

TRIP REPORT

Traveler Name: Shari Coleman

Department: City Council

Dates Traveled: 12 – 15 November 2017

Destination: Anchorage, Alaska

PURPOSE OF TRIP:

Alaska Municipal League (AML) 67th Annual Local Government Conference

NARRATIVE:

The Continuing and Newly Elected Officials (NEO) Seminar was a two day event during the week-long AML Conference, held at the Captain Cook Hotel. The goal of this seminar was to provide a broad, though not all-inclusive, scope of duties, obligations and responsibilities of an elected official, as well as an introduction to general procedural guidelines and regulations. Most in attendance were recently elected council members, though a handful were returning members.

The event was comprised of multiple speakers addressing a wide range of topics:

Linda Murphy; Soldotna City Council, NEO coordinator. Murphy addressed some of the roles and responsibilities of elected officials, as well as the municipal staff and their relationship with council. She also talked about parliamentary procedures and orchestrated a mock (and rather assuming) public meeting, with commentary.

Michael Lamb; retired. Lamb is a financial professional who summarized the budgeting fundamentals for municipal governments and how money is allocated to different needs.

Ray Gillespie; professional lobbyist. Gillespie spoke about the balance (or imbalance) of power in Legislature. I bit mind-boggling to me on how this works and how anyone can get anything done under this party system. He touched briefly on how to be an effective advocate when visiting Juneau.

Marty McGee; State Assessor. McGee talked about taxes and why we tax. He addressed the different types of taxes typically used in Alaska, and reminded everyone that taxes are levied in order to pay for services expected or demanded by the public.

Rene Broker; counsel at Cook Schuman & Groseclose, and Michael Gatti; counsel at Jermain, Dunnagan & Owens. A good part of the seminar was dedicated to presentations given by each or in collaboration. Topics discussed were the Open Meetings Act, quasi-judicial and ex parte defined, ethics and conflict of interest. Quite a bit to digest here, and little was presented as printed material. Most of the direction of the discussion was steered by questions from the participants. The review of the Open Meetings Act was of particular interest since there has

been of late some reference to this from the public at large regarding our own city council behavior.

OBSERVATIONS:

Most speakers were engaging, and seminar overall was educational. As most information presented was new to me, I feel confident that some of it actually stuck. Registrants were given a "handbook" for reference, which for the most part is a hard copy of the power point presentations. Though not exactly a revelation in and of itself, the simplest and most compelling comment made towards the end of the two day event was that no matter what challenges you face as a councilor, remember that every action you take is made as a voice of the people, and not for yourself.

PERSONS CONTACTED:

Ray Gillespie, professional lobbyist

Signature:  Date: 8 December 2017