



Memo

Date: 10/16/2015

To: Selectboard
From: Richard McGuire
Re: ICMA 2015 Conference

The following is a report of the conference I recently attended from September 26th through September 30, 2015. The conference was the 101st Annual Conference sponsored by the International City Management Association (ICMA). The conference was attended by over 3,800 professionals from local and county government with international attendees representing 20 countries. The conference was held in Seattle, Washington. During the conference, I attended four keynote sessions, a number of educational sessions and several social functions.

Keynote Speakers

1. Shawn Achor – Mr. Achor is a leading expert in the science of positive psychology and the connection between happiness and success. In his talk he referenced research-based strategies for positive leadership and improved engagement. One particular example he used involved a hospital. The only change they made was for all hospital staff to smile and say hello to visitors and patients when they were in a specified number of feet. This one change affected everyone's perception of the quality of the hospital.
2. Verna Meyers – Ms. Meyers is a diversity advocate, consultant and author of *Moving Diversity Forward: How to Go from Well-Meaning to Well-Doing*. She encouraged listeners to recognize their own biases in order to actively combat them
3. Patrick Lencioni – Mr. Lencioni is a top business speaker and has written 10 books including one that has been on the best-seller list for over 13 years. He offered practical advice on leadership models that improve organizational health and specifically addressed five characteristics of a dysfunctional team.
4. Kelly Leonard – Kelly Leonard is the Executive Vice President of The Second City. He brought with him five members of the Second City performers and used a few short skits to show how improvisational techniques can be used to challenge employees and encourage adaptable leaders.

Educational Sessions Attended:

1. The Phantom Menace: Addressing E-Hostility in your community
2. Community Approaches to Stormwater Management and Climate Change
3. Delivering Services Differently
4. Rethinking Civic Technology's Place and Purpose
5. What are the next Big Things facing local government
6. Mastering the fundamentals: HR and Team Meeting Facilitation
7. Daring to engage electronically

There were also opportunities to meet with various vendors and consultants as part of the educational exhibits. Vermont managers gathered for a traditional dinner together Monday evening.

In summary, the conference was both interesting and informative. It provided an opportunity to meet with fellow managers from around the world on an informal basis. Each community has a host of challenges and hidden in each challenge is an opportunity. It was interesting to learn how other managers and communities responded to those opportunities. As in past conferences, I came away with a greater appreciation and understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Williston.