

Working together is success.

— Henry Ford



NH Association of Counties
Goal Setting / Facilitation

October 28, 2014

Primex³
NH Public Risk Management Exchange

Center for
Public Sector
Advancement

Promoting Excellence in the Public Sector



Purpose and Intended Result of the Session

The purpose of this goal-setting session was to assist the New Hampshire Association of Counties (NHAC) in having a discussion with its membership regarding the future of the association and the skills and type of leader desired in its next Executive Director.

Participants

Members of NH Association of Counties and its Officers

The exercise was facilitated by:

Rick Alpers, Member Services Consultant, Primex³

Ground Rules for the Session

It was agreed upon by the group that the environment for today's session would be a safe and open for all to freely and actively participate. Participants would not be critical of one another's thoughts and belief. These ground rules will help foster an environment that will allow all members to participate openly and freely.

The two questions on the agenda were the following:

1. What type of organization do you want NHAC to be?
2. What type of leader and skills sets are you looking for in your next Executive Director?

These results of these questions are explored in depth on the following pages.

Question 1. What type of organization do you want New Hampshire Association of Counties (NHAC) to be? The following responses were collected:

- NHAC to better coordinate information sharing between all 10 counties.
- An association that is transparent and openly shares information with its members, legislators, elected officials and the general public.
- Work to keep legislators up to date on member issues and needs.
- Help identify outside resources of all levels of government for the benefit of their members and coordinate their use for the members.
- It is important that the current organizational structure be reviewed by its members and by-laws committee to ensure that is operating in an efficient manner.
- An association that actively monitors legislation and regulations that affect NHAC and its members and will **educate** and **advocate** on behalf of its members.
- An association that helps all 10 counties and their leaders become a unified front and share the same vision for the future of NHAC.
- An association that coordinates and provides educational opportunities for all county employees across the membership.
- Dedicate time and resources to educated county elected officials and state legislators.
- Coordinate additional meeting opportunities with the Governor, Executive Council, and NH State Department Commissioners.
- Improve and grow current relationship with New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) and help educate and advocate on behalf of NHAC.
- Help raise the profile of County Government with the general public and state government.
- Provide a yearly orientation for all new members.
- Help understand the role of each affiliate partner and share these roles with the membership.
- Provide education to its members about the role of NACO and its benefits. Also regularly share all pertinent information regarding NACO with the membership.
- Be an association that's less political and more focused on providing professional services to its members.
- NHAC needs to grow their revenue stream outside the current dues structure to help support future association innovation.
- Explore partnerships with schools and tech centers to potentially schedule job fairs to educate future employees of what county government has to offer for employment.
- There is a need and a desire from the membership for the association to update its use of technology for all of its meetings. Particularly the use of video conference for members that have to drive long distances to attend a 2 hour meeting.

- Potentially provide grant opportunities for the membership and association by possibly employing a grant writer to serve the association and membership.
- Bolster recognition of county employees serving on various state committees.
- Improve the current county website.
- Strive to have the association always remain *relevant*.
- Future lobbying services to be performed by a lawyer.
- Be a central repository for all means of county government.
- To become an association that is known for educating and advocating state officials and elected legislators and not perceived strictly as a lobbying association.

**Question 2. What type of leader and skill sets are you looking for in your next Executive Director?
The following responses were collected:**

- To have integrity.
- To be strong willed.
- Be a great communicator to *ALL* 10 counties.
- Keep members regularly updated.
- Be a business and financial expert.
- Visit each county regularly.
- Be well educated about county government.
- Is a great relationship builder.
- Somebody that loves county government.
- Have an in depth understanding of RSA 91-A and how it pertains to not only its members but also the association.
- To always treat NHAC as a public entity.
- To have the hunger and drive to do the job.
- To be diplomatic but firm.
- To be inquisitive by nature.
- To be politically astute.
- Have a great understanding of NH legislation and how it works.
- To be a creative outside the box thinker.
- Challenge the status quo thinking.

- Quickly identify areas of change needed in the association and make recommendations to appropriate board for implementation.
- Be ok with delegating tasks back to the membership.
- Have great facilitation skills.
- Be transparent
- Be an educator
- Help educate the elected officials.
- Keep the NHAC mission and vision moving forward.

After answering the above two questions in great detail a conversation ensued as to what the next steps would be. It was determined by the group and association officers that this conversation would reconvene on **November 14** at their next scheduled Executive Committee meeting at the Merrimack County Nursing Home. There the report from this session will be reviewed and there will be an opportunity to further discuss the two questions from today's conversation.

This session is an important step in the discussion of the future of NHAC. There is common ground amongst its members that association hire an Executive Director that will focus on the growing the association and its services. There is a desire to have to lobbying services handled by a third party organization while the new executive director focuses on growing the association. There may be a time in the future that the executive director will assumes the advocating role again.

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A d v a n c e m e n t

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