LAKE BLUFF MAYOR KATHLEEN O’HARA INAUGURATED AS THE 62ND PRESIDENT OF THE NORTHWEST MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE

Lake Bluff Village President Kathleen O’Hara was inaugurated as the 2020-2021 Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC) President on Wednesday, June 17. O’Hara is the organization’s 62nd president and the first from the Village of Lake Bluff. Northfield Village President Joan Frazier was installed as Vice President, while Deerfield Village Trustee Dan Shapiro and Lake Zurich Village Manager Ray Keller were installed as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the inauguration took place virtually, with thirty-three NWMC members and guests participating. Attendees celebrated the accomplishments of outgoing NWMC President and Morton Grove Mayor Dan DiMaria as well as the installation of officers for fiscal year 2020-2021.

President DiMaria thanked the membership and staff for their collective achievements over the past year. He noted that the global pandemic and civil unrest of the past four months forced local governments into “emergency mode and we had to quickly figure out how to continue to provide services to our residents, protect their health and welfare and mitigate the economic devastation caused by the pandemic. I am proud to say that local governments are rising to the challenge as we always do.”

President DiMaria highlighted a number of accomplishments for the year, including: implementation of the strategic plan and annual work plan; completion of the NWMC Multimodal Plan; development of new Surface Transportation Programs for the Northwest and North Shore Councils of Mayors, legislation consolidating police and fire pension fund investments and
restoring recent cuts to the Local Government Distributive Fund; hiring Kendra Johnson and Matt Pasquini to lead the NWMC transportation department; and, adopting the FY2020-2021 NWMC budget that did not increase membership dues for the seventh consecutive year.

In her inaugural remarks, President O’Hara thanked Mayor DiMaria for his accomplishments and leadership as NWMC President. She said, “It is not an over exaggeration to say that we are at a pivotal point in our history. The coronavirus pandemic will continue to present challenges to local governments as we seek a return to normalcy. The call to correct longstanding injustices in our country necessitates long overdue discussions and action. Out of challenges rise opportunities and solutions. I look forward to pursuing them with all of you on these historic and critical issues to our conference, communities and our country.

President O’Hara noted that the organization will need to incorporate innovative ways to deliver services and engage on issues. “This will especially be true in the legislative advocacy arena”, she continued. “We have supportive legislators willing to work with us and we will seek innovative ways to engage with them, provide the information and data they need as they consider bills impacting local government and make our positions known.”

She identified a number of initiatives for the coming year, including: enhancing relationships and partnering opportunities with our legislators; ongoing COVID-19 response and member assistance; implementation of the NWMC Multimodal Plan and new NWMC website; and, protecting local government revenues and advocating for financial relief for our members. She closed by thanking the membership for the “trust and confidence you have in me to lead the Northwest Municipal Conference and I look forward to working with all of you to achieve our mutual goals.”

The Northwest Municipal Conference is a membership-supported association of 42 municipalities and 1 township representing a population of over 1.2 million Illinois residents. Established in 1958, the Conference serves to strengthen local government and enhance intergovernmental cooperation in the north and northwest suburbs of Chicago.

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