



**Council of Metropolitan Area
Leagues**

Established in 1962 as an ILO and is composed of the members of the local LWVs in the seven metro counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington Counties.

CMAL Board of Directors

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Governor’s Blue Ribbon Committee on Metropolitan Council Issues Final Report

On December 21, 2020, Governor Walz’s Blue Ribbon Committee on the Metropolitan Council issued its final report. CMAL was among numerous governmental and civic agencies/entities that provided testimony to the Committee, whose final recommendations align closely with CMAL’s positions, though it also includes several minority counterpoints.

The Committee provided the Governor with the following recommendations:

- The Nominating Committee should expand to include a majority of local elected officials;
- Council Members should be appointed by the Governor to staggered four-year terms;
- There should not be direct election of membership to the Council;
- Current elected officials should not be appointed to the membership of the Council.

In 2019, CMAL conducted a study on governance of the Metropolitan Council. Our consensus concluded that:

- The membership and the Chair should be appointed by the Governor with fixed, staggered terms;
- Council Members should only be removed for cause;
- Members should not be chosen by direct election or the appointment of sitting local elected officials.

Our study and conclusions were shared with the Blue Ribbon Committee in testimony provided on October 26, 2020. The Committee also concluded that the Metropolitan Council is properly designated as the

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Twin Cities metropolitan area, under federal law. In its capacity as MPO, the Council works with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) to oversee federal transportation funding in the metropolitan area. The importance of stable long-term funding for transit was also noted.

The Committee also agreed that the current regional transit model, consisting of services provided directly by Metro Transit and by several suburban transit providers allows for conflicting prioritization for investment but also provides opportunities for local input.

The final report includes CMAL’s testimony; the CMAL press release announcing its 2019 consensus on Metropolitan Council governance; and CMAL’s Report to Members on its 2018-2019 study. The final report may be found at [Blue Ribbon Committee Final Report](#).

SAVE THE DATE! CMAL ANNUAL MEETING

May 8, 2021 at 10:00 am (virtual)

Meeting will include a speaker (TBD), election of board members, and other essential business.

The following Board positions will be open:

Chair, held by Karen Schaffer

Secretary, held by Marti Micks

Director #2, held by Peg DuBord

Director #3, held by Kate Redden

Additional positions may be filled. If interested in recruiting candidates or serving yourself, contact Karen Schaffer at schafferka@gmail.com.

Timelines of Redistricting: People Powered Fair Maps

The federal government is required by the Constitution to conduct a census of the nation to determine the number of Congressional districts each state will be apportioned. Minnesota currently has 8 congressional district representatives but may lose one district representative depending on the apportionment data. For more info, go to: [People Powered Fair Maps](#)

- February 15, 2021: Apportionment data by Census Bureau released.
- June 30, 2021: Census Block data will be sent to state: kickoff map.
- July – August 2021: MN Legislature holds hearings.
- August 31, 2021: Special Redistricting panel convened by MN Supreme Court if the Legislature cannot agree and court case.
- September – November 2021: Input from Legislature, organizations, groups taken by Redistricting Panel.
- February 15, 2022: Court issues final redistricting order. Aspirational date.
- February – April, 2022: Local redistricting hearings.
- April 4, 2022: Cities with councils elected by wards will have hearings.
- May 6, 2022: The counties will have hearings.

County Government: What's Working and What's Not?

- A huge take-away from the January 9th **County Government Panel Presentation** was that there have been many positive changes that have occurred because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Officials hope these changes become part of the new ways of doing business.
- The best way to get information on your county is it to subscribe to the county board meeting links and committee agendas/minutes.
- For those of who were not able to attend you can view the recording using the following link: [County Government Panel Discussion](#)

Speaker Highlights:

Jan Callison, former Hennepin County Commissioner:

- The best time to give input on issues you care about are at the committee level meetings. That is where decisions are made.
- A Commissioner's job is administrative, in that the County Boards are administrative arms of the State.
- Nationalization of issues has emerged at local government level. Result of groups not gaining traction at the national level. Current examples: immigration and gun rights.
- One third of homeless in Minneapolis are from out of state.

Matt Smith, Dakota County Manager

- To reduce public COVID-19 exposure, Dakota County has a virtual receptionist to respond remotely to in-person visitors.
- COVID-19 funding has been used to improve public programs with encrypted email and video-phone visits for wellness checks for WIC, group therapy and other county clients. Virtual visits have increased group therapy participation for those who feel safer at their homes. Cancellations for WIC appointments are rare since transportation or other health issues don't affect ability to be at virtual visit.

Lisa Weik, Washington County Commissioner

- In response to the increased need for internet service with the pandemic, the county made their libraries hot spots so cars could sit in parking lot and have Wi-Fi service.
- The loss of several hometown newspapers is a concern for citizens staying informed.
- Prior to COVID-19, in-person open houses averaged 15-50 people, averaging 5 comments.
- In response to COVID-19 open houses went online for the County Highway 15 project and received over 20,000 online views and nearly 200 comments.