

Fellow ILCMA Members:

Thank you to everyone who participated in the recent ILCMA bylaw's amendment vote, the results of which are outlined in this newsletter. The process that led to these proposed bylaw changes followed a familiar path that we have utilized many times in the past to review and consider changes to our bylaws. In this case, the suggestions for updates came from the Committee on Professional Conduct, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee and the ILCMA Board. Following extensive review and discussion, at its meeting on February 7 in Normal the ILCMA Board unanimously voted to move these proposed changes forward to a vote of our membership. Most of the changes were resoundingly approved, however, three specific changes meant to underscore ILCMA's commitment to encouraging diversity, equity and inclusion among our leadership were not.

The ILCMA bylaws currently include a clause that states ***"The Illinois City/County Management Association is committed to diversity. The association membership is open to all qualified individuals regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran status, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or any other factor unrelated to professional qualifications."*** Added several years ago, this important clause still stands. The ILCMA Board asked the DEI Committee to do a comprehensive review of the ILCMA bylaws through a welcoming and inclusive lens. This was an important goal set forth in our current strategic plan because ILCMA has been very intentional about seeking to include voices across our Association that represent the totality of our membership. This is so fundamental to our purpose that it is also included in our Mission Statement. Ensuring that our bylaws reflect both that intentionality and our mission and vision was why these changes were discussed and then ultimately proposed to our membership.

This is a unique situation for ILCMA, as votes to update our bylaws seldom, if ever, fail. We know that this reality may bring about different responses from our membership, and we care about those responses and the lived experiences and perspectives that may drive them. It is important that our Association be a place where all our members feel a sense of belonging, a core focus that ILCMA has embodied for over 70 years. While some proposed changes were approved and others were not, the process itself reaffirms our commitment to the important work of building a stronger, more welcoming Association. To continue to underscore that commitment, we are working on ways to more clearly open lines of communication between the Association membership and the Executive Board. Look for more information on that effort soon.

We, the Executive Board, believe that embracing diversity strengthens our Association, enhances decision-making, and fosters an environment where all members feel valued and heard. Key values from ILCMA's Vision include:

- We embrace our diversity
- We promote and champion diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Our governance reflects diversity
- We are known for being welcoming
- We are willing to have conversations that challenge each other, and challenge big topics

We encourage all members to actively participate in our ongoing efforts to embody these values fully because together, we can continue to build an Association that not only reflects our ideals, but also champions them in every aspect of our governance and interactions.

Peggy Halik
President

Phil Kiraly
President-Elect

Paula Schumacher
Vice President

Kimberly Richardson
Secretary/Treasurer