

# LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

## Good-Bye and Hello

Many local officials completed their terms of office last week. We thank all of you for the time and energy you have devoted to public service, including your work on behalf of NHMA. For those who have never served in local government, it is difficult to appreciate how much work and time are involved, and how thankless the task can be. We hope you will enjoy your time off.

Meanwhile, we enthusiastically welcome all of the new officials. We look forward to working with you in the coming years. Please be sure to let us know the e-mail addresses of the new officials in your town who should receive the *Legislative Bulletin*, so we can provide them with the latest legislative news. You can e-mail address changes to [governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org](mailto:governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org). (Please also go into Member Directory Updates in the Member Toolbox section on NHMA's website to update all elected and appointed local officials and employees.)

Some who are new to local government may not fully appreciate the extent to which state legislation affects what happens at the local level—but you will learn quickly. We hope you will read the *Legislative Bulletin*, get to know your legislators, think about what you can do to influence state policy, and let us know when you have questions or ideas.

## Where We Are

Next Thursday, March 24, is “crossover”—the date by which the House must take final action on all House bills and the Senate must do the same for all Senate bills. After the lengthy sessions last week—when the House had a deadline to act on all bills not going to a second committee—this week was rather quiet, with a relatively short Senate session, no House session, and only a few committee hearings and executive sessions in each chamber. The pace will pick up again in coming weeks as the House begins hearings on Senate bills and *vice versa*.

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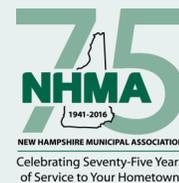
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## Senate Hearing on Medicaid Expansion Tuesday

The reauthorization of New Hampshire's Medicaid expansion program, the NH Health Protection Program (NHHPP) continues its journey in the Senate next week, with a hearing before a combined **Senate Finance and Health and Human Services Committee** on **Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 12:00 noon in LOB 210/211**. If you can come to show your support—you don't have to testify, but could sign as a supporter—you would be most welcome!

All interested parties have been working hard on the bill. The bill, with amendments to address a number of questions, was passed in the House last week. There has been much press coverage about the details of this issue, but it should be noted that there is a 'New Hampshire touch' on the bill, with the work and citizenship requirements, as well as a severability clause, so that the program can still be extended should the federal government, which is funding 95% of this important program, object to those provisions.

The Senate is expected to move quickly, as there are deadlines approaching for health insurance providers to file plan notices with the State. That means you must act quickly to let the Senate know of your support for HB 1696—which spends no state funds, even for administrative expenses.

Municipal officials know that the NHHPP is good for municipalities.

- The NHHPP reduces local welfare expenditures for prescription drugs.
- The NHHPP has enabled local welfare recipients to access medical treatment which has allowed those individuals to return to work after treating their health issues. Once back to work, those NHHPP participants no longer need local welfare assistance.
- The NHHPP will also provide treatment for substance abuse, which is another important part of the program from the municipal perspective. The lack of treatment options in New Hampshire has been widely discussed and first responders have supported programs to divert addiction related cases to treatment, rather than the court system and jail. The NHHPP will help to fill that considerable void.

Please contact members of the joint **[Senate Finance and Health and Human Services Committee](#)** and urge them to support the reauthorization of the NHHPP. Please contact the government affairs staff if you have any questions.

## THE EDGE

### *Bucking the party*

The House and the Senate both have written rules that govern their procedures. Less well known outside Concord are certain "leadership rules" that are unwritten (to our knowledge) but are well understood. These are rules enforced by the majority party for its own members; historically they have been followed, whichever party was in charge, but how strictly they are enforced has varied.

One of these rules is that no member of House leadership—which includes not only the titled party leaders, but all committee chairs and vice chairs—may speak against a committee report on the floor of the House. Beyond that, certain bills are designated as "leadership issues." On these bills, members of leadership are not only prohibited from *speaking* against the committee report, they are expected not to *vote* against the committee's recommendation.

The consequences of violating these rules vary, ranging from a private reprimand to loss of a committee chairmanship (although, to our knowledge, the latter has not occurred under the current leadership). Speaking against the leadership position is a more serious violation than merely voting against it.

These rules make it extremely difficult to overturn a committee report, especially on a leadership issue, because the committee position has approximately a 50-vote advantage out of the gate.

*Continued on next page*

## Water's Worth It!

The annual Water's Worth It! legislative breakfast is set for **Wednesday, March 23rd** at the Holiday Inn on Main Street in Concord. Check-in for the event begins at **7:00 a.m.** with a breakfast buffet. Water quality professionals will present information on drinking water and wastewater treatment challenges in New Hampshire. The keynote speaker is Hayley Lapoint, Meteorologist for WMUR TV. All legislators and staff are invited to enjoy a hearty breakfast and learn more about New Hampshire's water infrastructure. This event is free. Please RSVP to [nhwpc.elizabeth@gmail.com](mailto:nhwpc.elizabeth@gmail.com) by March 13th to reserve your seat at this important breakfast. The breakfast is sponsored by the NH Water Pollution Control Association in conjunction with a wide ranging coalition of other local nonprofit water organizations. There is no cost for attending this event.

To view the weekly Legislative Bulletin from the NH School Boards Association, please click [here](#).

### HOUSE CALENDAR

Joint House/Senate Meetings Are Listed Under This Section

#### TUESDAY, MARCH 22

##### SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENERGY, Room 304, LOB

11:00 a.m. **SB 334**, establishing a commission to study the planning functions of the office of energy and planning.

#### THURSDAY, MARCH 24

##### EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION, Room 306, LOB

10:30 a.m. **SB 524**, relative to state procurement card rebates.

11:00 a.m. **SB 446**, relative to requirements of the state building code.

#### TUESDAY, MARCH 29

##### FINANCE, Rooms 210-211, LOB

11:00 a.m. **SB 485-FN-A**, establishing a state grant program to assist state and local law enforcement agencies in addressing the opioid crisis and making an appropriation therefor.

##### TRANSPORTATION, Room 203, LOB

1:00 p.m. **SB 359**, relative to funding electric vehicle charging stations with municipal registration permits.

1:30 p.m. **SB 433**, relative to exclusions from seasonal highway weight limit regulation.

### THE EDGE *(Continued)*

That makes last week's vote on **HB 1198**, relative to valuation of telephone poles and conduits, all the more remarkable. We understand that this was a leadership issue, yet the committee's recommendation, which NHMA strongly opposed, was defeated, 151-164.

In addition to a strong vote against the committee recommendation by those outside of leadership, there were even defections within the leadership. Several committee chairs and vice chairs "took a walk"--choosing to be out of the room when the vote was taken--while a few went a step further and actually voted against the committee. We're not going to name names here, but we know who they are, and we are especially grateful to them.

*You really can make a difference*

How did this happen? Without a doubt, it was the phone calls from their local officials that did it. Several representatives stated that they simply could not vote against their towns, regardless of the consequences. (For what it's worth, our understanding is that no one was disciplined, although there were expressions of disapproval.)

This underscores once again the influence that local officials have and the importance of exercising it. Those phone calls and e-mails *do* make a difference.

Don't ever forget how important your voice is!



**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30**

**PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS, Room 201, LOB**

11:00 a.m. SB 364, establishing a committee to study the feasibility of incorporating complete streets into the 10-year transportation improvement plan. **NHMA Policy.**

**SENATE CALENDAR**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 22**

**FINANCE, Rooms 210-211, LOB**

12:00 noon **HB 1696-FN**, requesting a modification of the New Hampshire health protection program.

**JUDICIARY, Room 100, SH**

9:45 a.m. **HB 617-FN-A**, requiring state police to wear a camera when interacting with the public.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23**

**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION, Room 101, LOB**

9:30 a.m. **HB 1418-L**, relative to the minutes of nonpublic sessions of public bodies.

9:50 a.m. **HB 1419**, relative to voting records in nonpublic sessions of public bodies.

**PUBLIC AND MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS, Room 102, LOB**

9:00 a.m. **HB 295**, correcting a reference in the housing law to municipal agreements regarding the construction of parking facilities.

9:20 a.m. **HB 430**, relative to extending the veterans' property tax credit to all honorably discharged veterans.

9:40 a.m. **HB 1164**, relative to contributions by a city to the county or state.

10:00 a.m. **HB 1315**, adding mixed-use development to the definition of business and industrial facility.

**SENATE FLOOR ACTION**

Thursday, March 17, 2016

**SB 345**, relative to the definition of agritourism. **Passed with Amendment.**

**SB 349**, relative to city chief elections officers. **Referred to Interim Study.**

**SB 374**, requiring the department of environmental services to update coastal flooding trends. **Passed.**

**SB 381**, relative to the combustion of the wood component of construction and demolition debris. **Passed with Amendment.**

**SB 413**, relative to employment rights of persons with criminal records. **Tabled.**

*(Senate Floor Action — Continued from Page 4)*

**SB 416**, relative to flexible working arrangements in employment. **Passed with Amendment.**

**SB 452-FN**, requiring certain state agencies to conduct an audit of laws governing coastal regions to enable authorities to take appropriate actions. **Passed.**

**SB 475-FN**, requiring law enforcement agencies to file crime reports with the department of safety. **Passed.**

**SB 482-FN-L**, (New Title) establishing a committee to study the effect of short-term rentals on municipalities. **Passed with Amendment.**

**SB 494-FN-A**, limiting an exemption from the road toll. **Passed.**

**SB 551-FN-A-L**, establishing video lottery and table gaming at one location. **Tabled.**

### Upcoming Events for NHMA Members

#### NHMA Workshops

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Beginning in April, 2016—Local Officials Workshops—Various Locations

For more information please access our website: [www.nhmunicipal.org](http://www.nhmunicipal.org) and scroll down on the left to CALENDAR OF EVENTS and Click *View the Full Calendar*.

Contact us by phone at 1-800-852-3358 x3350 or email us at [NHMAregistrations@nhmunicipal.org](mailto:NHMAregistrations@nhmunicipal.org)

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#### NHMA Webinar

March 30, 2016      Half-Time: A Mid-Session Legislative Update

Time: 12:00—1:00 p.m.

Click [here](#) to register by noon on March 29, 2016.

Join Government Affairs Counsel Cordell Johnston and Government Finance Advisor Barbara Reid for a look at the status of legislation affecting municipalities after "Crossover." Crossover is the date (March 24 this year) by which a bill must pass either the House or the Senate in order to "cross over" to the other chamber for consideration.

This webinar will discuss the prospects for bills still alive at the State House, and offer a postmortem on a few that have been killed. The discussion will include, among others, local option fees, the Right-to-Know law, the retirement system, highway funding, planning and zoning issues, assessing, municipal tort liability, and other legal matters.