

**NORTHWEST MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE**

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*A Regional Association of Illinois  
Municipalities and Townships  
Representing a Population of Over One Million*

**NWMC Board**

**Minutes**

**Wednesday, March 11, 2026**

**6:00 p.m.**

**NWMC Offices and Via Videoconference**

- MEMBERS**
- Antioch
- Arlington Heights
- Bannockburn
- Barrington
- Bartlett
- Buffalo Grove
- Deer Park
- Deerfield
- Des Plaines
- Elk Grove Village
- Evanston
- Fox Lake
- Glencoe
- Glenview
- Grayslake
- Hanover Park
- Highland Park
- Hoffman Estates
- Kenilworth
- Lake Bluff
- Lake Forest
- Lake Zurich
- Libertyville
- Lincolnshire
- Lincolnwood
- Morton Grove
- Mount Prospect
- Niles
- Northbrook
- Northfield
- Northfield Township
- Palatine
- Park Ridge
- Prospect Heights
- Rolling Meadows
- Schaumburg
- Skokie
- South Barrington
- Streamwood
- Vernon Hills
- West Dundee
- Wheeling
- Wilmette
- Winnetka
  
- President*
- Donna Johnson
- Libertyville
  
- Vice-President*
- Eric Smith
- Buffalo Grove
  
- Secretary*
- Paul Hoefert
- Mount Prospect
  
- Treasurer*
- Scott Anderson
- Barrington
  
- Executive Director*
- Mark L. Fowler

**I. Call to Order**

President Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

President Johnson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. Roll Call**

Ms. Durso called the roll.

Members Present:

Arlington Heights, Manager Randy Recklaus  
 Barrington, Manager Scott Anderson  
 Bartlett, President Dan Gunsteen  
 Buffalo Grove, President Eric Smith  
 Des Plaines, Mayor Andrew Goczkowski  
 Elk Grove Village, Manager Matt Roan  
 Hanover Park, President Rod Craig  
 Highland Park, Manager Ghida Neukirch  
 Hoffman Estates, Mayor Bill McLeod  
 Libertyville, Mayor Donna Johnson  
 Morton Grove, Administrator Chuck Meyer  
 Northbrook, Manager Cara Pavlicek  
 Northfield, Trustee Matt Galin  
 Palatine, Manager Reid Ottesen  
 Park Ridge, Manager Joe Gilmore  
 Rolling Meadows, Manager Rob Sabo  
 Schaumburg, Trustee Brian Bieschke  
 Skokie, Manager John Lockerby  
 South Barrington, Mayor Paula McCombie  
 Streamwood, Manager Sharon Caddigan  
 Wheeling, Manager Jon Sfondilis  
 Wilmette, President Senta Plunkett

Others in Attendance:

Pat Eaves-Heard, Nicor Gas  
 Mark Fowler, NWMC Executive Director  
 Larry Bury, NWMC Deputy Director  
 Eric Czarnota, NWMC Program Manager for Transportation  
 Ellen Dayan, NWMC Purchasing Director  
 Marina Durso, NWMC Executive Assistant  
 Brian Larson, NWMC Program Associate for Transportation  
 Chris Staron, NWMC Policy Director

**IV. Approval of Regular and Executive Session Meeting Minutes – January 14, 2026**

Motion to approve the minutes of the January 14 meeting was made by Mayor McLeod. The motion was seconded by Mayor Craig and unanimously approved.

**V. President’s Report – Donna Johnson, NWMC President and Mayor, Village of Libertyville**

**A. NWMC Strategic Plan Report**

President Johnson reported that the Executive Board recommended approval of the draft NWMC Strategic Plan Report. She said the plan reflected input from membership and leadership on three strategic goals: Collective Impact, Organizational Excellence and Transformative Engagement. She noted that each strategic goal includes multiple outcomes and targeted actions to achieve them.

Mr. Bury thanked the membership for supporting the collaborative effort that resulted in the plan. He reviewed the process to develop the plan, including the membership survey, SWOT analysis and leadership retreat held in November. He listed issues identified during the process including member engagement, legislative influence, communications, partisanship and the different perspectives of members, depending on the length of involvement with the organization. He said the next steps are to incorporate the plan’s initiatives and baseline measures into next year’s work plan.

Motion to approve the recommendation was made by Mayor McLeod. The motion was seconded by President Smith and unanimously approved.

**B. FY2026-2027 NWMC Officer Nominations**

President Johnson reported that the FY2026-2027 NWMC Officer Nomination Form was emailed to the Conference’s chief elected officials on February 26. She said nominations are due back to Mark Fowler by Wednesday, March 18.

Mr. Fowler reported that three nominations were received to date, and he encouraged members to return the forms by the deadline. He said that Nominating Committee will meet on March 23 to prepare the slate for presentation at the April 8 NWMC Board meeting.

**C. FY 2025-2026 NWMC Work Plan – Q3 Update**

Mr. Fowler presented the third quarter update to the FY 2025-2026 NWMC Work Plan, noting the quarter covers the November 2025 to January 2026 time period. He thanked the membership for participating in the development and approving the strategic plan. He specifically thanked Mr. Bury for his leadership in developing the plan. Other quarterly highlights included: hosting the annual NWMC Holiday Celebration in December; updating the website; issuing the 2026 Legislative Program and implementing the related action plan; ongoing work on pension issues including legislator briefings, member actuarial studies and fact sheets.

Mr. Fowler noted the joint legislative dinner held on January 28 in conjunction with the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference, scheduling the annual NWMC Legislative Days in Springfield, and creation of working groups focusing on e-mobility and housing legislation. He commended Ms. Dayan for her participation in the Build Up Cook celebration and vendor fair. Regarding transportation, Mr. Fowler reported that staff issued a summary of the NITA legislation and held a networking social with the Transportation and Bicycle/Pedestrian committees. He also reported that the Northwest and North Shore Councils of Mayors issued their call for projects for FY 2027-2031, conducted office hours for members and approved release of the programs for public comment.

**D. NWMC Annual Gala**

President Johnson reported that save-the-date postcards have been sent for the Northwest Municipal Conference Annual Gala, scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, at the Independence Grove in Libertyville. She said the evening will serve to celebrate the NWMC’s 68th anniversary and the inauguration of the organization’s FY 2026-2027 officers. Mr. Fowler asked that members contact him with any potential sponsors.

## **VI. Priority Issues**

### **A. Legislative Committee – Eric Smith, President, Village of Buffalo Grove, Co-Chair and Paul Hoefert, Mayor, Village of Mount Prospect, Co-Chair**

#### **1. Legislative Update**

President Johnson reported that Governor Pritzker unveiled his proposed budget on February 18, which included a cut to the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF). Mr. Staron noted the cut would be roughly \$60 million statewide, with the cut to NWMC members totaling approximately \$6 million. He also noted the budget includes ongoing cuts to the Corporate Personal Property Replacement Taxes (CPPRT) that in part are distributed to municipalities. He referred to a letter to legislators in the packet as requested by the Executive Board that opposes cuts to the LGDF. President Johnson asked if there were any comments or questions regarding the letter. There being none, motion to approve the recommendation was made by Mayor Craig. The motion was seconded by Mayor McLeod and unanimously approved. President Johnson encouraged member to also use the template letter to develop personalized letters to legislators.

#### **2. Local Regulation of Unsheltered Homelessness Act**

President Johnson reported that House Bill 1429 establishes standards for the local enforcement of “camping ban” ordinances and noted that the Executive Board and Legislative Committee recommended approval of sending the attached comments to Representative Olickal. Mr. Staron gave further background on the bill and the attached response highlighting municipal concerns.

Motion to approve the recommendation was made by Mayor Craig. The motion was seconded by Mayor McLeod and unanimously approved.

Mr. Staron continued the legislative report by reviewing upcoming legislative deadlines in the House and Senate. He said that due to the legislative calendar and upcoming primary, staff expects deadlines to consider bills will be extended. He said the e-mobility legislation that emerged from the NWMC working group, House Bill 4840, has not been scheduled for a hearing and that a related proposal from the Secretary of State will probably be amended onto existing legislation. He also highlighted trailer bills regarding credentialing of building inspectors, a bill requiring inspectors to search for hidden cameras and a lump sum pension buyout bill for police and firefighters.

#### **3. Building Up Illinois Developments (BUILD) Agenda**

President Johnson reported that on February 18, Governor Pritzker unveiled the Building Up Illinois Developments (BUILD) agenda and outlined the bills that comprise the agenda. She said that the Executive Board and Legislative Committee recommended opposition to these bills.

Mr. Staron discussed the legislation in further detail and reviewed the Housing Supply and Affordability position statement drafted by the Conference’s Housing Working Group. He said the goal was to go beyond the simple local control argument and educate legislators as to the nuances and unintended consequences of the legislation. He reviewed the statement which features where and how NWMC members are addressing housing issues. He said that a housing survey was sent to members to gather additional information, data and evidence to tailor to individual legislators. He said staff was also working on visualization to show the impacts of the legislation on existing housing stock and neighborhoods. He said staff was working to engage non-municipal stakeholders including school districts, stormwater and wastewater interests, park districts and public safety interests.

Mr. Fowler summarized the regional approach to the BUILD agenda. He said the Governor’s office engaged the Mayors Caucus to provide comments on HB5626. He said the Caucus initially requested a task force to discuss the issue but that was rejected due to the work of the state’s missing middle housing task force in 2024. The Caucus then requested additional comments and redline changes to the bill from its member councils of government and the City of Chicago. Due to the complexity of the issue, differences between city and suburban interests and the timeframe for comments requested by the Governor’s office, Mr. Fowler said the Caucus ultimately did not offer a position and directed their staff to inform the Governor’s staff that the Caucus is open to dialog but cannot offer comments at this time. He said the council of government directors met

on Monday and expressed the intent to work with the Caucus and Chicago to identify shared items and concerns while also working through the Invest in Communities Coalition to discuss issues and concerns germane to the suburban perspective.

Motion to approve the recommendation to oppose the legislation as well as the statement from the NWMC Housing Working Group was made by Mayor McLeod. The motion was seconded by Mayor Craig. Ms. Pavlicek requested that the motion be modified to state opposition to the legislation as presented, noting that municipalities generally support increasing development, but are concerned about removing the ability of municipalities to work with other stakeholders. After further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved. President Johnson thanked Ms. Pavlicek and the Board for the engagement and discussion. Mr. Fowler noted that, on issues where the Conference is initially opposed but wants to remain engaged in the discussion, staff works with the Conference lobbying team to strategize and work with bill sponsors to express concerns and offer suggestions.

#### **4. Megaproject Assessment Freeze and Payment Law**

President Johnson reported that on February 26, the House Revenue & Finance Committee advanced legislation creating the Megaproject Assessment Freeze and Payment Law. Mr. Recklaus provided an outline of the legislation which allows for local negotiations of property taxes on large projects. He said conversations are ongoing and it is expected that additional language would emerge.

#### **5. Legislative Positions**

President Johnson reported that the Executive Board and Legislative Committee recommended approval of the legislative positions contained in the attachment. Mr. Staron thanked members for lending expertise and insight in developing informed positions on the legislation.

Motion to approve the recommendation was made by Mayor McLeod. The motion was seconded by President Smith and unanimously approved.

#### **6. 2026 NWMC Legislative Days**

Mr. Fowler thanked the seventeen attendees representing twelve NWMC members for attending the Legislative Days. He thanked President Smith for leading the legislator meetings, Managers Bragg, Wisniewski, Ottesen, Sabo and Sfondilis for presenting the Conference's issues and Anderson Legislative Consulting for scheduling meetings and serving as the base of operations. Mayor Craig thanked President Smith and expressed appreciation for scheduling a room in the capitol to meet with legislators. President Smith thanked the managers for presenting the issues and answering legislator questions.

#### **7. NWMC-DMMC Joint Legislative Dinner**

President Johnson noted that the event was well organized and effective. Mr. Fowler reported that over two hundred people attended, including twenty-one legislators. He noted that responses to the attendee survey were overwhelmingly positive.

### **B. Finance Committee – Scott Anderson, Manager, Village of Barrington, Chair**

#### **1. Budget Reports and Purchase Journals**

Mr. Anderson reported that the Executive Board and Finance Committee recommended approval of the November 2025, December 2025 and January 2026 budget report and purchase journals. He said that the budget was tracking as expected and the Finance Committee noted no items of concern.

Motion to approve the recommendation was made by Mayor McLeod. The motion was seconded by President Smith and unanimously approved.

#### **2. NWMC Surplus Vehicle & Equipment Auction Agreement**

President Johnson reported that the Executive Board and Finance Committee recommended offering the first of four possible, one-year contract extensions for Auctioneer Services to America's Auto Auction. Ms. Dayan reported that the extension would run from February 15,

2026 through February 14, 2027, with the contract terms remaining the same. She noted that the proposed auction dates for 2026 are April 14, July 14, October 13 and December 15.

Motion to approve the recommendation was made by Mayor Craig. The motion was seconded by Mayor Trustee Bieschke and unanimously approved.

**VII. Other Business**

No report.

**VIII. For the Good of the Order**

President Johnson reported that Nancy Hyunh from the Governor's office contacted staff today to see if any members had storm damage or issues that they need help with. Mr. Fowler suggested members contact Ms. Hyunh directly for assistance.

Ms. Heard reminded the Board that the Illinois Commerce Commission was discussing a potential ban on gas and asked that members engage on the issue. She also asked that members contact her if they would like Nicor to attend any upcoming meetings or events in the community.

**IX. Next Meeting**

President Johnson announced that the next NWMC Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 8, 6:00 p.m. at the NWMC Offices and via videoconference.

**X. Adjournment**

There being no further business, President Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mayor Craig and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.