

VIRGINIA

TOWN & CITY

A dedication to public service

Dr. Patricia Woodbury is
VML's new president

Inside:

2018 General
Assembly details



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About the cover

Newport News Council Member Dr. Patricia Woodbury is the new President of the Virginia Municipal League. VTC highlights Dr. Woodbury's dedication to public service and the City of Newport News. Story begins on page 12.

Photographed by Manuel Timbreza.

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Make plans now to meet with delegates and senators at VML Legislative Day

IT'S THE TIME OF YEAR when state legislative committees are wrapping up their work and preparing legislation for the 2018 session. VML has worked on everything from mental health and opioids, marijuana, solar, telecommunications structure, and fiscal stress just to name a few! In recent weeks legislative meetings have been held at the new General Assembly Building (the "Pocahontas" building), which is located at 900 East Main Street, across the street from the Capitol. Public access to the building is through the Main Street entrance. It is no secret here in Richmond that this building is small and the acoustics are not good, making them hard to hear in. The Pocahontas Building is being used because the General Assembly Building at the corner of 9th and Broad Streets is undergoing a complete renovation and reconstruction. This will be the first time that the Pocahontas Building will be used during a legislative session and it is going to be very crowded during that 60-day period.

Given the anticipated challenges of the Pocahontas Building, VML is taking a different approach to VML Legislative Day and we need your help! VML Legislative Day is on Wednesday, January 31, 2018 at the Library of

Virginia. Please contact your legislator prior to attending VML day and tell them that you would like to attend the "morning hour" at the Capitol, which takes place at the beginning of the noon floor sessions. This is the traditional time for delegates and senators to recognize guests. When you are making arrangements to attend the morning hour, please be sure to tell your delegation about VML's legislative program in addition to any legislative priorities that you have. It is anticipated that the "morning hour" will be the best meeting to attend on Legislative Day, especially since we don't know what the committee meeting schedules will be. Further, we anticipate that committee meetings will be very crowded.

Also, please be sure to mention the VML Legislative Day and its accompanying reception; we are hopeful that this will provide a meaningful time for discussion among legislators and the "folks from back home." We will hold a legislative briefing at 3 p.m., and a reception will follow at 5:30 p.m. The reception will be earlier in the evening this year to provide ample time to have dinner with your legislators.

I also want to wish you Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year! 



Wednesday, January 31, 2018 at the Library of Virginia.
Register now at www.vml.org.

VML connects you with a variety of networking and professional development events. Learn about these opportunities at vml.org/events.

Jan. 3	Finance Forum, Omni Richmond, Richmond
Jan. 5	Newly Elected Officials Conference, Charlottesville
Jan. 10	Opening of 2018 General Assembly session, Richmond
Jan. 31	VML Legislative Day, Library of Virginia, Richmond
March 10	End of 2018 General Assembly session, Richmond
March 15	Emergency response seminar (TBD)

Middleburg and Virginia Beach council members join VML Executive Committee



Littleton elected to at-large position

Trowbridge "Bridge" Littleton, council member for the Town of Middleburg, was elected to an at-large position on the Executive Committee in October.

Littleton became a member of Middleburg's town council in 2016. During his term, he has seen the value VML provides to communities across Virginia and is excited to join in a leadership capacity to help VML with its important mission for its members.

"As a small town, Middleburg does not have the resources or capabilities to keep up with the dynamically-changing environment of our state legislature, but the laws which legislators propose and enact impact us greatly," Littleton said. "VML is our lifeline to Richmond and our elected state officials."

Being a member of VML's Executive Committee enables him to advocate for the interests of local governments and help them meet the challenges of tomorrow.

In addition to serving on the Middleburg Town Council, Littleton has been a member of the town's planning commission and currently sits on its historic district review commission. He also serves as the vice president for the Middleburg Museum Foundation, an all-volunteer non-profit organization which is building a new heritage museum to preserve and exhibit the rich history and stories of the Middleburg area. His experience with government also includes working for the Aerospace Industries Association, an advocacy group based in Virginia which works directly with federal and state governments on national security issues and job creation for our country.

Littleton was born and raised in historic Middleburg and has called Virginia his home for his entire life. After attending Radford University where he earned a B.S. in history and political science, he got a law degree from the University of Richmond School of Law. He began his

career with ITT, a large defense contractor, rising to the position of chief contracts officer until the company was sold in 2015. He currently serves as president of Hellen Systems, a company which he co-founded. The company is based in Middleburg and is developing a back-up system for the Global Positioning System (GPS).



Urban Section elects Kane as chair

Virginia Beach Council Member Shannon Kane was elected chair of VML's Urban Section in October at the VML conference. The Urban Section is a VML subcommittee that represents communities with populations greater than 35,000. As Urban Section chair, Kane also serves on the League's Executive Committee.

She sees her new roles with VML as facilitating communication links between localities.

"Sharing solutions is job number one," Kane shared. "Many issues facing some local governments have been faced before, and learning from one another's experience can be critical to meeting challenges successfully and cost-effectively."

Kane has been a member of the Virginia Beach city council since 2014. She describes herself as "new enough to local government [to] bring a fresh perspective so that the 'status quo' doesn't become a roadblock."

Outside of her elected position, Kane is president and founder of marketing firm EWR Management Group in Virginia Beach and currently serves as president of the board of the Alzheimer's Association of Southeast Virginia. Before starting her own business, she held executive positions with Physicians for Peace, Junior Achievement of Greater Hampton Roads, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, and the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Kane earned a bachelor's degree in communications and public relations from James Madison University.

Bedford hires new economic development coordinator



Mary Zirkle is the new economic development coordinator for the Town of Bedford effective January 2, 2018. Zirkle has been serving as town manager of Buchanan

- Zirkle - for the past three years. She also has extensive administrative experience in planning and community development gained through her previous employment with Roanoke and Bedford counties as well as Hill Studio. She is a graduate of the University of Mary Washington and received a master's degree in urban and regional planning from Virginia Tech.

Virginia Beach council members appointed to statewide groups

Governor Terry McAuliffe recently announced appointments to his administration.

Louis R. Jones, vice-mayor of the City of Virginia Beach, was reappointed Oct. 6 to the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers. Jones is the president and owner of Hollomon-Brown Funeral Home and Tidewater Cemetery Corporation.

Rosemary Wilson, member of the Virginia Beach City Council, was appointed Nov. 9 to the Broadband Advisory Council. Wilson is a realtor with Berkshire Hathaway Towne Realty. She also is a past president of the Virginia Municipal League and has served as chairman of the league's Human Development and Education Committee as well as the Federal Advocacy Council.

Fitzpatrick is new deputy manager in Chesapeake

The City of Chesapeake has hired **Laura Fitzpatrick** as a deputy city manager. She most recently served as assistant city manager for the City of Hampton. Prior to that, Fitzpatrick served in various assistant city manager positions in Rio Rancho, New Mexico; Manassas Park, Virginia; and Troy, Michigan. Fitzpatrick holds a Bachelor of Science in business administration with a focus in hu-

man resources from the State University of New York at Buffalo, and a Master of Public Administration with a focus in local government from the University of Kansas. She has been a Credentialed Manager through the International City/County Management Association since 2011, and is a 2009 graduate of Leadership-ICMA.

Retirement

J. Lance Mallamo retired Nov. 30 as the director of the Office of Historic Alexandria. He joined the City of Alexandria

staff in 2007. Deputy Director Gretchen M. Bulova has been appointed acting director.

In Memoriam

Former Loudoun County Supervisor James F. Brownell passed away on November 19 in Martinsburg, West Virginia. He was a member of the board of supervisors from 1968 to 1992.

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Virginia cities leading in technology use

EIGHT VIRGINIA CITIES have been recognized by the Center for Digital Government (CDG) in the 2017 Digital Cities Survey for using technology to improve services and boost efficiencies.

This 2017 survey focused on collaboration among cities, counties, and regions as well as citizen engagement, policy, operations, and technology and data. Many factors play into the judging process, including an increased focus on open government/transparency/open data and access to information.

“This year’s leading digital cities are leveraging technology to connect disadvantaged citizens with critical information and services, promote citizen inclusion in important government processes and share government data with the public,” said Teri Takai, executive director of the Center for Digital Government. “Thanks to the efforts of these innovative cities, citizens can now meaningfully interact with city government more easily than in any other time in history.”

Of the roughly 60 finalists in five population categories, eight are from Virginia. The cities of Virginia Beach and

Lynchburg both placed first in their population division.

Virginia Beach’s City Council introduced 10 strategic goals supported by IT. The city also established a regional broadband taskforce, formed a regional CIO’s meeting, commissioned a re-engineering study for regional connectivity and is providing free wireless to K-12 schools. In addition, the city developed two web-based apps to support its Open VA portal and transparency efforts – “Balancing Act” and “Taxpayer Receipt” – that allow residents to directly engage in the budget process.

Lynchburg added an interactive portal, “My City Services,” to their Open Data Portal and used citizen engagement efforts and GIS to support the city’s “Poverty to Progress” initiative. The GIS team is partnering with the Va. Extension Service to map areas that lack nearby grocery stores to help non-profits and churches pro-

vide food assistance to those in need.

Find a link to profiles of the finalists and more information about the survey at www.govtech.com/dc/Digital-Cities-Survey-2017.html.

Virginia cities recognized by Center for Digital Government

250,000 – 499,999 population:

1st City of Virginia Beach

125,000 – 249,999 population:

3rd City of Norfolk

10th City of Alexandria

10th City of Hampton

75,000 – 124,999 population:

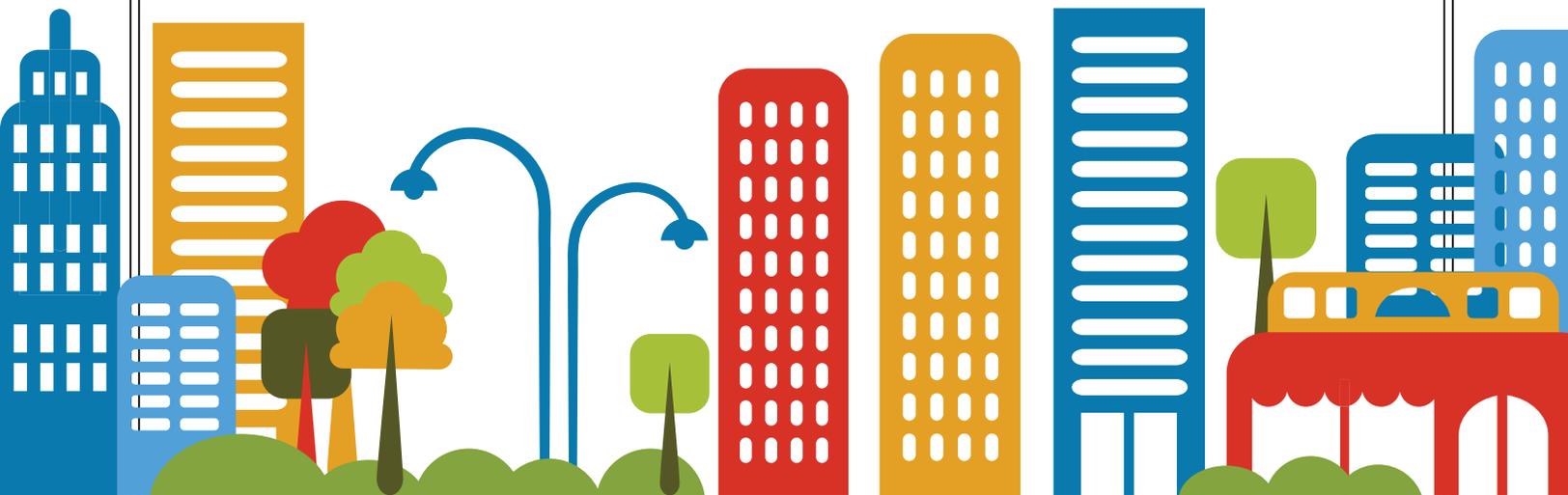
1st City of Lynchburg

4th City of Roanoke

Up to 75,000 population:

5th City of Williamsburg

10th City of Salem



New event and pool reno earn Staunton Parks & Rec awards

A CHILDREN'S EVENT and the reopening of a community pool recently earned the Staunton Parks & Recreation Department recognition from the Virginia Recreation and Park Society (VRPS).

In early 2017 the department held a screening of the movie "Cars" as a special indoor edition of a family film series, which usually occurs outside during the summer. The event was themed as a drive-in to tie into the movie's topic. In preparation, children created cars out of large cardboard boxes to sit in while they watched the movie. They could pretend to fuel up before parking at gas pumps also fashioned out of cardboard boxes.

The pool renovation project began in 2015, when Vice Mayor Ophie Kier initiated an effort to reopen the historic Montgomery Hall Park pool. The pool served as a hub of activity for the African-American community during the Jim Crow segregation era but had been closed since 2009. City Council approved plans to renovate the pool in early 2016. The pool reopened to swimmers in summer 2017 with numerous new amenities including a sun shelf, a 12-foot slide, spray features, and a tumble-bucket play station.



VRPS awarded the projects Best New Special Event and Best New Renovation/Addition (Bricks and Mortar).

Find a link to more information about the projects, including more photos, at www.ci.staunton.va.us/Home/Components/News/News/211/.



Danville's website is a spark of an idea



DANVILLE COUNCIL MEMBERS Lee Vogler and James Buckner are using technology to solicit citizen input for improving the city.

“100 Ways in 100 Days: Improving Danville, VA” is a website launched by Vogler and Buckner through which community members submit project ideas, problems, and potential solutions.

Vogler, a five-year council veteran, saw the idea in use in a community in Florida and thought it could be a novel way to generate conversations with the community and his fellow council members. He approached Buckner to be the project co-sponsor.

Buckner, who has served on the council for three years, liked the concept because “it gives the people a direct line” to council members. He also says it may be less intimidating and time consuming than speaking at a council meeting.

Buckner and Vogler have been pleased with the quality of submissions so far.

“A handful of ideas are things already in motion,” said Buckner, “which is a good sign that we are on the same page as our citizens.”

After the idea-raising period ends Dec. 31, Vogler and Buckner will present the ideas gathered to the rest of the council. They anticipate some projects can be addressed by city government, while others may best be served in the hands of a local non-profit or civic group.

Danville’s “100 Ways in 100 Days: Improving Danville, VA” can be viewed at 100waysdanville.tumblr.com.

Leadership Academy schedule finalized



JOIN THE ELITE RANKS of VML Leadership Academy graduates with a variety of training events in 2018. The Academy’s interactive curriculum will develop your knowledge and enhance your leadership abilities, making

you better able to serve your locality and the citizens you represent. Registration for each event opens in the months before at vml.org/education/leadership-academy/.

2018 Training calendar

- Jan. 3** Finance Forum (Richmond)
- Jan. 5** Newly Elected Officials (Charlottesville)
- Jan. 31** VML Legislative Day (Richmond)
- March 15** Emergency response seminar (TBD)
- April 25** Legislative review (webinar)
- June 6-7** FOIA/COIA (Richmond and Roanoke)
- July 11** Council-manager relations (webinar)
- Aug. 3-4** Budgeting (Staunton and Richmond)
- Sept. 12** Comprehensive planning (webinar)
- Sept. 28-** Mayors Institute & annual conference
- Oct. 2** (Hampton)
- Dec. 12** Public engagement/purpose (webinar)



Galax Vice Mayor Willie Greene (left), also VML City Section chair, receives a certificate reflecting his completion of the second tier of the VML Leadership Academy from Director of Member Services Mike Polychrones.

Christiansburg's The Only Place to Know: Informing residents about town government

CHRIStIANsbuRg HAS DEVELOPED a program that introduces newcomers and old timers to the organization of town government and the services available to residents. Learn about Christiansburg's The Only Place to Know program through this interview with Melissa Powell Demmitt, the town's public relations directors.

How long have you offered this?

2017 was the second year we offered The Only Place to Know program (the name originates from Parks and Recreation's slogan, "The only place to play").

How did it come about?

There were a few new residents participating in our Senior Police Academy, and during a discussion about different recreation options in town, several of the seniors were unaware there were so many parks. One even asked if town employees ever

offered a tour of the town with an overview of what the town offers. Tammy Caldwell, our supervisor of senior programs with Parks and Recreation, thought it was a great idea. She started brainstorming different town facilities the tour could visit, as well as topics to cover. She thought it would be a good idea to have department heads – or a representative from each

Local governments communicate with residents in a variety of ways, through cable channels, press releases, inserts in utility and tax bills and citizen academies, to name just a few.

department – give a brief overview of the department to give residents an idea of what each arm of the town does, but also to give them a point of contact should any issues and questions ever arise.

We quickly realized a program like this would not only help new residents (or existing residents who want more information) navigate their town and understand the services offered, but it would also allow us to educate these individuals, who could then become ambassadors for the town and share information with their friends and neighbors. We offer a Citizens Academy every other year in partnership with Montgomery County, but that program is several weeks for several hours each week. It's super informative, and we always have a lot of interest, but this one-day tour offers a quick overview for those who cannot invest that much time. If they want to learn more and take a deeper dive, the Citizens Academy is a great next step.

How many citizens participated?

There have been approximately 39 participants in the two sessions we've offered. We have offered the program on a yearly basis at this point, but could alter that schedule to allow for more tours if needed.



What is the cost to participate?

There is no cost to participate. We offer the program not only to new residents, but also to individuals – regardless of how long they've lived here - who want to learn more about the operations of the town and the different facilities. The program also includes a free lunch for participants, sponsored by our local Holiday Inn.

Any cost to the town?

There is no cost to the town. We use a town bus to transport participants to the different facilities.

What feedback do participants provide?

The feedback we have received has been nothing but positive. Participants have loved the program and many have stated that they learned several new things about the different departments in town and how they operate. 

About the author: Kelley Hope is the editor of Virginia Town & City and a communications specialist for VML.

Making room for growth

Communication, tax credits are priorities for Virginia home builders' association

ENSURING WORKERS HAVE a diverse supply of housing options to meet their needs is a priority of the Home Builders Association of Virginia (HBAV).

Andrew Clark is the new vice president of government affairs at HBAV. Before joining the statewide organization, he served in a similar role at the Home Building Association of Richmond, one of HBAV's 13 regional affiliates.



Andrew Clark is the new vice president of government affairs at HBAV.

Clark says the organization and their 3,200 members want to work with localities to build communities and reach mutual economic development goals. He's been traveling around the state, meeting with members to learn about housing challenges facing the housing industry.

Some of those challenges linger from 2007, when the economy began to slow as the U.S. entered the Great Recession.

A decade later, "Virginia has a lot of room to grow," Clark shared, whether that is in construction of new homes or revitalization of existing neighborhoods. He says one service HBAV members can provide localities is the sharing of best practices that have worked in other areas.

In working across localities and even regions of Virginia, HBAV's member builders, engineers, and architects learn of strategies in topics such as workforce housing and land-planning attitudes that can give localities ideas for tools to adapt for their own use.

Clark cites a rehabilitation tax abatement program in the City of Richmond that has brought revitalization and redevelopment to virtually all neighborhoods across the city.

As a result, "Richmond is getting national recognition for a renaissance of culture, food" and more, he says.

Clark wants to help localities raise awareness of local housing incentives such as historic tax credits and the low-income housing tax credit.

"We worked to maintain the state historic tax credit last year and we're advocating in Washington now to protect the federal version," he said.

He sees these tax credits as tools builders can use to promote revitalization.

In 2016, HBAV got the General Assembly to pass SB549 to scale back the types of proffers localities could accept from developers for rezoning land. The bill limited off-site proffers to parks and recreational facilities (including playgrounds), public safety, roads, and schools. It also dictated that a proffer must be "specifically attributable" to the new development.

Since SB529's passage, Clark has talked with localities who have different perspectives on its

impact. Some have implemented changes to their rezoning process; others are re-evaluating how they approach infrastructure projects and funding. He also has had conversations with localities who have concerns about the bill.

"It's been a learning curve for both industry and local government," Clark admitted.

In his opinion, localities who have experienced success have opened dialogue with industry about challenges and how to work together. Clark sees bringing together localities and members to facilitate discussions as the immediate focus for the organization.

He says that HBAV has no plans to introduce legislation in 2018 about cash proffers. 

About the author: Kelley Hope is the editor of *Virginia Town & City* and a communications specialist for VML.

Personal finance just got personal

VRS offers financial wellness education for members and public

RETIREMENT PLANNING PARALLELS the phases of work and personal life. Each of us travels along a similar path: early career, mid-career, late-career and retirement. Along the way, we may experience new relationships, marriage, having children, educating children, buying a car and home, and changing or losing jobs. We may encounter repaying student loans, credit card debt, divorce, sickness, injury, death and the demands of caring for elderly relatives. Change is constant. And, Virginia Retirement System is here to help.

VRS Financial Wellness Program

As part of its mission to serve members and the larger community, VRS began offering a free financial education program through its website www.varetire.org/financial-wellness in fall 2017. Powered by Enrich, an award-winning web-based platform, the program is designed with a holistic view of personal finance and to help users grow their knowledge and confidence in everyday financial decision-making.

Addressing money matters throughout life – such as managing debt, insurance and taxes, spending less, saving, budgeting and career advancement – are important steps when preparing for retirement.

Users of the program, including VML members who are not VRS members, can access a variety of free financial education on the VRS website, including:

- Articles
- Videos
- Educational games
- Calculators
- Budgeting tools

Active VRS members also will find expanded financial wellness content through their secure myVRS accounts at myvrs.varetire.org.

VRS member features include:

- A library of mini-courses to help members assess and improve their financial literacy.
- Personalized action plans to help members pursue financial goals.
- An expanded library of videos, webinars, calculators and quick-read articles to increase members' financial savvy.
- Opportunities to earn badges by consuming content and completing course modules and other financial wellness activities.

In addition, VRS members can take full advantage of the offerings by personalizing their myVRS Financial Wellness profile, to receive content recommendations based on their interests and that build on their knowledge. VRS members also can save budget plans and other resources for future reference.

Content will be continuously added, so VRS members can check back often for new ideas, games, tips, tools and time-savers.

Modernization of myVRS

The financial wellness program is just one new feature of the evolving myVRS retirement planning system. VRS is engaged in a multi-year process to enhance other components of myVRS to make retirement planning easier and more secure, while increasing online self-service features.

“With a modernized myVRS, including the innovative myVRS Financial Wellness program, we are helping our more than 341,000 active members plan for tomorrow, today, by providing a secure, easy-to-use and up-to-date source of information,” says Patricia S. “Trish” Bishop, director of VRS.

In the past two years, VRS has rolled out increased security and identity authentication for accounts, a new goal-based Retirement Planner, a refreshed Benefit Estimator, online refunds for members who leave active service, online purchase of prior service and educational tips and tools to help VRS members make informed retirement-planning decisions.

In the next biennium, VRS will launch two new offerings within myVRS: members will have the ability to submit retirement and health insurance credit applications online as well as update beneficiaries online.

“By informing users early and often of their financial fitness and retirement outlook and providing resources for making positive changes,” Bishop says, “VRS is focused on offering superior service and assistance to members as they prepare for retirement.”

Login and stay tuned to VRS

If you're a VRS member and haven't explored myVRS recently, check out your secure online account today. Login or register myvrs.varetire.org for an update on your retirement plan benefits and to access the myVRS Financial Wellness program.

For more information about myVRS developments as they happen, visit the VRS website www.varetire.org, subscribe to the VRS Member News www.varetire.org/members/newsletters and like VRS on Facebook at www.facebook.com/VirginiaRetirementSystem. 



Affordable housing shortage affecting Virginia economy

VIRGINIA'S FAILURE TO ADDRESS adequately affordable housing needs has significantly affected key state priorities, including economic and workforce development, transportation, education and health, according to a report made at the recent Governor's Housing Conference.

The report was made by the Housing Policy Advisory Council (HPAC), created by Governor Terry McAuliffe under Executive Order 32 in October 2014. The council was made up of a diverse group of stakeholders committed to understanding and innovatively impacting the affordable housing inventory of Virginia. The report, "Addressing the Impact of Housing for Virginia's Economy," was independently written by experts from Virginia Tech, George Mason University, William and Mary, and Virginia Commonwealth University. Other key findings were:

1. Virginia has a shortage of housing affordable to a substantial share of households;
2. Virginia needs to produce substantial new affordable housing to accommodate anticipated workforce growth;
3. The homebuilding industry faces major challenges in meeting affordable housing needs;

4. Regions with lower combined housing and transportation costs have experienced better economic performance; and

5. Virginia can no longer rely on the federal government to address critical housing needs.

The report will assist all of Virginia's housing providers in better aligning efforts and resources. The Virginia Housing Development Authority plans to engage state, regional, and local stakeholders as they examine their programs and policies to ensure that they are making the greatest impact on the Commonwealth.

More information on the report can be found at www.vchr.vt.edu/virginiahousingeconomiclinkages. 

About the author: *Michelle Gowdy is VML's acting executive director and general counsel.*



Newport 1

Where great things are

Community Theatre

*Newport News
Golf Club
at Deer Run*

*The Mariners
Museum & Park*

*The New Home House
Museum & Cultural Center*

*Peninsula Fun
Center*



News

What's happening



In October, Newport News Council member Dr. Patricia Woodbury became President of the Virginia Municipal League. This article highlights Dr. Woodbury and the City of Newport News.

VML's new president Dr. Patricia Woodbury shares her dedication to public service

DR. PAT WOODBURY has a long history of public service, first as a teacher, community volunteer, a Licensed Professional Counselor, and a nationally certified School Psychologist. In 2002, Dr. Woodbury was elected to the Newport News School Board and was subsequently elected to the Newport News City Council in 2008.

Dr. Woodbury has been a member of the League's Executive Committee since 2012, first serving as chair of the Urban Section, an at-large member, and vice president before taking the reins as President in October. "I am incredibly honored, grateful, and excited about the opportunity to serve the residents of the cities and towns of Virginia," she said. "VML is a wonderful organization, and I look forward to continuing my service on the board as President."



Patricia Woodbury chats with Cheryl Morales (behind desk) and Barb Kleiss inside the Newport News Tourism office.

Lifelong learning has been a theme of Woodbury's life and informs her policy approaches, such as advocating for workforce development programs. Lifelong learning ensures that adults as well as children have educational opportunities. She organized the first Yoga class on the Peninsula and taught classes at Adult Education and Riverside Mental Health. She wrote many research papers in her doctoral studies about the

“Through education, people develop academically, socially, culturally, emotionally, and intellectually. This doesn't just benefit the individual, it benefits the greater society as well.”

connection of body, mind and spirit. She also has been a liturgical dance leader, again exploring the relationship of body, mind and spirit.

“Through education, people develop academically, socially, culturally, emotionally, and intellectually,” Woodbury told *Virginia Town & City*. “This doesn't just benefit the individual, it benefits the greater society as well.” She believes people are living longer due to the many opportunities afforded through lifelong learning to stay active and engaged. This year the Virginia Municipal League will add a lifelong learning category to its innovation awards. Innovation awards recognize the accomplishments of member local governments for forward-thinking problem-solving ideas.

In August of this year Dr. Woodbury posted this on her website (www.patwoodbury.com):

“This is a very important year for me. I am so very grateful to the citizens of Newport News who re-elected me in 2016. I am honored and continue to work hard on your behalf. I am Chairman of the Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) Board of Commissioners for 2017-2018 as well as President-Elect

of The Virginia Municipal League (VML). I will assume the Presidency in October, 2017. These are very exciting and busy times and I am delighted to represent you regionally, state wide and even nationally. Last week I was part of a National League of Cities (NLC) panel that gave a briefing in Washington concerning workforce development. Congressman Bobby Scott introduced the panel and gave relevant remarks about the subject.

VTC: What led you to run for local office?

Woodbury: My husband had encouraged me for years to run for office because he knew how passionately I felt about “making a difference.” I finally decided I could stay home and complain about the issues or I could get out there and try to do something about them!

VTC: What experiences in your background shape your decisions as a local leader?

Woodbury: I was born and raised on a farm during the depression and money was very limited. We raised most of what we ate. Honesty, integrity, and doing your best were the values that we were taught and expected to practice. Some of the illegal and immoral practices that are being revealed today in politics concern me greatly and call me to practice and advocate for ethical behavior in public office.

VTC: What are you most proud of in your career?

Woodbury: The support of the citizens who elected me against all odds the last time I ran. I am all about the people and serving them. I find nothing more satisfying than being able to help our citizens. I consider myself a “servant leader” in this job.

60 seconds with Dr. Patricia Woodbury

Birthplace: Southampton County, Virginia

Education: B.S. in music education from Longwood College; Master of Education in School Psychology, Educational Specialist Degree, and Doctor of Education in Counseling/School Psychology from The College of William and Mary.

Family: Husband Gerard. Two children: son, Jerry (deceased) and daughter, Michelle. Two grandchildren: Madeline Patricia and Michael.

Career history: Licensed Professional Counselor (State of Virginia) and nationally-certified School Psychologist for Newport News and Hampton Public Schools; assistant professor of special/regular education for Hampton University; Director of Children's Diagnostic Clinic for Hampton University; Owner/Director Holistic Counseling Center.

Current civic involvement:

Virginia Municipal League
Executive Committee since 2012

Hampton Roads Transit Board
of Commissioners since 2008,
currently chairwoman

Newport News City Council since
2008

Past civic involvement:

Virginia Transit Association, President

Newport News School Board

Virginia School Board Association

Newport News Youth Services Commission

Co-ordinator, Basic Skills, Newport News Adult
Education/Army

Most unusual request you've gotten as a city councilmember?

When I was first elected I went to Church as always and was asked at least a dozen times when were the leaves going to be picked up. This went on for several weeks and finally I said I was looking into buying a truck to pick them up myself! Of course I was joking.

Favorite quotes: "A grateful heart is a magnet for miracles." I read it in an inspirational book and it really resonated with me. We have so much to be grateful for in this country. The other quote is, "You want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans for your life!"

I wish I could have been at this historical event: I would have liked to have been in Philadelphia in 1776 when this great country was fighting for its life. Actually, they needed a woman there ... Abigail Adams did her best but she needed help! I would have also liked to have been with Lincoln when he freed the slaves with the Emancipation Proclamation.



Family portrait with husband Gerard Woodbury, a retired NASA engineer and their beloved dog Obi.

VTC: Is there anything in your career that you wish you could do over?

Woodbury: I wish I had started earlier and my husband constantly reminds me he told me so!

VTC: What is the biggest trend or change facing Virginia local governments for 2018?

Woodbury: Local governments face many challenges this year particularly with the constant attempts by the state to exercise the Dillon Rule. The City of Newport News, along with all local governments, needs to retain the ability to shape their communities in a way that the citizens decide. Another great concern for me is the compromising of free speech. Whenever one is unwilling to listen to another opinion, whether you agree or not, we are reverting to dictatorship. Also, it is important and necessary to let go of partisanship and build relationships that make decisions for the good of all.

VTC: What is the inspiration behind lifelong learning?

Woodbury: I was born and raised on a farm during the depression. We did not have a phone until I went to college because the phone lines were not extended that far from town. Several members of my family, including my mother, were teachers and they emphasized the value of education. When I was six years old, I earned ten cents a day for picking cotton. That experience helped me realize I did not want to do that the rest of my life and a good education was the key to my future. I have always loved learning new things and I make it a point to learn something from every life situation. I still go to seminars and workshops that enrich my life. My greatest joy was teaching others of every age as well as learning from them. As the song goes, "By your students you'll be taught." We can facilitate learning in many ways all our lives. Education and the people who provide it touch the lives of every student and



Patricia Woodbury has been a member of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and the Adult Choir for over 50 years. She has taught Day School, Sunday School, been a lay reader, chalice, Eucharistic Minister and served on the Vestry. She has led "The Moving Spirit", an ecumenical liturgical dance group, since 1985.

their families. My high school English teacher encouraged me throughout all my educational achievements. She has been and continues to be an inspiration in my life.

VTC: You returned to college as a student in your forties. What was that like?

Woodbury: When I went back to get my Master's, Educational Specialist degree, and Doctorate from William and Mary, I was significantly older than my classmates and we were at different stages of life. This provided a unique opportunity to share my background and life experiences as well as learn from my classmates.

VTC: You've often commented on your desire to leave your body to science after you pass away. What inspired that?

Woodbury: I read an article in which neurosurgeon Ben Carson expressed his appreciation for the cadaver he used to learn to operate on the brain. Leaving my body for study by future doctors is a way I can continue promoting education even after death.

VTC: You are the sixth Newport News official to be named VML president. Tell me about a few of your notable predecessors.

Woodbury: My city has had a long and positive association with the League, beginning with the League's first president, Newport News City Attorney Samuel R. Buxton, in 1905. The most recent council member to be VML president was Jessie M. Rattley in 1978. Ms. Rattley was the first African American elected to the Newport News City Council and became the first female mayor of the city in 1986. I admire how she paved the way for others to lead. That is a job that did not end with her; it continues with all of us. I feel our role as elected and appointed officials is to help our communities and

Transformation Through Education

DR. WOODBURY has always been dedicated to education and a love for teaching. She has taught pre-school to graduate students. Thirteen years at Hampton University training graduate and undergraduate teachers was most rewarding. Teaching allowed her to experience the transformation of lives. One student at Hampton had an articulation problem and was guided to address it. To Dr. Woodbury's surprise, the student made a presentation to her graduate class that told the story of how Dr. Woodbury had helped her to overcome the problem so she would be an effective professional. She discovered due to many ear infections as a child, she had not heard the beginnings and endings of words.

Dr. Woodbury saw experienced, successful business men come through the graduate program and become wonderful special education teachers as a second career. One of the most unique experiences Dr. Woodbury had was teaching at Memorial University of Newfoundland, a 17,000 student university located in St. John's, Newfoundland. The students there were hungry to learn and, unlike most students, asked for more work. They were like "groupies" and many came from the "out ports" to learn and advance themselves. About three years after teaching there she received a package with a request for a recommendation to become a school psychologist. The student had sent all the papers he had submitted with the notes Dr. Woodbury had written on them. One had suggested his work was so exemplary that he would make a good school psychologist so he was pursuing that goal.

Transformation Through Education is another theme of hers and she has observed it many times over in her students.



(Above) The Newport News shipyard is the largest in the world at more than 550 acres.



(Left) Hilton Elementary School is located on the banks of the James River in the historic Hilton Village section of Newport News.

the people we serve to improve, making our society a better place now and in the future.

VTC: What makes Newport News unique?

Woodbury: The Newport News shipyard is the largest in the world at more than 550 acres. Founded in 1886, Newport News Shipbuilding is the sole designer, builder, and re-fueler of U.S. Navy aircraft carriers and one of two providers of U.S. Navy submarines. Next year, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the United States’ first federal war-housing project, Historic Hilton Village, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This unique English-village-style neighbor-

hood of homes and business was constructed between 1918 and 1921 to house those who built the shipyard. I am proud to visit Hilton Village each week where I attend church at St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church.

We have many other wonderful historic buildings as well as museums, such as The Mariner’s Museum and The Virginia Living Museum. You’ll be amazed at our public art program that makes our city a unique and inviting place to live, work, and visit. I encourage everyone to come experience Newport News, “Where Great Things are Happening.” 



2018

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**New faces, new spaces,
same challenges for local governments**

By Janet Areson

THE 2018 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION, beginning Wednesday, Jan. 10, will bring with it a lot of changes. The General Assembly building on Capitol Square is coming down; a new General Assembly building will be constructed on the same site. In the meantime, delegates' and senators' offices, along with committee meeting rooms, have moved down the hill to the Pocahontas Building on Main Street. On Saturday, Jan. 13, Ralph S. Northam will be inaugurated as Virginia's 73rd governor. The oath of office will be administered as well to Justin E. Fairfax as lieutenant governor and Mark R. Herring as attorney general.

The House of Delegates will look different as well, with 19 new delegates joining the body. A new Speaker of the House will be elected as the result of the retirement of long-time Speaker William Howell. The dynamics of the House will change too, because the lopsided Republican majority has

narrowed dramatically after the Nov. 7 elections. One likely change is the mix of membership on House committees and subcommittees.

The 60-day session of the General Assembly is a budget session during which the 2018-20 biennial budget will be examined, amended, and approved. This year's budget debate will incorporate many challenges facing the state and its localities – funding the rebenchmarking of the Standards of Quality for K-12 education, adequately funding public safety and human services needs, and addressing the costs of transportation, transit, and environmental infrastructure.

Also of concern is the state's own fiscal health. Earlier this year, Standard and Poor's changed Virginia's general obligation debt rating outlook to "negative." The concern was the state's reliance on the Revenue Stabilization Fund (the "Rainy Day" Fund) for normal operating expenses during a period of growth, as well as the risk of future federal funding reductions that would carry an outsized impact for the Commonwealth. Legislative leaders will put together a new cash reserve fund to reduce the state's dependence on the Rainy Day Fund and provide greater budget flexibility.

While names, faces, and meeting locations will change this year, many issues will make a return from previous years, including wireless technology, retaining local land use authority, rebuffing limits to local taxing authority, and preserving stormwater funding. All will command the attention of local governments over the 60-day session.

What follows is VML's 2018 legislative program, which was developed by the 24-member Legislative Committee with assistance of the six policy committees, and adopted by the membership at the annual business meeting on Oct. 2.

PRIORITY: State and local government fiscal relationship

Governance at the local level becomes ever more challenging as the Commonwealth and the federal government add new programs, modify existing program guidelines, and promulgate complex regulations and higher standards for local governments to implement. It is not uncommon for the state and federal governments to either underfund their share of the costs or to ignore them altogether.

VML opposes restrictions on local taxing authority in absence of reliable, sustainable alternatives. In addition, the participation of local government is critical in any discussions relating to local taxing authority. The state should reform its own tax structure before taking on the topic of local taxes and state budget cuts to state-mandated and other high priority programs should specify the programs to be affected by the cuts.

PRIORITY: Education funding

A strong public school system is essential to economic development and prosperity. The state must be a reliable funding partner in accordance with the Virginia Constitution and state statutes. The Standards of Quality should recognize the resources, including positions, required for a high-quality public education system.

VML opposes changes in methodology and changes in the

division of financial responsibility that result in a shift of funding responsibility from the state to localities. Further, VML opposes policies that lower state contributions but do nothing to address the cost of meeting the requirements of the Standards of Accreditation and Standards of Learning. Any approach to improving low-performing schools must include adequate state financial support.

VML supports increased state funding for the Virginia Preschool Initiative, the K-3 reduced class size program and Early Reading Intervention program. VML also supports increased state stipends for highly effective teachers in high-poverty schools, and other innovative programs for teachers and students.

PRIORITY: State assistance to local police departments (HB 599)

Almost 70 percent of Virginians live in communities served by police departments. The state created a program of financial assistance to local police departments (HB599) when it imposed an annexation moratorium on cities more than 30 years ago. It has increasingly de-emphasized this funding obligation as a priority but has never compromised on the annexation moratorium. VML calls for the state to honor its commitment to local governments and public safety by funding the program as stipulated in the Code of Virginia.

Other legislative issues

Communications sales and use tax

VML supports setting the Virginia Communication Sales and Use Tax rate at the same level as the state sales tax rate, and broadening the coverage of the tax to include audio and video streaming services and prepaid calling services.

Community solar

VML supports legislation that would allow for greater flexibility for community-owned solar facilities. VML supports protecting current net metering compensation.

Full funding for Virginia state parks

VML supports full funding for Virginia State Parks, as detailed in the Virginia Association for Parks' Needs Assessment.

Incentives for in-fill development/tax abatement

VML supports allowing local governments greater flexibility in creating incentives for in-fill development, including tax abatement for properties that do not have derelict structures.

Landscape materials

VML supports the ability of localities to regulate the use of specific landscape cover materials or the retrofit of existing landscape cover materials for the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens.

Marijuana decriminalization

VML supports a change to the Code of Virginia to make anyone found to be in the simple possession of no more than 0.5 oz. of marijuana for personal use subject to a civil rather than criminal penalty. Individuals under 21 years of age found to be in possession should still be required to undergo drug screening and participation in treatment or an education program as a condition of the suspension of a conviction if appropriate.

Medical use of marijuana

VML supports the expansion of an affirmative defense to prosecution for the possession or distribution of marijuana if there is valid written certification issued by a practitioner licensed by the Virginia Board of Medicine to prescribe cannabidiol oil or THC-A oil for treatment or for alleviation of the symptoms of, cancer, glaucoma, HIV, AIDS, ALS, MS, PTSD, traumatic brain injury, and other chronic or terminal conditions.

Price floor for regional gas taxes

VML supports legislation to establish a protective floor price for the 2.1 percent regional gas tax, such as was done for the statewide fuels tax in §58.1-2217. This is essential to provide a more stable, dedicated revenue source for long-term financing of regional projects.

Public transit funding

VML supports increased federal and state funding for public transit; policies that allow for the equitable distribution of such funding; and dedicated sources for such funding, all to avoid the impending fiscal cliff in 2019.

Statewide taxing authority for transit capital needs

VML supports legislation that would allow localities to adopt additional regional or local taxes to provide needed capital funds for transit.

Retain local land use authority in implementation of wireless technology

VML supports new wireless technology to improve communication throughout the Commonwealth. Implementation of any new technology should conform current land use authority to protect the public's interests and to promote.

School capital funding pilot program

VML supports new avenues for funding public school construction and renovation costs, including the creation of a pilot program of competitive grants using funds from the Virginia Public Building Authority to offset new construction or renovation costs for publicly owned and operated K-12 schools.

Stormwater local assistance fund

VML supports continued investment in the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund to assist localities with much-needed stormwater projects to meet federal and state clean-water requirements.

Regional greenhouse gas initiative

VML urges the General Assembly to address greenhouse gas emissions targets through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) or carbon credit auctions, with proceeds to be placed in a state fund to assist localities in addressing flooding, energy efficiency improvements, and economic development.

Taxing, licensing, and registering internet-based businesses and services

State and local policies should (1) encourage a level playing field for competing services in the marketplace; (2) preserve and/or replace local and state tax revenues; (3) ensure safety, reliability, and access for consumers, providers, and the public; and (4) protect local government's ability to regulate businesses whether they are traditional, electronic, Internet-based, virtual or otherwise.

Transition to Next Generation 911

VML supports the statewide transition to Next Generation 911 using the state funds that will be dedicated by the 911 Services Board; this should not be an unfunded mandate for which localities pay the bill.

Call out: Help protect the rights of local government

Voice your concerns to your legislators. Plan to attend VML Legislative Day on Jan. 31 and set up meetings before or after with your representatives. Register at vml.org/events-list/.

Other ways to stay involved:

- Follow legislative happenings through VML eNews. Subscribe at vml.org/publications/enews/.
- Call and email your legislators about issues included in VML action alerts. Find your legislator at whosmy.viriniageneralassembly.gov/.
- Attend the VML/VACo Finance Forum on Jan. 3. Register at vml.org/events-list/.
- Follow VML on Facebook (@viriniamunicipalleague) and Twitter (@Virginia_League). 

About the author: *Janet Areson is VML's director of policy development. She also serves as the executive secretary-treasurer for the Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA).*

A change of scenery for 2018 General Assembly

ROBERT A.M. STERN ARCHITECTS LLP AND GLAVE & HOMES ARCHITECTURE



Artist rendering showing the design of the new General Assembly Building.

Visiting the Pocahontas Building

- During the legislative session, the Pocahontas Building will open at 6:00 a.m.
- Non-credentialed lobbyists, media, and members of the public will enter from Main Street.
- Groups will not be able to reserve subcommittee rooms in 2018. Determine a meeting location outside the building.
- House members' offices are on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors.
- Senate members' offices are on the 5th and 6th floors.
- House and Senate leadership is on the 6th floor.
- House Appropriations is on the 13th floor.
- Senate Finance is on the 14th floor.
- The nearest cafeteria is across the street on the 3rd floor of the Suntrust Building.

THE REMODEL of the Virginia General Assembly Building is underway, a project expected to be complete in 2021.

In the meantime, General Assembly members and staff have been relocated. The 2018 session of the General Assembly, which begins January 10, will be held in the Pocahontas Building at 900 East Main Street in Richmond. This also is the location of the individual offices for the 140 members of the General Assembly as well as committee rooms and offices for legislative staff.

The new General Assembly Building will improve and modernize committee meeting rooms and other public spaces while preserving the historic integrity of Capitol Square. The plan's Modern Classical design incorporates the 1912 façade of a structure that was combined with three others over decades to accommodate the state's growing legislature.

That 1912 building was the home of the Life Insurance Company of Virginia, now Genworth Financial, Inc. According to an ac-

2018 General Assembly

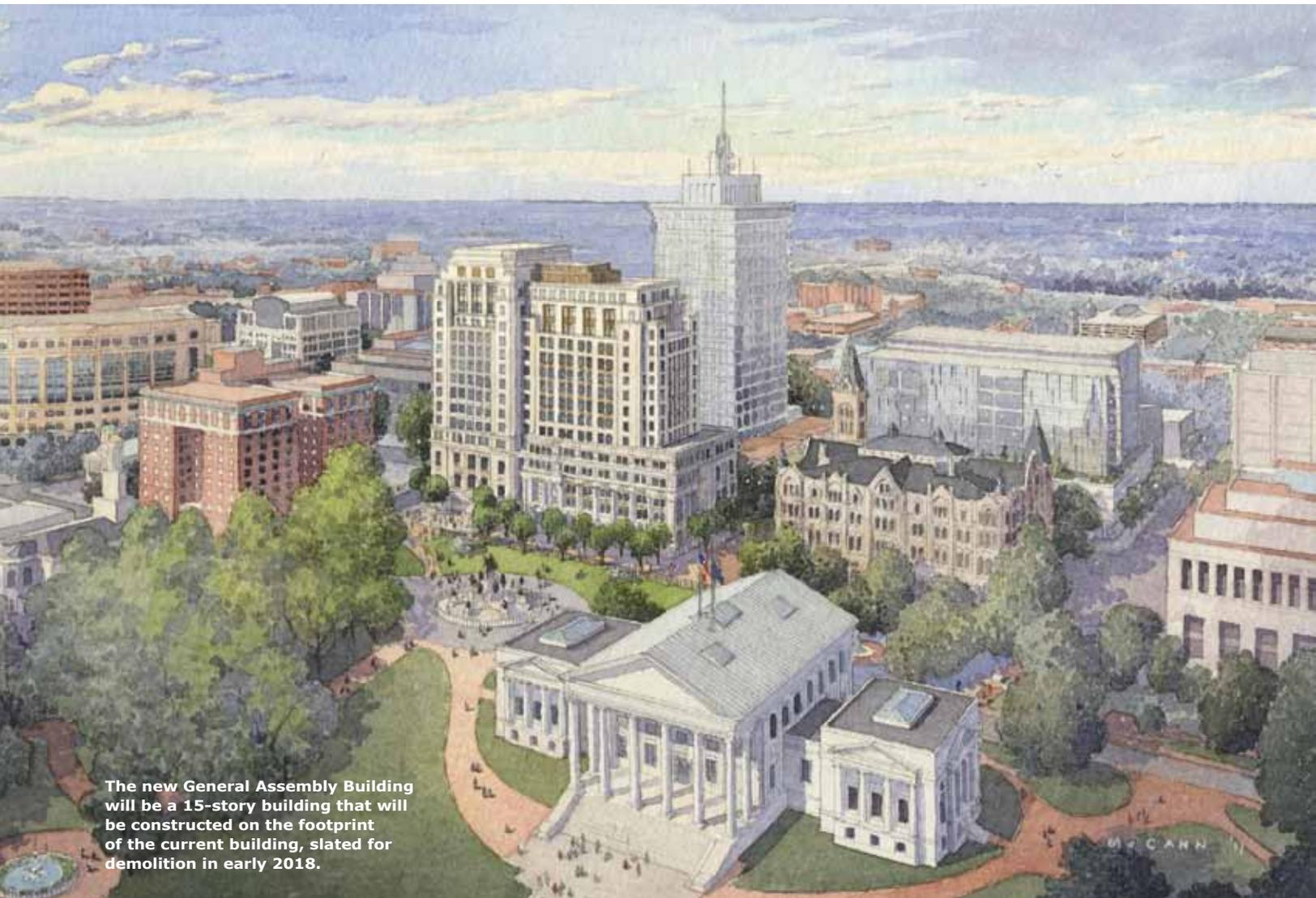
count by Historic Richmond, the facade “features three-story-tall Corinthian pilasters with American eagles, cherubs, and winged horses ... the only example of Pegasus in classical columns in all of Richmond.” The General Assembly Building site also was the home of a branch of the Freedman’s Bank, created by Congress in March 1865 and operating through 1874 to assist former slaves with financial needs.

The lower four floors of the new 426,000-square-foot building will include various public functions, including committee rooms, a cafeteria and other meeting facilities. Legislator offices and other meeting spaces will occupy floors above. 

About the author: *Kelley Hope is the editor of Virginia Town & City and a communications specialist for VML.*



ROBERT A.M. STERN ARCHITECTS LLP AND GLAVE & HOMES ARCHITECTURE



The new General Assembly Building will be a 15-story building that will be constructed on the footprint of the current building, slated for demolition in early 2018.

ROBERT A.M. STERN ARCHITECTS LLP AND GLAVE & HOMES ARCHITECTURE

Who pays for those recounts?

NOVEMBER'S GENERAL ELECTIONS saw some extraordinarily close vote tallies, tallies that triggered recounts for races to elect delegates to the Virginia General Assembly.

What triggers those recounts? If the difference between the candidates is not more than 1 percent, a candidate can ask for a recount.

It would seem logical that the state would pay for recounts associated with races for the state legislature, but that it not the case. The counties and cities involved in the recount pay for those costs if the margin between the candidates is a half of a percent or less, or if the candidate asking for the recount is declared the victor by the recount court.

for counting those votes.

It would just make sense that the state would recognize the degree of state control—and the importance of the function—by providing the lion's share of the costs.

That is not the case.

Except for the salary of the general registrar, cities and counties pay the personnel costs in the registrars' offices, as well as overhead costs such as utilities, furniture, office supplies, etc. And they pay for voting equipment, storage and security of voting equipment, printing of ballots and cost of election officers.

Primaries? Localities pay for those too, as well as the cost of conducting recounts. But cities and counties have no control over whether primaries or mass meetings are held.

Once the Great Recession took hold in Virginia, the state started nickel-and-diming state funding of election administration, as was the case for many shared state-local functions. Here's some examples:

2012 session: Eliminated funding for printing and mailing absentee and voter registration applications to localities (\$77,290 each year).

2011 session: Reduced state funding for the salaries of general registrars and electoral board members by 4 percent in FY12 (a reduction of \$233,428). The salaries for these constitutional positions are included in the Appropriation Act and cannot be cut below the specified levels even if state funding is reduced.

2010 session: For FY11-12, reduced compensation funding for general registrars and local electoral boards by \$1.6 million in each year.

For FY10: Reduced state salary reimbursements for the equivalent of a one-day furlough for all state-supported local employees, including general registrars and

members of electoral boards.

2009 session: Requires that municipalities holding elections in May pay all expenses of those elections, including those incurred by the State Board of Elections.

Local governments bear far too large of a share of the cost of election administration, a function that is largely driven by state rules and regulations. This is especially true when cities and counties have to pay for recounts for elections of federal or state officials. 

About the author: *Mary Jo Fields is a consultant with VML.*



Election administration is one of the most tightly regulated services that cities and counties perform for the state. Councils and boards of supervisors have little control over election administration, except that if they are divided into districts or wards, to set the boundaries of those districts every ten years. Further, cities and towns can decide to have their elections either in May or in November.

A good argument can be made for the statewide regulation of this important function. After all, a voter in Ashland should have the same ability to vote as one in Alberta or Alexandria. A person's geographic location should not determine whether the person can vote or not, or the procedure

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