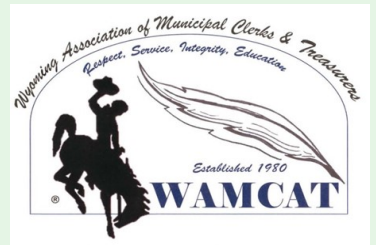


Newsletter - March 2023



Rene Kemper

Douglas Mayor Rene Kemper passed away on Friday, March 3rd after a long battle with cancer. She served one term on the council and was in the first year of her second term as Mayor. Our sincerest condolences go out to the City of Douglas, Rene's family and friends, and most especially her daughter, Dorina.

No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow.

WAMCAT BIO
Deaun Tigner
Town of Basin

YEARS IN POSITION: 4

HOBBIES: *The sky is the limit in this case. I'm always up for a challenge. I enjoy lots of different things including photography, crocheting, scroll sawing, kayaking the river and learning new skills to work on projects with my kids. There is so much knowledge out there to absorb!*

FAVORITE THING ABOUT YOUR JOB:

Since there are always things to learn, there is never a dull moment. Over the past few years, I've had the pleasure of meeting some wonderful people who have shown me how incredible human beings are at lending a hand to one another. What I like best about my job is getting to know the various customers and feeling like I'm making a difference.

FUN FACT ABOUT MY TOWN/CITY: *The Town of Basin is known for our Christmas Lights. Beautiful to drive under, they span the length of Main Street. Visitors from all over the region and state come to see our lights every year.*



Congratulations to Cecilia Good of Sheridan for obtaining her Registered Parliamentarian designation from National Association of Parliamentarians!

WAMCAT BOARD

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WYOMING'S 67TH LEGISLATURE

Session Highlights: The specifics of the bills we tracked are detailed in previous editions of the Week at the Capitol. The overall highlights for WAM are detailed in the following paragraphs.

Annexation: There were two annexation bills this session: House Bill 73 and Senate File 142. House Bill 73 would have required a vote of those proposed to be annexed prior to any action being taken by the annexing city. This bill would make annexation significantly more difficult. WAM was able to amend the bill in the House to make it workable, and we were able to kill the amended bill in the Senate Corporations Committee. Local Government Annexation has been proposed as an interim topic by Senator Barlow. We will be actively working with Management Council to try to keep it off the list of interim topics, as we feel the current process works well, and contains adequate safeguards and opportunities for objection for those in a proposed annexation area.

Senate File 142 was a bill that required notification of property owners within 300 feet of the proposed annexation area. This notification is to be made by first class mail. This bill did pass.

Direct Distribution: House Bill 185 provides an additional \$26,250,000 to Wyoming cities, towns, and counties. This bill had a long arduous trip through the House and Senate, but we were successful in getting this bill passed with your help.

The Governor included these funds in his recommended supplemental budget. The JAC cut these funds in half (\$13,125,000) in December and sent the bill to House to be introduced. Thanks to the help of Representative Chadwick and Speaker Sommers, the House added back the other half and the bill was passed out of the House with \$26,250,000. These funds were to be disbursed according to the Madden/Bebout formula that the legislature has relied on the last two biennial budgets.

We were able to keep the \$26.25 million in the bill through Senate Appropriations. Senate Majority Floor Leader Larry Hicks let the bill sit on General File for two weeks, flirting with the deadline for consideration by Committee of the Whole. When he finally released the bill, he also proposed an amendment with a completely new, highly simplified formula. After a vigorous 90-minute debate on the Senate Floor, the Senate decided that sticking to the more proven Madden/Bebout was more prudent, and the amendment failed.

The bill was again delayed by Leader Hicks on third reading, but in the end the Senate passed the bill unamended. These funds will be disbursed along with your regular Direct Distribution payments this coming August and January.

For the FY 23-24 Biennium, Wyoming local governments will receive a total of \$146.25 million in direct distribution. This is obviously significantly more than we've been receiving the last several bienniums, and while the Governor stressed the additional \$26.250 million this year was a one-time appropriation, we will be working hard to keep the number as high as possible as the debate about next year's budget begins next Fall.

Liquor License Bills: Three liquor license bills were worked through the interim and were introduced early in the session. These bills included Senate File 03 – Retail Liquor License Fees, Senate File 12 – Tavern and Entertainment Liquor License, Senate File 13 – Bar and Grill Phase Out. These were all bills sponsored by the Joint Corporations Committee.

Senate File-3 would allow the licensing authority to charge market rate for a new issued retail liquor licenses issued after July 1. This bill failed on third reading in the Senate on a 14-14 tie, three Senators claiming conflict as current holders of liquor licenses.

Senate File-12 would have created a new type of license called a Tavern and Entertainment License. This license would be comparable to a retail license in that it did not require food sales, and there were no restrictions on the number of licenses.

Senate File-13 phased out the caps on the number of Bar and Grill licenses. It would increase the number of licenses in July and again in 5 years. At the end of 10 years the caps would phase out completely.

During the Committee process, the Tavern license was amended into the Bar and Grill license and the original Tavern License bill died in committee. The bill was further amended to keep the population cap at the end of the 10-year period.

We are appreciative of all the work done by Mayor Patrick Collins of Cheyenne and other elected officials at the committee hearings. We also appreciate the work of Mike Moser who represents the Wyoming Liquor Dealers Association. He personally lobbied this bill very hard along with us, and it would likely not have passed without his help.

Vehicle Procurement: Senate File 164 is a bill that improves the process of procuring vehicles. It also increases the amount of construction towns can do without bidding the work. Specifically, the cap on bidding construction projects was increased from \$35,000 to \$75,000. The process for procuring vehicles changed, in that if no bids are received in response to advertisement for bids, cities can go to direct purchase for vehicles up to \$250,000. This bill also allows for vehicle bids without the posting of a bid bond if the city or town so chooses.

WYOLink: There were two bills to fund what the state calls the "local portion" of the WYOLink costs. Both bills died, but thanks to Senator Pappas, we were able to get WYOLink funding into the Supplemental General Fund Budget. As it is in the standard budget, this issue is hopefully resolved for the foreseeable future.

Property Tax Relief: At the beginning of the session, there were 17 property tax bills designed to provide tax relief. At the end of the session there were two remaining. **House Bill 99 - Property Tax Refund Program.** This bill provides a tax refund to qualified individuals and households. To qualify, one's income must not exceed 125% of the county median income and have assets of less than \$150,000 per person in the household. If qualified, the State would refund up 50% of the tax due.

Senate Joint Resolution 03 - Property Tax Exemption for the Elderly and Infirm. This resolution would authorize a constitutional amendment that would be voted on at the 2024 General Election. At the last minute a substitute bill was introduced that significantly changed the bill to provide for a 4th class of taxable property which was the gist of House Joint Resolution 2. That bill died in the House on 3rd reading. This is a highly irregular, and objectionable way to pass this question on to the voters and could be ripe for a constitutional challenge in the courts.

Pharmacy Benefits Manager Bill: The biggest disappointment of the session was the passage of the Pharmacy Benefits Manager bill. **Senate File 151** significantly modifies current practices and will increase cost to providers and employees including customers of WAMJPIC. We fought this bill hard along with a broad coalition of other organizations, but the Freedom Caucus sided with the local independent pharmacies. We are seeking a veto of the bill, as its passage will increase insurance premiums to most Wyomingites.

ARPA Bill: The legislature appropriated the remaining funds from the State's ARPA award. Numbers moved up and down at several junctures, but when the dust finally settled in Joint Conference Committee, Wyoming's cities, towns and counties came out with an additional \$45.3 million that will be distributed through the SLIB. From that total, the Water and Sewer ARPA Grant Program will receive an additional \$30 million, while \$15.3 million will go into the Local Government Project ARPA Grant Program. As you will recall, a total of \$100 million each was already handed out by the SLIB through these programs, and these new funds are intended to pay for proposals "further down the list".

Preemption Bills: We were able to kill a couple of preemption bills that would have encroached municipal authority and local control. These included HB-98 Working Animal Protection Act, HB-105 Repeal of Gun Free Zones, HB-218 Jackson Hole Rodeo and Fairground State Historic Site.

Let the SHENANIGANS BEGIn

The WAM Winter Convention was A-MA-ZING!!!! The bootcamp for newly-elected officials was just what we needed! The turnout was phenomenal and the information given during those many (many, many) hours was perfect for newbies and also a great brush-up for not-so newbies.

WAMCAT SPRING INSTITUTE SCHEDULE IS OUT AND REGISTRATION IS OPEN!!!!

WEDNESDAY 4/12/23:

Orientation
Team Building
Professional Behavior: What Supervisors Need to Know
Basic Parliamentary Procedure

FRIDAY 4/14/23:

Time Management and Organization
Legislative Updates and How They Affect Our Communities
Records Management
Cyber Security

THURSDAY 4/13/23:

Rate Setting
Clerking 102
USDA
Liquor Law Updates
Asset Management
Sparkling Creative Momentum—How Leaders Build a Creative Culture
Managing Stress for Work-Life Enjoyment

