



Dear Members,

At the 2023 League Conference you will be asked to approve a critical membership dues proposal to stabilize current services and assistance the League provides and position you to obtain new resources for your growing needs.

The League's members have expectations for assistance and services from the League, and the current League budget does not generate sufficient revenues to fund those expectations. At a minimum, the organization seeks to ensure these existing services are covered by member dues.

In addition, many municipal elected officials and staff have expressed the need to provide more robust member services and structure a sound and thriving organization in light of current politics and threats to local government authority and finance.

Since at least 1981, the League's dues have not kept up with inflation. Our current total dues revenue is \$270,579; if the dues had kept up with inflation, current total dues revenue would be \$441,485. Those totals reflect the inflationary costs of the services being provided in 1981 only; namely, an executive director and administrative assistant. We are doing so much more than that for you now, but we need your help with more resources.

Existing Budget Needs

- The Board approved using reserves to cover bringing on a **Public Affairs Director**. Leandra Lipson was hired in 2022 and has created social media channels, prepared our weekly legislative newsletter and legislative materials, has led our conference and event planning during the past year, and much more. For long term stability, this position must be covered by dues revenues.
- The League has initiated a new **financial services program** that provides low-cost, on-call accounting and bookkeeping services to our members. MMIA has provided the first 3 years of seed money and Jodi Rogers was hired in August 2023. The League's revenues must include sufficient funding to cover this position.
- Relying entirely on in-house tracking, analyzing, testifying, and lobbying 200 or more bills during a legislative session is unsustainable. The League must hire an additional staff member or a **contract lobbyist** to implement the League's legislative strategy, allowing organization staff to focus their time and resources on running the organization and providing ongoing services to members during the session and the interim.
- In order to adequately organize, calendar, and administer the organization, the League needs a **full-time assistant/paralegal**. Current executive assistant services for the League is shared with MMIA and has already passed the capacity to provide administrative support for the League.

Building A Stable League Organization

- Increased dues revenue would **cover additional consultant costs** directly, instead of making requests for additional contributions from certain members. Currently, the League incurs additional consultant costs related to nutrient standard rulemaking, public affairs and communications related to preemption, structuring a new public entity to administer state and federal transportation dollars for local projects, and litigation services. The League splits these costs equally with 7-12 individual League member municipalities, depending on the issue. However, these services benefit all members.
- The League would hire a **member services coordinator** dedicated to engaging in close coordination with its members in all aspects of the services we provide. A member services position would help coordinate training and education, obtain feedback on services needed and provided, provide a consistent contact point for members, and fill in with project assistance where necessary.
- The League would hire either an additional financial services position or an **additional services position** such as legal counsel, grant writer, planner, IT, or other subject matter expert. Similar to the financial services program, this position would be covered partially by dues revenues and partially by a pay-for-service model. League members could access the types of services they need when they need it for reasonable cost.

The increased dues necessary to cover both existing deficiencies and build capacity for providing long-term member services would be accomplished by raising League membership dues from the current \$.48/per person to \$2/per person over a 3-year phased in period. Minimum dues would be increased to \$1,000 and maximum dues increased to a ceiling of \$66,126.

This proposal must be approved by the full membership at the annual meeting to be held during the conference lunch on October 12, 2023. League staff, the Funding Advisory Subcommittee, the Board's Dues and Budget Committee, and the Board of Directors have worked hard over the past year to identify a reasonable and appropriate dues proposal to address current and future municipal needs. By pooling resources, the League can provide the support and advocacy necessary to create and defend efficient and effective municipal government. We ask for your support when this proposal is put to you for your vote.

Sincerely,



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League Membership Dues Proposal

Cast your Vote on October 12th

Dear League Member,

At the 2023 League Conference we will be asking you to approve a critical membership dues proposal to stabilize the current services and assistance the League provides and take the steps necessary to obtain new resources for the growing needs of League members.

The proposal must be approved by the full membership at the **Annual Meeting of the Members** to be held during the **League Conference Luncheon on October 12, 2023**. The League's staff, Board of Directors, Advisory Committee, and Finance Dues and Budget Committee have worked hard over the past year to identify a reasonable and appropriate dues proposal to address current and future member needs. By pooling resources, the League will be equipped to provide the support and advocacy necessary to create and defend efficient and effective municipal government.

We ask you for your support when this proposal is put to a vote at the annual meeting. **Please read this letter** for more details and information on the proposal and why it is vital to the future of the League.

Please also **read this letter** from Mayor Chris Hindoien, Board Member of the League, to understand why the City of Choteau is in support of this proposal.

Sincerely,
Kelly

Kelly A. Lynch, JD, AICP
Executive Director
Montana League of Cities and Towns

JOIN US IN Helena, Montana

For nearly one hundred years, the League's annual conference has served as an invaluable gathering for municipal employees and elected officials across Montana to network and exchange ideas.

Join your peers to gain knowledge and build connections that will help you grow and maintain a vibrant and healthy local community, October 11 - 13 in Helena.

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CITY OF CHOTEAU



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September 20, 2023

Dear Fellow Mayors,

We are just weeks away from the annual Montana Leagues of Cities and Towns Annual conference this year in Helena. One of the topics for the membership is the new "Dues Proposal" for our group to vote on. Why should I vote "Yes", and is it worth the cost?

Let's look at the numbers;


Our group consists of 127 cities and towns stretching from east to west, as well as from north to south. We range in population from Ismay at 20 souls, to the Magic City of Billings with 119,960 community members. This, in and of itself, is reason alone to vote "Yes" on this important matter. The diversity of Montana lays within our member communities and the people who live there. We, as elected officials, are the voices of our constituents. Now more than ever, we need to come together and align our goals, our voices and let those in Helena know the simplest truth in Montana; LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS THE PUREST FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

The 2023 Legislative session was one of the most contentious on record when it came to proposed legislation that would have a dramatic impact on our ability to govern our communities. We were able to stand our ground and maintain our ability to legislate at home in our own locations. The 2025 Legislative session will be even more difficult as the political landscape continues to change. Do you and your fellow elected councilmembers want to have to go Helena every other year, stand in line with your fellow communities and ask permission from the Montana legislature to approve your request for a project, a change in local statutes, or anything pertaining to your day-to-day operations? Without an increase in our dues, and the ability for the MLCT to respond to these attacks, we may just see that happen as the underlying tone of the last session was Centralized Government. The 150 senators and representatives along with the Governor would control your community!

Gone are the days of what seemed to be an urban vs. rural battle, as the new lines are being drawn based on an ill-founded idea that Helena knows the needs of our communities better than those elected by that community to govern it every day. For that reason alone, it is worth the cost. I ask you simply, find a way to say "Yes". Keep your local government business local and under the purview of your citizen constituents.

Thank you for your time and support on this important matter facing our membership.

V/R


Chris Hindoiem, Mayor
City of Choteau