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## The Weekly Recap

**WHAT HAPPENED:** After a brief break, the General Assembly gaveled back into business at the Legislative Building in Raleigh to formally kick off the 2023 long session that will unfold over the months to come.

**WHAT IT MEANS:** The long session is the heavy-lift of the legislative biennium, with new proposals for committees to vet -- lawmakers are now filing bills -- and the development of the state's spending plan. As you'll read in this Bulletin, the League has approved its slate of goals for the new biennium, based on input and shaping from the state's cities and towns. We break them down by category below.

**ON TAP:** Mark on your calendars and register for important NCLM events ahead related to the legislative session. You'll find the information below in this Bulletin. On Jan. 30 is the next Advancing Advocacy -- a free-of-charge virtual meeting for our members exploring the legislative session in context and going over policy proposals that may affect cities and towns. More dates will follow as the session unfolds. On Feb. 22 is our popular Town & State Dinner, which will provide an opportunity for our municipal elected officials to meet and build relationships with state legislators over dinner in downtown Raleigh.

**THE SKINNY:** Don't forget -- the General Assembly has deadlines for the filing of bills, which you can review/print [here](#). Keep them in mind as you converse with your lawmakers, especially if you have requests for local bills. We'll keep you posted as we review proposals that lawmakers bring forward of interest to cities and towns. Read on for what North Carolina's municipalities together have prioritized.

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# Legislative Goals Approved

After months of listening sessions, Legislative Policy Committee meetings and finally electronic voting by member cities and towns, the N.C. League of Municipalities has approved its Legislative Goals for the 2023-24 biennium. From 408 municipal goal proposals submitted through this process, falling into 50 distinct subject matter areas, 155 cities and towns approved a top 10 list of goals that now make up NCLM's final legislative agenda. Not surprisingly, infrastructure-related goals were again a top priority, closely followed by proposals involving keeping cities and towns financially healthy. Housing and law enforcement training were also top concerns of North Carolina's municipal leaders.

Here are the 10 Legislative Goals for 2023-24, along with the subject areas approved by the League Board of Directors:

## RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

- Create an adequate and permanent funding stream for local infrastructure.
- Expand state transportation funding streams for construction and maintenance for municipal and state-owned secondary roads.
- Allow municipalities to use local resources and capabilities to expand broadband access in their communities through innovative partnerships.
- Expand incentives that encourage regionalization of water and sewer, as well as other municipal services, when appropriate.

## HEALTHY FINANCES

- Provide local revenue options beyond property tax.
- Expand incentives and funding for local economic development.

## VIBRANT COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

- Revitalize vacant and abandoned properties with enhanced legal tools and funding.
- Expand federal and state resources for affordable housing.

## RACIAL EQUITY

- Enhance state systems and resources for local law enforcement officer recruitment, training, and retention.

## ADAPTIVE MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS

- Revise state contracting laws to better protect public entities from the effects of inflation.

You can also find PDFs of handouts – one listing talking points for each, and one a streamlined version – [here](#) and [here](#).

“Hundreds of cities and towns and their officials from across North Carolina gave their input and prioritized these legislative goals. These goals truly reflect the top priorities of all our cities and towns, whether small or large, and achieving them will move our economy even further ahead,” said Erin Wynia, NCLM's Director of Government Affairs.

In addition to the voting, 111 officials from cities and towns participated in various in-person and virtual discussions, while the 65-member Policy Committee and NCLM Board of Directors played key roles in considering and narrowing priorities and developing goal language.

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## Cities, Towns: Let Us Know Your Goals

The League requests that member cities and towns share with us their own legislative goals for the new biennium underway. While the League has adopted its slate of legislative goals as shaped by municipalities (see above), individual cities and towns may have their own, written priorities for the sessions ahead. Please submit them to NCLM Grassroots Associate Abbie Britt at [abritt@nclm.org](mailto:abritt@nclm.org). Thank you!

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## LGERS Board Approves Employer Contribution Rate

The Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System Board met Thursday and voted to increase the employer contribution rate in accordance with the Employer Contribution Rate Stabilization Policy adopted in 2021. Materials from the meeting can be seen [here](#).

The employer contribution rate for general employees will increase from the current 12.10 percent in fiscal year 2022-23 to 12.85 percent for fiscal year 2023-24. Please note that these rates for general employees are only for the pension component of contribution rates; the death benefit contribution can vary from unit to unit for general employees and is in addition to these rates. The employer contribution rate for law enforcement officers (LEOs) increases from 13.10 percent to 14.10 percent; the employer contribution rate for LEOs will be adjusted by the "Court Cost Offset" and the Death Benefit. The board did not vote to provide retirees with either a one-time payment increase or a Cost-of-Living Adjustment, which would ultimately be funded by municipal employers.

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## 2023 Town & State Dinner: Register!

The N.C. League of Municipalities is proud to announce the 5th Town and State Dinner, a gathering of lawmakers and local leaders. This event provides an opportunity for our municipal elected officials to meet and build relationships with state legislators over dinner in downtown Raleigh.

The night begins with appetizers and refreshments, and a full plated dinner will shortly follow. Please join us Wednesday, Feb. 22 as we celebrate our communities and the leadership that makes their successes possible.

Legislators can register using the information emailed to them directly, or can contact us at [TSD@ncml.org](mailto:TSD@ncml.org).

Local elected officials can register using the link below:

[REGISTER HERE](#)

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## Join Us For Next 'Advancing Advocacy'

The North Carolina General Assembly is back in town, and the 2023 legislative session is likely to provide more than a few fireworks. To be ready, NCLM's Government Affairs staff will be hosting a series of our virtual Advancing Advocacy meetings that we are calling "In Session." Join us Monday, Jan. 30 at 3 p.m., for the first of three of [these virtual sessions](#), with the others to follow in subsequent weeks at the same time.

As in the past, we will discuss expected policy proposals in areas affecting cities and towns, and strategies to respond to them. Also on the agenda: the recent Legislative Goals approved by League members, the political landscape and leadership change at the General Assembly, and some thorny land-use issues expected to arise. So please join us for these important virtual advocacy sessions. You can register [here](#). As always, it is free of charge. Hope to see you then.

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