

DEDICATED TO A STRONG GREATER MINNESOTA

August 20, 2021

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

Dear Mr. Martig,

As the new President of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC), I am writing to urge your city to join our organization for the upcoming year. The past year and a half has been challenging, but as we prepare for the 2022 legislative session I believe your city would benefit significantly from membership in the CGMC—and the CGMC will be even stronger with your city's voice.

So far, 2021 has had its share of challenges with a completely remote legislative session—something we have never seen before. This created challenges in connecting with and influencing legislators, but CGMC immediately stepped up and adapted to the “new normal” by using digital advocacy including videos, advocacy weeks that focused on specific issues, social media posts, guest columns, and virtual meetings to influence lawmakers and advocate for Greater Minnesota.

As the leading voice for Greater Minnesota cities, CGMC was instrumental in passing legislation that is important to our communities this session. Over the past few months, CGMC:

- Successfully secured millions in funding for the Minnesota Initiative Foundations and DEED child care grant programs to help continue to combat the child care shortage in Greater Minnesota
- Led efforts that resulted in \$600,000 for a new Municipal PFAS Reduction Initiative and stopped legislation that could have unjustly held cities liable for PFAS in their wastewater
- Advocated for funding for the successful Greater Minnesota Business Development Public Infrastructure (BDPI) grant program, which received \$3.7 million through the jobs and economic development bill
- Advocated for a Local Government Aid “hold harmless” provision that ensures no city will lose LGA next year
- Supported \$70 million for the Border-to-Border Broadband grant program where almost the entire investment will fund projects in Greater Minnesota
- Supported the passage of \$18 million for small-city streets

I am proud of these accomplishments and the work of the CGMC, but there is much more work to do. The influx of federal funding, as well as the large surplus for the current biennium, provide significant opportunities for the CGMC to advocate for our priorities in the 2022 legislative session and beyond.

LGA, bonding among our top priorities for 2022

LGA reform discussions are anticipated to kick off soon, and it is expected legislators will plan to revisit the LGA formula during the 2022 legislative session. 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 a fair and balanced distribution formula. 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.

Another top priority for the CGMC next session will be passage of a bonding bill that funds infrastructure across Greater Minnesota, including wastewater and water infrastructure, BDPI, housing programs, child care facilities, and local roads and bridges. CGMC will be at the Capitol advocating directly for these issues that are vital to the future of our communities.

Working together for the future of Greater Minnesota

Enclosed with this letter is a sample invoice and resolution that reflect what your city's general dues would be for 2021–22 membership. For new CGMC members or returning members that have not been members of the organization for more than five years, CGMC offers a four-year dues phase-in period, during the first year of which your city will pay 25% of its full dues amount, scaling up 25% in each of the following years. A sample resolution for your city council to consider regarding CGMC membership is also enclosed.

To learn more about membership, CGMC issues, 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 the CGMC's website at greatermncities.org.

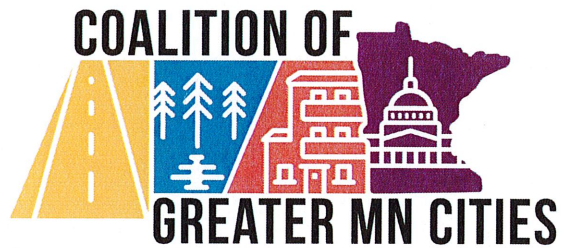
Join the CGMC today!

Join the CGMC to help us continue to strengthen our Greater Minnesota communities. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat Baustian".

Pat Baustian, Mayor of Luverne
President, Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities



Sample – 2022 CGMC Dues Invoice

To: Mr. Ben Martig, City Administrator
City of Northfield

From: Lisa Bode, CGMC Treasurer

Date: August 20, 2021

Re: SAMPLE – 2022 CGMC General Dues Assessment

This **sample** invoice reflects the general dues assessment for your city should you elect to join the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (“CGMC”) for 2022. This 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.

For additional information about joining the CGMC or to request an official invoice for 2022 dues assessment, please contact CGMC staff member Shane Zahrt at (651) 295-1123 or SAZahrt@flaherty-hood.com.

SAMPLE **CITY** RESOLUTION TO JOIN THE
COALITION OF GREATER MINNESOTA CITIES

WHEREAS, the interests of **CITY** and its residents are deeply impacted by the actions of the Minnesota State Legislature and Minnesota state government; and

WHEREAS, the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC) is a nonprofit advocacy organization whose mission is to pursue policies at the state legislature that benefit Cities located outside of the seven-county Twin Cities Metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, the CGMC works to protect LGA funding and works on economic development, environment, transportation, and annexation issues which benefit **CITY** and other Greater Minnesota communities; and

WHEREAS, this is a pivotal time in Minnesota's history, and it is important for Greater Minnesota communities to speak with a collective voice on issues at the State Capitol; and

WHEREAS the CGMC offers a phased-in dues structure for new or returning member cities, under which, **CITY** will pay 25% of our full dues amount during our first year of membership, 50% of dues in the second year, 75% in the third year, and 100% of our dues during the fourth year.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF **CITY**:

1. That the City of **CITY** hereby agrees to join the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities.

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2021



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.