



THE MARYLAND MUNICIPAL LEAGUE  
*The Association of Cities and Towns*

**Engagement & Outreach Committee**

**6:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday, January 26, 2022**

Virtual Room Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87823668175?pwd=K3dDZDJVRU9SUFpuRUJRR2tiRktadz09>

**AGENDA**

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Call to order   | Chairperson Keller             |
| 2. Update on Traditional programs                                | Paula Chase Hyman              |
| a. Essay contest dates and committee obligations                 |                                |
| b. Banner City   |                                |
| 3. Promo Video Initiative – Update & Selection of Municipalities | Chairperson Keller & MML Staff |
| 4. Announcements   | Paula Chase-Hyman              |
| 5. Adjournment   | Chairperson Keller             |

**It's essential to the committee's goals to have a quorum. Please contact Sharon Easton at MML with Regrets ONLY by January 25. As you've accepted the appointment, we will assume you plan to attend, otherwise.**

Paula Chase Hyman is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Engagement & Outreach January Meeting

Time: Jan 26, 2022 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87823668175?pwd=K3dDZDJVRU9SUFpuRUJRR2tiRktadz09>

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## Maryland Municipal League

*The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns*

### **Engagement and Outreach Committee Meeting Notes**

**Wednesday, December 8, 2021  
Virtual Meeting**

- PRESENT:** Emily Keller, Mayor, Hagerstown, Chair  
Diane Foster, Councilmember, Taneytown, Vice Chair  
George Bacorn, Chief of Police, Denton  
Douglass "Doug" Barber, Clerk, New Carrollton  
Deborah Burgoyne, Mayor, Burkittsville  
Celina Benitez, Mayor, Mount Rainier  
Elizabeth Boa, Manager, Glen Echo  
Michele Gregory, Councilmember, Salisbury  
Don Mulrine, Administrator, Denton  
Jack Orris, Councilmember, Berlin  
Bernard "Brad" Pudner, Public Works Director, Berwyn Heights  
Briana Urbina, Councilmember, New Carrollton
- NOT PRESENT:** James D. Gaston, III, Administrator, Brentwood  
Awilda Hernandez, Clerk, Bowie  
Sharron Lipford, Engagement Director, Seat Pleasant
- STAFF:** Paula Chase Hyman, Director, Member Engagement  
Angelica Bailey, Director, Governmental Relations  
Sharon Easton, Membership Specialist
- GUEST:** Abigail McNinch, Mayor, Denton, Legislative Committee Chair

#### **Call to Order**

Chairperson Keller called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Chairperson Keller welcomed special guests Denton Mayor Abigail McNinch who is the chair of MML's Legislative Committee and MML Governmental Relations Director Angelica Bailey. She thanked everyone for attending and turned it over to Mayor McNinch.

*O V E R . . .*

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## Proposal from Legislative Committee

Mayor McNinch thanked the Chairperson Keller for allowing her time on the committee's agenda. She informed the committee that MML staff and the Legislative Committee are looking at different ways to better engage the membership in the legislative process. She stated that by the time the Legislative Action Request (LARs) get to the legislative committee, a lot of members don't know about them or the legislative process. There is still a need for more engagement. She is proposing a conversation that would look at the legislative process and perhaps add an option to the Banner City application to attend meetings with your legislator or write testimony.

She stated that participating in Annapolis becomes more meaningful for your town and more important for MML because we are stronger together. As an example, she noted that when MML had the biggest push for highway user revenues (HUR's) was the year when all the elected officials came and stood in the room.

New Carrollton Clerk Douglass Barber indicated this would be a way to show that we are engaging with our state legislators. He stated that clerks are always trying to show their elected officials that they are always in training mode.

Mayor McNinch stated that Annapolis can be intimidating for elected officials but beneficial to their municipalities as well. Burkittsville Mayor Debby Burgoyne said small towns can benefit from that push and they can see how easy it is to do.

MML Governmental Relations Director Angelica Bailey stated that the legislative team has been working on a member tool kit, which will include talking points, oral and written testimony, copies of priorities, research that has been done, and contact information for state colleagues to help equip committee members to do this advocacy.

Chairperson Keller thought it was a good idea and asked if this would be a requirement for this year or next year.

Member Relations Director Paula Chase Hyman stated that she likes that there is synergy going on with the committees. Mayor Keller will be talking to the CPC chair about the video premiere. This is the first time we have had this much cross communication between the committees, and she thinks it is a good idea.

Paula noted that if someone testifies at a hearing, it could be added under Part 5. She stated that the committee needs to determine whether it is fair to add it this year even though the legislative session has not started. Normally when there are new criteria, it is added to the next cycle so that everyone is starting from the same point knowing what they need to finish.

Some committee members felt that it should start the next cycle because legislator conversations have already begun and are struggling with the criteria they already have. The new criteria would be an addition that can be done as an option but is not a requirement.

Paula noted that the legislative team sent an outline of what would be required.

Angelica stated that MML is very strategic about who they sign up to testify, the panels that are put together, and the points that they try to make. We can use member help when meeting one on one with legislators. Delegation officials love to hear from municipalities in their district. She suggested that members could send picture of potholes that there has not been enough HUR funding to fix them. There are a lot of different ways to encourage this among the membership. There are different ways this can be done, and they are open to what works best within the Banner City/Town Program's framework.

Mayor McNinch asked what would be the end goal? Paula stated that the Banner City/Town program is designed to honor the most engaged municipalities so we walk the line of offering criteria to serve as a guidepost to what engagement can mean. We want to let them know the ways to stay engaged and to take advantage of benefits and services that we offer. It is somewhat of an exclusive program, and you don't want it to be that everyone can get it. Some things on part 5 you can't control, like a committee appointment. When the committee considers new criteria, it is a part 5 criteria which increases a municipality's odds of getting the designation. She noted that what this new criterion does is pull the legislative component into it so that when talking to municipalities, you can let them know this is another way to be engaged.

Denton Administrator Don Mulrine stated that when municipal officials attend a hearing, your delegates will always want to point out that their municipal officials are in the audience so that pays dividends as well. He noted that not everyone can speak but just being there is huge.

Angelica stated that they can inform the legislators which municipal officials are in attendance. They are limiting the length of testimony and the number of people that can testify with COVID precautions. She is not sure if they are limiting audience participation currently.

Chairman Keller thanked Angelica and Mayor McNinch for joining the meeting and noted that we would be in touch regarding the legislative team's proposal.

Chairman Keller asked if this was something they wanted to vote on tonight. Paula noted that she will work with Angelica on the language that is needed. The question is always what the criteria is and is it verified. She noted that the legislative team will be the ones to verify the information.

Burkittsville Mayor Deborah Burgoyne **made a motion to make an addition to the Banner City/Town Part 5 criteria for this year that will encourage participation in MML's legislative agenda. The motion was seconded** by New Carrollton Clerk Douglass Barber **and passed.** The legislative team will provide the language needed for the BCT form.

### **Update on Traditional Programs.**

*Essay Contest Content.* Member Relations Specialist Sharon Easton reported that the essay contest materials will be mailed the week of December 13. Committee members should expect to receive them in the next few weeks. Paula informed the committee that schools will receive their packets in early January and that is when we will begin to do our outreach to the schools. The deadline remains the end of March. She stated that we hope to be able to return to our normal essay contest submissions of about 3,000. Paula asked the committee to make sure to let their municipalities know that the essay contest materials are coming.

*MGW Month.* Paula provided the Twitter analytics for November. There were 10,400 impressions during the month of November, which is down from 2020, which had 12,000 impressions. The difference is the last couple of years asked members to tweet Wednesdays for MGW Wednesdays. This year we told everyone to tweet whenever they could which may have diluted the numbers.

The top three highest impressions came from three separate tweets from Gaithersburg. This is because Gaithersburg has a dedicated social media person which makes a huge difference. The fourth highest came from Riverdale Park which was a staff appreciation tweet. The fifth highest was College Park with a recycling tweet. The 6<sup>th</sup> highest impression was Seat Pleasant with a photo of their staff attending arbor training.

Regarding questions on whether we update Facebook, Paula stated that she is on Twitter more than Facebook. MML Executive Assistant Felicia Banuelos updates our Facebook page. She noted that next year, they will coordinate the effort, so that Facebook can be updated as well. Chairperson Keller asked if MML checks Instagram and Tik Tok. Paula stated MML does not have an Instagram or Tik Tok account, but we should always encourage municipalities to use whatever social media they have but we wouldn't be able to provide analytics for those platforms. Committee members asked if submitting their analytics to MML would be easier. Paula noted that would appreciate seeing everyone's analytics from their social media platforms. Next year, we will ask committee members to bring their impressions for the month of November.

Paula stated that she also checked the October analytics and we had 11,000 impressions but half of those were for the Cardin town hall tweet. If not for that tweet, October would have been sparse.

*Banner City/Town Outreach.* – Paula stated that everyone should continue to reach out to their assigned municipalities. We will give them a break in December. Committee members should let everyone know to schedule their school visits and to promote the essay contest starting in January. You will get a reminder before that time.

*Promo Video Initiative.* Chairperson Keller informed the committee that MML Strategic Partner CGI Communications can do the video. We will not need to do an RFP for the video. She noted we need to determine the selection criteria and decide if we are going to invite all municipalities or select municipalities to participate.

Paula informed that that the committee that we informed CGI that we are attempting to showcase at least 30 municipalities and that we want to geographically include every part of the state. There will be five one -minute videos which will cover all we are requesting. Paula noted that we are looking to 1) record or provide existing B-roll or aerial footage of 20 Maryland municipalities from the following regions: 2 – Southern Maryland, 4- Eastern Shore (2 Upper Shore/ 2 Lower Shore), 4- Western MD (2 Allegany/2 Garrett), 2 – Northern Maryland (1 Cecil/1 Harford County), 6 – Central Maryland (3 Prince George's/3 Montgomery)and, 2) Record interviews with officials from 10 pre-selected Maryland municipalities with targeted messaging provided by MML from the following regions: 1-Annapolis, 1- Baltimore, 1- Hagerstown, 1- Frederick, 1- Eastern Shore, 1- Western Maryland, 1- Southern Maryland, 1- Prince George's, 1- Montgomery, 1-Northern Maryland.

The committee agreed with the geographical representation that was presented. After discussion, the consensus of the committee was to open it up to all municipalities to see if there was interest.

Paula stated that she hopes that we get the interest needed, otherwise we will call on municipalities to see if they would be interested. If we know of someone who has that unique quality that we are looking for or a picturesque town, we could seek them out.

Chairman Keller suggested that we do the request through a short video. Paula thought that was a good idea and we could even have President Day do the video. Paula would work on getting the video together with staff.

Chairperson Keller noted we are looking for sponsors. We need \$10,000 for the video which doesn't include the premiere and other costs associated with the video. She is meeting with the Conference Planning Committee chair to get a better understanding of the costs associated with the premiere. If there are sponsors that committee members have a personal relationship, let us know.

Paula stated that if there are companies that you think would be interested in being involved in this video initiative, we will acknowledge them during the premiere. We will get the sponsorship letter done by the end of the month to send.

New Carrollton Clerk Douglass Barber suggested that we reach out to Maryland Tourism who may be willing to assist as well. Chairperson Keller knows the Maryland Tourism chair and she will reach out to him. She will also reach out to Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) since she is on their board.

Paula noted that tourism seems to be more county driven so what would be in in for them as a county tourism board. Chairman Keller said municipalities run the state. Tourism boards always reach out to include the municipalities.

Paula noted that one of the state agencies that Mayor Grant had slated for us to contact was the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives. He may have already contacted them and we will follow up to let them know we are still doing the video.

Paula informed the committee that we will need to identify what the sponsors will get. Even though we are raising the money to get the video done, the sponsors will get the bulk of their exposure at the premiere. They may get their logo at the end of the video, but because they are one-minute videos, all their exposure will be at the red-carpet event, and when we are showcasing the video at the event.

Mayor Benitez asked for clarity on who could donate, what we would be offered, and who we wanted or did not want to target. Paula stated that she will outline the sponsorship request and what the benefits will be to those donating. Paula is hoping that the state will want to give us some assistance as well.

Chairperson Keller suggested that we wait to select topics to see who is participating. It will be easier to come up with an outline once we know what areas we are highlighting. She hopes that everyone will help in securing sponsors.

Paula stated that a lot of this will come together in the next couple of weeks. She noted that we should have some information by January. Things will move quickly after that since we want to shoot the video in the spring.

Chairperson Keller stated that she appreciated everyone's time. She is excited and looking forward to this. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. She appreciated everyone's dedication.

**There was a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded and passed.** There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.