson related to the unrest. Members of the committee expressed concern that the state did not respond soon enough or understand that local jurisdictions were no longer able to respond to the situation. With a special session set to begin next week, Chair Newman did not name a date for a next meeting.

House Committee Hears from Health Experts on COVID-19

On Wednesday the House Select Committee on Minnesota's Pandemic Response and Rebuilding met to hear testimony from public health experts on the state of the coronavirus pandemic. The first testifier was Andy Slavitt, former Acting Administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and Chair of the United States of Care Board. He spoke about strategies that Minnesota and other states have employed that have shown to be successful, including testing,

isolation, wearing masks, and contact tracing. He also spoke about the importance of maintaining a sense of hypervigilance as we continue to combat the spread of the virus. He said unified messaging is a critical ingredient to fostering buy-in from the public. He also warned that we have not seen the worst of the virus in Minnesota. Before delivering a final set of messages to the public, he stated that what we have done so far has bought scientists time, and that there are promising therapies and drugs for the virus, but along with a vaccine, these therapies will be one part of the overall equation as society continues to respond and rebuild.

Dr. Sakina Naqvi of Doctors for Health Equity provided testimony based on a practicing physician's perspective. Jennifer DeCubellis, CEO of Hennepin Healthcare System also testified. Some of the executive orders issued by Governor Walz have targeted health systems in attempt to give them more flexibility and Ms. DeCubellis asked the committee to keep those changes in place. Other testifiers spoke about the disparities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic both in terms of health outcomes and economic impacts.

Click [HERE](#) to view a recording of the committee hearing.

Mortgage-Relief Options Available to Homeowners Facing Hardship Due to COVID-19

The Governor's office and Attorney General's office announced a commitment by 31 Minnesota financial institutions to provide mortgage-relief options to customers facing financial hardship caused by COVID-19 for homeowners not covered by the CARES Act. The agreement includes several relief options, including: 90-day forbearance period for customers facing financial hardship caused by COVID-19, customers accessing forbearance will not be required to make a lump-sum payment at the end of forbearance plan, and no late fees or negative credit reporting for customers in a forbearance plan.

More information on the agreement, including other forms of relief and a list of participating banks and credit unions [can be found here](#).

Participate in MHFA's QAP Public Hearing Next Tuesday

Minnesota Housing's Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) for tax credits is open for public review and comments. Minnesota Housing will hold a public hearing on the QAP next week:

Tuesday, July 14

10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

888-742-5095

Conference Code: 603-415-8008

If you plan to speak at the hearing, please email HTC.MHFA@state.mn.us by noon CST on Monday, July 13. You will be allowed five minutes to speak at the hearing. If you plan to attend the public hearing, please email HTC.MHFA@state.mn.us. You are not required to pre-register, but it will help with planning. Comments and questions on the QAP will be accepted through 5:00 p.m. CST on July 22.

Contamination Cleanup Awards Announced

DEED awarded 12 Contamination Investigation and Cleanup Grants in six Minnesota cities, including four cities in the metropolitan area, to clean up contaminated sites approved for redevelopment. The funds were awarded through the Contamination Cleanup program, which

received legislative funding in 2019. Metro Cities supports state funds for redevelopment and cleanup of previously developed sites.

The Contamination Cleanup and Investigation Grant program helps communities pay for assessing and cleaning up contaminated sites for private or public redevelopment. Grants cover up to 75% of the costs to remove contaminants at approved polluted sites. The remaining costs are covered by cities and counties, other units of local government and private landowners and developers.

Cities and port authorities in the metro receiving awards are Apple Valley, Lakeville, Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and the Saint Paul Port Authority. More details on the awards [can be found here](#).

Metro Cities News is emailed periodically to Metro Cities member mayors, councilmembers, city managers/administrators, and city staff to keep officials and staff abreast of important metro city issues.

If you'd like to sign up to receive Metro Cities News, please email newsletter@metrocitiesmn.org and provide the following: Name, Title, Employer and Email address. Thank you!

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