



DEDICATED TO A STRONG GREATER MINNESOTA

June 14, 2021

Mr. Ben Martig
City Administrator
City of Northfield
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057

Dear Mr. Martig,

As Mayor of Little Falls and President of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC), I am writing to urge your city to join our organization.

The past 16 months have been incredibly challenging for all of us who serve in local government. From dealing with economic uncertainty to navigating through a global health crisis to striving to help our local businesses stay afloat, we have all worked hard to keep our communities strong during a very trying time.

Our partner through the pandemic — and beyond

Through it all, CGMC has been by our side, fighting for the unique needs of Greater Minnesota cities like yours and mine. Here are just a few of the CGMC's accomplishments over the past year:

- Fought for and secured \$841 million in federal CARES Act funding for local governments and a fair and equitable distribution formula that addresses needs in all corners of the state.
- Secured millions of dollars in emergency grant and loan funding for small businesses and child care providers.
- Successfully advocated for the passage of a bonding bill that included an historic investment in water and wastewater infrastructure, as well as funding for critical needs such as roads and bridges, housing, economic development programs, and child care facilities.
- Defended cities from harmful legislation that could have placed unfair and unwarranted liability on municipalities for the presence of PFAS chemicals in wastewater.
- Conducted a series of webinars to help local governments navigate the labor and employment issues related to the pandemic, changing laws and regulations, and uncertain city budgets.

And the work never ends! The Legislature reconvened this week for a special session to set the state budget for the next two years. CGMC remains hard at work advocating for our needs on issues such as Local Government Aid, child care, infrastructure funding, economic development, housing, environmental regulations, and much more.

Fighting for the future of Local Government Aid

I am proud of CGMC's recent accomplishments, but there is much more work to do. One of the biggest issues on the horizon is a potential overhaul of the Local Government Aid (LGA) program.

Key lawmakers have expressed interest in reviewing and potentially revamping the LGA program during the 2022 legislative session. As those discussions continue, CGMC will be fighting for its member cities every step of the way.

For the past 40 years, CGMC has fought vigorously for increased LGA funding, defended the program against cuts and onerous policy changes, and worked to ensure the distribution formula is fair and balanced. If we want any potential changes to LGA to be beneficial to Greater Minnesota, our cities need to work together. Your involvement in CGMC will ensure that your city has a seat at the table.

Learn more at the CGMC Summer Conference

I am pleased to invite you to learn more about CGMC at our upcoming Summer Conference, which will be held July 29–30 in Alexandria. The conference marks CGMC's return to in-person events and will feature an array of informative and entertaining speakers, presentations, and opportunities to socialize with fellow city officials and staff.

More information about the conference can be found on the enclosed flyer and on the CGMC website at bit.ly/CGMCsummer21.

Join the CGMC today!

Enclosed with this letter are handouts with additional information on CGMC, the issues we work on at the Capitol, and information about the benefits of membership.

To learn more about CGMC or to schedule a meeting with CGMC staff, please contact Shane Zahrt at SAZahrt@flaherty-hood.com or (651) 295-1123. You can also find more information on CGMC's website at greatermncities.org.

Greater Minnesota is stronger when our communities work together. I hope your city will join the 110 cities in Greater Minnesota who are already part of this great organization.

Sincerely,



Greg Zylka, Mayor, Little Falls
President, Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities



2022 CGMC Dues Invoice

To: City Administrator Ben Martig, City of Northfield

From: Lisa Bode, CGMC Treasurer

Date: August 9, 2021

Re: 2022 CGMC General Dues Assessment

Your 2022 general dues assessment is based on the assessment policy approved by the CGMC membership at its annual meeting in July 2021.

2022 general assessment for Northfield

\$10,417

For research, advocacy, and general services related to property taxes, LGA, annexation, environmental regulation and funding, economic development, and transportation. This also includes services for labor and employee relations that will be provided to all CGMC cities.

For new member cities or returning member cities that have not been CGMC members for more than five years, this assessment is based on a policy of phasing in. For the first year, new cities are assessed 25% of their total dues. In the second year, 50% of their total. For the third year, 75% of their total. In the fourth year of membership and thereafter, cities pay their full dues.

Payment may be made from your 2021 or 2022 budgets, but payment should be made by February 1, 2022. About 9% of your general assessment is used for annexation and environment programs, which some cities pay out of their utility funds because of the direct impact of these issues on their sewer and water service.

Please make check payable to CGMC and send by February 1, 2022 to:

Lisa Bode, CGMC Treasurer
City of Moorhead
500 Center Avenue, Box 779
Moorhead, MN 56560

If you have a question about your 2022 CGMC assessment, please contact Bradley Peterson at (651) 225-8840 or bmpeterson@flaherty-hood.com



DEDICATED TO A STRONG GREATER MINNESOTA

2022 Legislative Priorities

- **Local Government Aid**
 - ✓ Increase LGA appropriation by at least \$90 million
 - ✓ Add inflation and population growth to LGA appropriation
 - ✓ Review of LGA formula to ensure maximum effectiveness for Greater MN cities
- **Environment**
 - ✓ At least \$1 billion water and wastewater package that leverages \$680 million from federal infrastructure bill, American Rescue Plan, state surplus, and state bonding bill
- **Address Greater Minnesota's Child Care Shortage**
 - ✓ \$20 million in bonding for child care facilities capital assistance program
 - ✓ Reform licensure for mid-size providers
- **Greater Minnesota Workforce**
 - ✓ Develop program that encourages workforce growth in Greater MN through educational opportunities
- **Tackle Greater Minnesota's Housing Challenges**
 - ✓ \$2.5 million for grants to support public infrastructure related to housing development
 - ✓ \$5 million for the Greater MN Fix-Up Fund
 - ✓ \$7 million for the Greater MN Workforce Housing Development Fund
 - ✓ Funding for grants to housing trust funds
 - ✓ Support technical changes to Minnesota Housing Finance Agency programs and state law to make housing tools more effective for Greater Minnesota
- **Building Permits, Development, Zoning, and Fees**
 - ✓ Defeat proposals that would impose one-size-fits-all regime on building that would limit a city's ability to set building, development, and health and safety standards in their own community
- **Transportation**
 - ✓ Permanent and ongoing funding of \$50 million for city streets of all sizes (\$25 million for cities with fewer than 5,000 residents and \$25 million for cities with more than 5,000 residents)
 - ✓ Support reforms and funding to the Corridors of Commerce program or creation of a like interregional highway expansion program to address commercial and safety needs of highway travel in Greater Minnesota



Frequently Asked Questions: CGMC Basics

What is the CGMC?

We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization representing more than 100 cities outside of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. We advocate for the unique needs of Greater Minnesota cities on issues such as Local Government Aid, economic development, environment, transportation, and more. CGMC is led by a board of directors made up of mayors, city councilors and city staff members from across Greater Minnesota.

How & when was CGMC established?

Our origins stem from the early 1970s, when several Greater Minnesota mayors began to express concerns that their communities were not receiving adequate attention at the legislature. They decided Greater Minnesota cities needed their own representation at the Capitol. CGMC started with just 13 cities and was led by enthusiastic city officials who hired lobbyists, met regularly with legislators, promoted their ideas in the media, and developed a strong presence around the Capitol, all while continuing to welcome additional members into the fold.

How does CGMC decide which issues to work on?

Our legislative advocacy focuses on five main areas: LGA & property taxes, economic development, environment, transportation, and annexation & land use. Within these areas, priorities and positions are selected based on input gleaned from our members through subcommittee meetings and informal discussions. Our official legislative priorities and positions are adopted by CGMC's full membership at our Fall Conference in November.

Does CGMC provide any non-legislative services?

In addition to our legislative advocacy, we have a public labor and employment program that provides our members with data and information on topics ranging from negotiations with unions to disciplining employees and other workplace situations. Our labor team conducts seminars and webinars and has been a vital resource during the COVID-19 pandemic as our member cities navigate the new realities for their employees and workplaces. CGMC member cities are also entitled to reduced fees on legal services related to labor and employment issues.

How does CGMC calculate membership dues?

For most cities, dues are calculated based on a \$1,500 base fee plus an amount per capita (which is tiered so that larger cities pay more per capita than smaller cities). A different calculation is used for cities with populations greater than 35,000.

We have a four-year phase-in fee schedule for new members or returning cities that have not been members in the last five years. For those cities, dues are phased in starting at 25% of the total in the first year and then stepping up to 50%, 75%, and finally 100% over the next three years. This phase-in schedule allows new members to see the work of the CGMC and participate in our programs for just a small initial investment.

How does CGMC communicate with its members?

We keep in touch with members in several ways. The most consistent is through the CGMC in Brief, our weekly e-newsletter that provides updates on activities at the legislature, emerging issues, grant opportunities, and upcoming events. We also offer opportunities to delve more deeply into specific topics through webinars featuring CGMC staff or outside guests and experts.

In addition, CGMC staff members visit as many of our member cities between legislative sessions as possible. These visits can take many forms: Zoom meetings, face-to-face with the mayor and staff, or a presentation to the whole council.

Does CGMC host any events?

We host several events each year including our Summer Conference, Fall Conference, Legislative Action Day (our annual "lobby day" at the Capitol in St. Paul), and seminars on labor & employment issues. In addition to our in-person events, we often conduct webinars to provide in-depth information on specific issues that may impact your city.

My city has a specific bonding project or need for a local bill. Can CGMC help us?

We do not lobby or take positions on legislation that is specific to individual cities. However, our expert staff is always happy to offer advice and perspective to our members on the legislature and the legislative process.



Frequently Asked Questions: What sets CGMC apart

Does it really matter if Greater Minnesota has its own lobbyists?

Years of experience have shown that if CGMC doesn't speak up on certain issues, no one will — and surely no one who is specifically looking out for Greater Minnesota. The cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul have several lobbyists working for them at the Capitol, as do communities across the metro area through the Metro Cities organization and Met Council. Greater Minnesota deserves the same strong team of advocates looking out for your communities. CGMC provides that team.

Is CGMC just another partisan organization?

No! We are a nonpartisan organization and the city officials involved in CGMC cover every corner of the ideological spectrum. We have strong positive relationships and work closely with members of both parties to advance the needs of Greater Minnesota — and we aren't afraid to criticize either party when their actions warrant it.

How is CGMC different from the League of Minnesota Cities?

While the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) covers issues that impact *all* cities across the state, CGMC focuses specifically on the unique needs and interests of cities in Greater Minnesota.

The work of CGMC and LMC is often complementary, but our distinct focus means we advocate for rural communities in ways LMC does not. By concentrating on needs and issues from a Greater Minnesota perspective, we strive to ensure that Greater Minnesota receives its fair share of state resources such as Local Government Aid, bonding dollars, economic development programs, etc.

My city hires a contract lobbyist to work on our issues. Why do we need to join CGMC?

Many cities hire a contract lobbyist or employ a staff member tasked with advancing specific bills at the legislature. They are great for bringing attention to a city-specific project, but no single contract lobbyist for an individual city is able to influence statewide policy on the "big issues" like LGA or transportation funding. When it comes to these types of major issues, a well-established association of like-minded advocates who can wield their collective power is far more effective.

It seems like CGMC spends a lot of time on local government aid (LGA), but my city does not receive LGA. Why should we be a member?

CGMC is most known for our advocacy on LGA, but we work on many other issues that are important to cities across Greater Minnesota. Child care, housing, broadband, transportation, environmental regulations, and annexation are just a few of the other critical issues that we work on.

In addition, we provide a discount on CGMC membership for cities that do not receive LGA. If your city's dues work out to be more than the LGA you receive, you are only charged for half of what your dues would otherwise be.

Won't CGMC just do the same work whether or not our city is a member?

There are certainly many cities who are not members of the CGMC but who still reap the benefits of our work. However, the cities who join CGMC understand that accomplishing favorable outcomes for Greater Minnesota requires cities to work together and put up a united front. CGMC cannot achieve success for all Greater Minnesota cities without a large group of member cities who support our shared goals and priorities.



40 Years of Legislative Advocacy

CGMC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization that represents cities outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area. We advocate on behalf of our member cities in five core issue areas:

Local Government Aid (LGA)/Property Tax Relief

- Fight for a fair, rational, and sustainable LGA formula that gives Greater Minnesota cities their fair share
- Vigorously defend the LGA program from any cuts or harmful modifications
- Advocate for annual LGA increases and inflationary adjustments
- Inform legislators and the public about the importance of LGA and its impact on Greater Minnesota communities

Economic Development

- CGMC is often the only organization advocating at the Capitol for the unique economic development needs of Greater Minnesota communities
- Tackle the issues that help Greater Minnesota thrive and knock down barriers to growth, with a focus on issues like child care, job training, housing, and broadband expansion
- Support the creation, enhancement, and expansion of tools for Greater Minnesota communities and businesses to grow their local economy, tax base and jobs

Environment & Energy

- Advocate for funding for state grant and loan programs that help cities cover the costs of necessary facility upgrades and repairs
- Educate legislators and the public on environmental issues facing Greater Minnesota cities
- Support regulations that provide effective and measurable benefits to the environment

Transportation

- Fight for consistent, dedicated funding for city streets in cities of all sizes
- Push for the creation and funding of programs to enhance the safety and capacity of highway connections that link Greater Minnesota to the global economy
- Advocate for fair distribution of funding between the metro area and Greater Minnesota
- Support efforts to adopt comprehensive transportation funding packages to sustainably finance highways, transit, and local needs

Annexation

- Promote orderly municipal growth and land use policies that support the efficient provision of government services and infrastructure
- Promote better land use and zoning controls in areas surrounding cities



40 Years of Legislative Advocacy



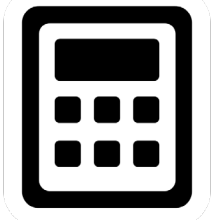
Lobbying: Fending Off the Sharks

No one else stands up for Greater Minnesota cities. Minneapolis, St. Paul, Metro Cities, Metropolitan Council, Municipal Legislative Commission, and many suburbs have armies of paid lobbyists and advocacy organizations looking out for their interests at the Capitol. The only way Greater Minnesota can be fairly represented is by demanding a seat at the table and speaking with a unified voice. For more than 40 years, CGMC has been that voice.



Members: The Keys to Success

CGMC is successful because of its members. Mayors, council members, city administrators and city staff members are involved in every aspect of CGMC's advocacy work, from policy formation to lobbying at the Capitol. City officials have an immeasurable impact on shaping public policy by attending lobby days at the Capitol, responding to "action alerts" from CGMC staff, testifying in front of committees, engaging in social media, and keeping in close contact with legislators.



Policy Analysis: Knowing the Numbers

CGMC's advocacy is effective because it is based on policy, facts and analysis. CGMC has always operated under the philosophy that city officials, legislators and the public should know and understand legislation that is being considered and the impact of the legislation once it is passed. Because of this philosophy, CGMC has a policy analyst on staff who can run the numbers and analyze the impact of legislative proposals in real time.



Staff: Close When You Can't Be

It is extremely difficult for city officials from Greater Minnesota, on their own, to have a constant presence at the Capitol simply due to the distance from St. Paul. It is far easier for a mayor from Edina or Minneapolis to visit the Capitol than a mayor from Worthington or Warroad. CGMC offices are located one block from the Capitol, and staff are there on a daily basis during the legislative session. This proximity has allowed CGMC staff to strengthen relationships with key lawmakers.



Media: More Than Just a Press Release

CGMC understands that a crucial component of good lobbying strategy is a strong media presence that helps build public support and keeps members informed. CGMC is in regular contact with editors and journalists throughout the state. CGMC is very successful at getting our message out through guest columns, letters to the editor, radio and TV interviews, and on social media. Legislators pay attention to the news from back home and we make sure they hear our message loud and clear.

CGMC Is Greater Minnesota's Voice on LGA

For more than 40 years, CGMC has been the most prominent and outspoken advocate for Local Government Aid (LGA). No one fights harder, brings the level of expertise, or looks out for Greater Minnesota like CGMC does.

A TIMELINE OF CGMC'S RECENT ADVOCACY ON LGA

2012 LAUNCHES "THANK LGA" CAMPAIGN

CGMC staff organized and hosted townhall meetings with city leaders around the state on the vital role LGA plays in providing local services and keeping property taxes down. The THANK LGA campaign generated significant media attention and set the stage for discussions on formula reforms and increasing LGA funding.

2014 SUCCESSFULLY ADVOCATES FOR \$9.3M INCREASE IN LGA APPROPRIATION

2017 SUCCESSFULLY ADVOCATES FOR \$15M INCREASE IN LGA APPROPRIATION

2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF LGA DURING PANDEMIC

As the state faced a potential deficit and economic uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CGMC was quick to speak out about the importance of LGA. Through meetings with legislators and the Governor's staff, press releases, guest columns in newspapers across the state, social media efforts and an "LGA Week" campaign, CGMC brought attention to the vital role LGA plays in helping cities power through the pandemic — and its role in providing a strong foundation for recovery afterward.

2013 KEY PLAYER IN LGA REFORM AND \$80M INCREASE IN LGA APPROPRIATION

CGMC was a vocal critic of a Dayton Administration plan that would have reduced LGA for numerous Greater Minnesota cities and channeled minimal new aid to rural communities, despite a proposed \$80 million increase to the LGA program.

Due to our pushback, the Legislature initiated a stakeholder process that included legislators and municipal organizations. CGMC was the only group at the table to exclusively represent Greater Minnesota.

2015 DEFENDS LGA AGAINST ARBITRARY CUTS

CGMC successfully pushed back against legislative proposals that would have significantly reduced LGA for first-class cities. The proposals would have undermined the integrity of the LGA formula and presented a long-term danger to the LGA program for all cities.

2019 SUCCESSFULLY ADVOCATES FOR \$30M INCREASE IN LGA APPROPRIATION, RESTORING LGA TO 2002 LEVEL

After the 2013 LGA increase and reform, CGMC set its sights on restoring the LGA program to its 2002 funding level — the high-water mark for the program. After a few years of modest increases, LGA finally returned to its 2002 funding level thanks to a strong campaign led by CGMC.

2022 & Beyond FIGHTING FOR GREATER MINNESOTA IN LGA REFORM DISCUSSIONS

Since the start of the 2021 legislative session, all four chairs of the legislative committees that control LGA have indicated they want to revise the program's formula. Formula revisions present opportunities, but also bring serious risks. CGMC will be fighting for our member cities every step of the reform process. CGMC membership is your city's seat at the negotiating table!



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SAVE THE DATE

**Mark your calendar for upcoming
CGMC events:**

Legislative Action Day

March 2, 2022, St. Paul

Summer Conference

July 27-29, 2022, Red Wing

Fall Conference

Nov. 17-18, 2022, Alexandria

Website

greatermncities.org

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youtube.com/GreaterMNCities

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