

Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce

Public Policy Committee

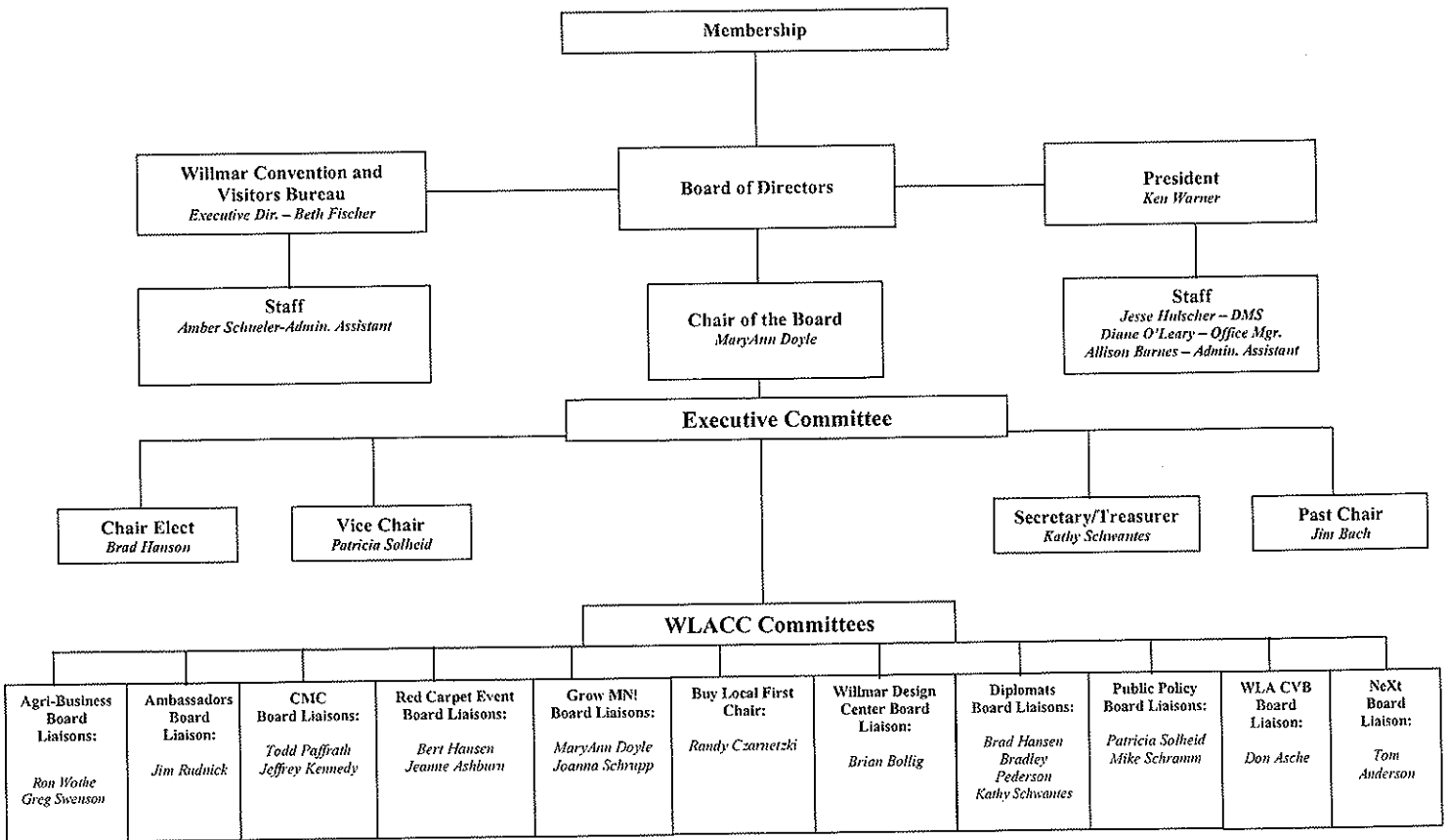
Public Policy Guidelines

&

Handbook

**Prepared & Submitted by Ken Warner, President
Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce
April 2013**

**2013 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
WILLMAR LAKES AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**



- Work with the Economic Development Commission to develop a series of topics that would interest and benefit the cities in Kandiyohi County
- Continue to lobby for Hwy 23

Committee Roster

Public Policy Committee Chair - Dave Baker

Committee Members

1. Doug Allen
2. Tom Amberg
3. Dave Baker
4. Russ Bennett
5. Kelly Boldan
6. Loren Corle
7. Bob Dols
8. Jason Duininck
9. Beth Fischer
10. Gary Geiger
11. Trudie Guptill
12. Wes Hompe
13. Jon Huseby
14. Jerry Kjergaard
15. Larry Kleindl
16. Senator Lyle Koenen
17. Jon Kreps
18. Carol Laumer
19. Steve Linder
20. Bob Mathiasen
21. Justin Mattern
22. Rep. Mary Sawatzky
23. Milan Schmiesing
24. Michael Schramm
25. Patricia Solheid
26. Charlene Stevens
27. Nathan Streed
28. Tom Taunton
29. Leslie Valiant
30. Clark Vollan
31. Ken Warner
32. Lisa Ziehl

Business or Organization

Ridgewater College
1st Minnesota Realty
Baker Hospitalities
Bennett Office Technologies
West Central Tribune
RELCO
Northern States Supply
Duininck Inc.
Willmar Lakes Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Individual/Heritage Bank N.A.
City of New London
Willmar Municipal Utilities
Minnesota Department of Transportation
Willmar Public Schools
Kandiyohi County Administrator
Minnesota State Senator
JD Kreps Financial Group
Rice Home Medical
Lakeland Broadcasting
Heritage Bank N.A.
E*Tap Marketing
Minnesota State Representative
Conway, Deuth & Schmiesing, PLLP
Rice Memorial Hospital
Jennie-O Turkey Store
Willmar City Administrator
Harvey Anderson & Johnson Funeral Homes
Gurley Foods
City of Spicer
Lake Region Bank
Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce
Rice Home Medical

IV. Policy Process

A. Policy Process:

1. An issue identified by a Chamber Committee, members or Chamber staff.
2. The issue is then referred to the appropriate committee/task force (or a temporary task force may be formed) for review and discussion, if appropriate and timely.
3. The committee/task force develops a recommendation and forwards it on to the Public Policy Committee.
4. The PPC supports, modifies or rejects that recommendation. If it is approved, it is forwarded on to the Executive Committee.
5. The Executive Committee supports, modifies or rejects that recommendation. If it is approved, it is forwarded on to the Board of Directors.
6. The Board of Directors either approves, modifies or rejects the recommendation. If it is approved, the recommendation is adopted as policy.

Only the Board of Directors takes a position for the Chamber except to the extent that the Board of Directors may authorize the Executive Committee or another committee to act during the period between Board meetings

B. Proactive vs. Reactive:

However, issues may surface with little notice and may not allow time for this formal process to be followed. In order to take timely proactive positions on issues, the Chamber may be required to skip one or more steps stated in the above process. Whenever possible, the process will be followed. At that time, the PPC, Executive Committee or the Board may develop a Chamber position by using the guidelines stated above as the standards to provide sound consistent public policy positions. **Either the Executive Committee or the Board must approve major public policy positions.**

If a recommended position is clearly consistent with the stated principles, the Board may take a proactive position whether in support of or opposing the issue without following this process! This process will be followed only on issues where the Chamber has a vested interest at stake. This should only be done on an exception basis and will not be common practice.

C. Staff Initiative:

The Board may ask Chamber staff, to take the initiative to represent the business interest on public policy issues. This may require staff to speak for or against a public policy issues without a firm Chamber policy. This will only be done in cases where the proposed position is directly in accordance with the Chamber's principles.

D. Bonding Requests:

The Chamber will only take a position on bonding requests where a genuine business concern is addressed. To that end, the Chamber will consider bonding proposals that enhance the economic climate, promote commerce and the quality of life in the Willmar Lakes Area and Kandiyohi County. In order to have funds available for needed programs the Chamber will promote efficient spending and cost controls to make available funding increases as it relates to a bonding bill.

E. Speaking for the Chamber--Guidelines

SPEAKING FOR THE CHAMBER HAS THE VOLUME OF OVER 600 BUSINESS VOICES!

V. Task Force Structure

Role of the Task Force: The workings of the PPC will be done at the Task Force level. The overall committee (Public Policy Committee) will serve as a summary, review, approval, education and oversight body.

Appointment: All members of a Task Force will be appointed by the Chair or Vice Chair of the PPC. Any task force will have a minimum of 3-5 members. Issues identified by a Chamber Committee, members or Chamber staff will be referred to the PPC. If the issue is deemed appropriate, it will be referred to the appropriate Task Force/Committee for further review, discussion and recommendation for action.

Recruitment of Task Force Members: All members of any Task Force or Committee must be members of the WLACC. Non-members or public officials can be consulted or used as a resource for the Task Force, but they should not be included in the decision making process for the Task Force.

Our members have shown themselves more than willing to serve on committees/task forces. You aren't limited to people who are your friends or are willing to do you a favor. There are members who like to get involved at the task force level and are waiting to be asked. New members and existing members are routinely surveyed for their interest in specific Chamber programs. These are men and women that have specific areas of expertise that you may need. Ask them!

Task Force Meetings: All meetings of the Task Force are independent of the PPC. The Task Force Chair should establish the date and time of the first meeting. At the time of the first meeting, the Chair and task force committee members should establish a regular meeting time to assure inclusion of all task force members. Meetings can be scheduled at the Chamber Office in the Earl B. Olson Board Room and breakfast/lunch can be catered or meetings can be held at a location approved by the task force members.

Task Force Communication: Each committee/task force will be asked to report on their respective actions and discussions at each monthly PPC meeting. Any proposed policy recommendation should be given to the Chair or Vice Chair of the PPC or Chamber staff by the third Wednesday of each month so it can be included in the Public Policy Committee meeting packets. This will allow all members of the committee to review the materials in advance of the meeting.

Committee/Task Force Report Forms: See sample of Public Policy Committee Paperwork contained within this manual.

Speaking for the Chamber, Public Policy Committee or Task Force: See Speaking for the Chamber Guidelines contained within this manual.

SAMPLE B.

**Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce
Public Policy Committee Meeting**

Meeting Ground Rules:

Meetings will start on time and end of time
(Unless agreed to by participants)

Meetings will last no longer the 1 ½ hours

Meeting minutes will be recorded and approved

Agendas will be established for next meeting
at the end of each current meeting

All discussion focused toward topic, not personalities

Group will stay on topic at hand until direction or action
is agreed to by the group

All topics open for potential discussion by group
(Agenda items receive priority)

Conflict of interest: any committee member or public official
has a real or apparent conflict of interest, that person shall declare the conflict of interest for the
record and shall abstain from any vote or discussion of the matter

Abstention: any committee member may not participate in or vote on a decision of the PPC if
they shall have declared a financial interest or a conflicting interest

We all leave friends

Others?

SAMPLE B. Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce Articles of Incorporation

Limitations

Article IV

Section 1: This Corporation shall be non-profit, non-partisan, non-political and non-sectarian.

Section 3: No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall consist of carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting, to influence legislation. The corporation shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign (including publishing or distributing statements or campaign literature) for or on behalf of (or in oppositions to) any candidate for office.

Committee Status and Responsibility

Committees are appointed by the Chairperson of the Board and report to the Chairperson of the Board and the Board of Directors. A committee carries out its instruction from the Board and has no power to commit the organization to anything unless the project has been approved by the President and the Board. The officers and directors shall divide the responsibility for working with the standing committees each year.

A subcommittee has only such powers as may be given by the parent committee.

A sub-committee reports only to its parent committee; the parent committee reports to the Board.

Board Policy – Identifying

Any communication sent on Chamber letterhead or that identifies the signer as an officer, Board Member, committee member or employee of the Chamber of Commerce should reflect policy adopted by the Board of Directors.

Issue – Avoidance

The Board may at times express a strong unwillingness to take a stand on certain matters. When such an opinion is supported by more than two-thirds majority of the members present, this considered refusal on the part of the Board to take an official position in the matter in itself be considered a continuing policy of the Board.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

On issues covered by general statements of policy, the Chamber shall allow the Public Policy Committee chairman, co-chairman, committee, and Chamber President the prerogative of action to be taken on legislative matters that affect the well being of the Greater Willmar Area, especially so far as business climate is concerned.

1. Legislation should facilitate rather than impede economic growth.
2. Legislation should stimulate rather than weaken the principles of private initiative, individual incentive and competitive enterprise.
3. Legislation should strengthen rather than weaken the principles of private initiative, individual incentive and competitive enterprise.
4. The Public Policy Committee should study all issues pertinent to our area.
5. Whenever possible the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce will attempt to establish a non-partisan political attitude. However, if pending legislation would appear to defeat our purposes, strong action should be taken rather than avoiding the issue.

LEGISLATIVE SUNSET

Any action taken by the Board of Directors directly related to a specific legislative bill should be limited to that bill and self-destruct at the end of that legislative session (Chamber year-end) unless otherwise noted.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

We believe that problems are best solved at the lowest level of government. We further believe that improved governmental organization and cooperation are essential to obtain the highest degree of efficiency at the local level of government.

SAMPLE A –WPS GENERAL OPERATING LEVY REFERENDUM MAILER

CHAMBER MEMBER
SURVEY REGARDING
WILLMAR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GENERAL OPERATING LEVY
REFERENDUM

It is important that you return this survey as it will help guide the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors in their decision making process. To do this, we must receive your completed survey by **Friday, October 21, 2011.**

FRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WILLMAR, MN
PERMIT NO. 667

WMA
WILLMAR •
LAKES AREA
chamber • of • commerce
"To advocate and promote the area-wide business community"
2104 Highway 12 East
Willmar, MN 56201
Return Service Requested

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 347
(WILLMAR PUBLIC SCHOOLS)
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a special election has been called and will be held in and for Independent School District No. 347 (Willmar Public Schools), State of Minnesota, on Tuesday, November 8, 2011, for the purpose of voting on the following question:

**SCHOOL DISTRICT BALLOT QUESTION 1
RENEWAL OF EXPIRING
REFERENDUM REVENUE AUTHORIZATION**

The board of Independent School District No. 347 (Willmar Public Schools) has proposed to renew the school district's existing referendum revenue authorization of \$498.49 per pupil which is scheduled to expire. The proposed referendum revenue authorization would be applicable for nine years unless otherwise revoked or reduced as provided by law.

YES

Shall the increase in the revenue proposed by the board of Independent School District No. 347 be approved?

NO

BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING TO EXTEND AN EXISTING PROPERTY TAX REFERENDUM THAT IS SCHEDULED TO EXPIRE.

Passage of School District Ballot question 1 extends an existing operating referendum at the same amount per pupil as in the previous year.

The annual dollar increases for typical residential homesteads, apartments, commercial-industrial properties, and most other classes of property within the school district are as shown in the table below.

For agricultural property (both homestead and non-homestead), the taxes for the proposed referendum will be based on the value of the house, garage and surrounding one acre of land only. There will be no referendum taxes paid on the value of other agricultural lands and buildings. For seasonal residential recreational property (i.e. cabins), there will be no taxes paid for the proposed referendum.

CHAMBER MEMBER
SURVEY REGARDING
WILLMAR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GENERAL OPERATING LEVY
REFERENDUM

Chamber members are receiving this background information and survey to ask for their feedback and to assist the Public Policy Committee in making a recommendation to the Chamber Board of Directors for taking an official position on the general operating levy referendum. The Chamber Board will meet on October 27th and make a decision whether or not the Chamber will support or oppose the General Operating Levy Referendum using the feedback we receive from our members.

(Please select only one)

- The Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce should **support** the General Operating Levy Referendum
- The Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce should **not support** the General Operating Levy Referendum

Additional Comments:

Please return your survey and feedback/comments to the Chamber NO later than October 21st. Discussion and action will then be taken at a special meeting of the Public Policy Committee meeting followed by the official Chamber position taken by the Board of Directors at their October 27th Board meeting.

Please complete and return by October 21, 2011 to:

Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce
General Operating Levy Referendum Survey
2104 East Highway 12
Willmar, MN 56201

Or fax (320 231-1948) or email kwarnar@willmarareachamber.com

SAMPLE C – PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING

COMMITTEE REPORT FORM

Committee: Public Policy Committee Special Meeting **Time:** 7:30 a.m.
Date of Meeting: October 25, 2011
Location: EBO Board Room – Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce Office

Members Present: Dave Baker Tom Amberg, Beth Fischer, Nathan Streed Jerry Kjergaard, Larry Kleindl, Russ Bennett, Jenna Fischer, Gary Geiger, Loren Corle, Jason Duininck, Steve Linder, Doug Allen, Clark Vollan, Bob Mathiasen, Pat Solheid, Representative Bruce Vogel and Ken Warner

Members Excused: Bob Dols, Kelly Boldan, Senator Joe Gimse, Bruce Gomm, Trudie Guptill, Milan Schmiesing, Les Heitke, Charlene Stevens, Leslie Valiant, Mike Schramm and

Guest: David Herzer & Bob Bonnawitz, Students First; Jim Bach, Cathy Hedlof, MaryAnn Doyle, Gary Laughlin and Greg Swenson, WLACC Board

Action Taken/Items Discussed:

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Dave Baker called the special meeting of the Public Policy Committee to order at 7:30 a.m. on October 25, 2011.
- II. **Proposed General Operating Levy Referendum:** Warner explained the purpose of the special meeting is to discuss the results of the recent membership survey regarding the proposed general operating levy referendum and forward a recommendation to the WLACC Board of Directors for their regular meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 27, 2011. Warner reported that the survey has a response rate of 16.31% with 89.28% voting in favor; 10.71% against. This was based on 515 ballots that were mailed to the primary contacts.

Warner also reviewed a draft press release that he prepared in anticipation that the committee would support the referendum based on preliminary survey results. In addition to voicing our support for the passage of the referendum, we will also encourage the Willmar Public Schools District to partner with the business community to participate in the following goals:

- The Willmar Public School District will agree that projected expenditures will not exceed revenues.
- The Willmar Public Schools will agree that reducing the school week to a four (4) day school week will only be considered as a measure of last resort to cut costs.
- Improve teacher evaluation by eliminating the “last in first out” approach to teacher layoffs. Replace it with a system based in part on teachers’ classroom results.
- Support reinstatement of the state’s math requirement for high school graduation.
- Continued support on a statewide basis of the elimination of unfunded mandates as passed by the legislature.

Warner noted that the Chamber will also need to make sure that even after the referendum vote on November 8th; the Chamber stays active in pursuing meaningful education reform and reliable funding. The Public Policy will consider appointing a subcommittee or make a recommendation to the Board at a future date that an Education Reform Committee be appointed to work on these issues and to assure we take a proactive and meaningful role

SAMPLE D – WLACC SUPPORTS OPERATING LEVY REFERENDUM PRESS RELEASE



Contact: Ken Warner
President
(320) 235-0300

October 27, 2011
For Immediate Release

WILLMAR LAKES AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SUPPORTS OPERATING LEVY REFERENDUM

WILLMAR – The Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors voted unanimously in favor of supporting the Willmar Public Schools Operating Levy Referendum. The decision was based on a membership survey of Chamber members and the recommendation of the Chamber’s Public Policy Committee. The survey has a response rate of 16.31% with a clear majority voting in favor supporting the general operating levy referendum.

Board Chair Jim Sieben explained, “Chamber members have always valued good education for our children and supported the school district. This was a difficult decision for the Chamber as we do understand and appreciate that in the current state of the economy, many businesses have been forced to reduce their operating expenses and asked their employees to share in the reductions, we remain optimistic that our economy will become stronger and we must continue to move forward.” Another factor is the school district is asking to “Renew” the existing referendum (not add a new referendum).

Every Minnesota school district’s circumstances have changed whether it’s from declining enrollment, a growing achievement gap, a more diverse student body or new academic expectations. Chamber President Ken Warner states; “the Chamber will not accept the current state of education funding or student performance and we believe it is essential that post-employment benefits and health care benefits for current employees as the status quo be restructured to address escalating costs.”

Due to our own interests, we encourage the Willmar Public Schools District to partner with the business community to participate in the following goals;

- The Willmar Public School District will agree that projected expenditures will not exceed revenues.
- The Willmar Public Schools will agree that reducing the school week to a four (4) day school week will only be considered as a measure of last resort to cut costs.
- Improve teacher evaluation by eliminating the “last in first out” approach to teacher layoffs. Replace it with a system based in part on teachers’ classroom results.
- Support reinstatement of the state’s math requirement for high school graduation.
- Continued support on a statewide basis of the elimination of unfunded mandates as passed by the legislature.

Public Policy Committee Chair Dave Baker concluded “along with being optimistic about business and the economy improving, schools will need to continue to review options for funding formulas and research non-traditional options to reform education to meet the future needs of our students. We stand ready to assist our community and state in being a leader in this change.”