

## **CIVIC GOVERNANCE DEMONSTRATION UPDATE**

### **November 17, 2016**

**Identity Statement:** Civic Governance is a new approach to policymaking that produces a civic infrastructure needed to govern for the common good and sustain democracy as a just system of governance.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND OUTLINE FOR 2016 CIVIC GOVERNANCE CASE STUDY:**

**Stage 1-(2011-2017)** Develop a Civic Governance Demonstration of the Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative (MACI).

**Background:** By 2011, civic organizing disciplines were being tested and developed within the MACI base to ensure they provided a way (a model) to link day to day work to *civic policy making* and the MACI purpose. Those who launched the current Civic Governance Demonstration benefited from the 15 years of testing and developing this model. In turn, they offered MACI the opportunity to see if the model could be applied to a major public policy issue-the need for water quality-expand the base and in the process sustain the integrity of the *Civic Organizing Framework*.

The general jurisdiction for the demonstration is the relationship between government and community in developing the capacity to address public issues that impact the common good.

The Civic Governance Framing Document presents the argument for why current approaches need to be changed and why civic organizing is a reasonable solution strategy. This document confirms arguments for the need for a new approach to policy making and governance made by members of the Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative (MACI), including government and nonprofit leaders, since 1995. The Framing Document produced, used and approved by all key stakeholders in 2015 remains unchanged. [www.activecitizen.org](http://www.activecitizen.org).

**Outline for the 2016 Demonstration Update** provides evidence of progress made in producing a Civic Governance Model for Water Quality and in doing so, meeting Stage 1 criteria for becoming a demonstration of MACI. This document is a first draft that will be finalized by January 2017 and revised for a broader audience. The focus for this draft is to address the following governing issues:

- I. Current Membership and Structure-This section names the lead organizing capacity, current and potential civic organizing agencies, and the 2016 Focus for Organizing. Other than Peg Michels and Lynne Kolze, current and potential members were introduced to the purpose of a civic organizing agency between 2013-2016. Though individuals have different tenure, we all are being organized within the criteria for Stage 1.
- II. Are Civic Governance members producing a Civic Governance Model for Water Quality Management that can be applied to any public policy issue? This document will build upon lessons learned in this last year, summarize what is working? Gaps? Steps being taken to close the gaps.

Appendix A. Summary of outcomes against Stage 1 Criteria. This was done by Peg Michels in her Lead Organizer role. Criteria will be used in the December endpoint evaluation process and done by all members.

Appendix B. A brief history of lessons learned from previous attempts to establish a demonstration in civic governance. The purpose for this information is to illustrate how practice proven successful in achieving the MACI purpose becomes criteria.

## I. CURRENT MEMBERSHIP, FOCUS FOR ORGANIZING (FFO) AND DEMONSTRATION STRUCTURE

**MACI Lead Organizer responsible to ensure organizing is in alignment with Criteria for MACI Membership:** Peg Michels-COI Lead Organizer.

At the beginning of 2016, Lynne Kolze was moving forward to meet criteria for the role of Civic Governance/MACI Lead Organizer when her position within the Pollution Control Agency (PCA) shifted from Civic Governance. She is currently exploring in her private time, the possibility of being a Civic Governance/MACI Lead Organizer. She sustains her membership in the Civic Governance Demonstration Organizing Agency to receive support in her exploration.

In preparation for moving forward to Stage 2, each existing and expanding Civic Governance Organizing Agencies have designated individuals who work directly with Peg Michels to learn the obligation of the role. Individuals will be identified as the lead organizers for their civic organizing agency, depending upon the outcome from the December 2016 Endpoint Evaluation and the decision to move forward to achieve Stage 1 criteria as a MACI governing demonstration by June 2017.

**2016-2017 Focus for Organizing:** (The two bullets are mutually dependent)

- **Produce a Civic Governance Model for Water Quality Management** (the model can be applied to any public policy issue) Deadline-December 2016.
- **Meet Criteria for Stage 1.** Deadline-June 2017.
- **Specific Outcomes and Evidence determines achieving the Focus for Organizing:**
  - **Members can link their organizing to Civic Governance purpose. Evidence:** *Civic Leadership Worksheet* determines membership in the Civic Organizing Agency. This criteria includes evidence that current members are successfully organizing 1-8 other individuals to the meaning of civic organizing/Civic Governance. The worksheet is during strategic planning, mid and endpoint evaluation to determine membership in the civic organizing agency. Ranking 3.0-4.0 December 2016. Written documentation support case study update.
  - **Sustain the lead organizing capacity** for a Civic Governance Demonstration within the MACI base. **Evidence:** Peg M and Lynne K meet criteria for role. (*MACI Lead Organizing Worksheet*) Ranking is 3.0-4.0 December 2016. Civic Governance meets criteria for Stage 1. June 2017. Lead organizer criteria introduced to 1-2 leaders in each civic organizing agency.
  - **Determine the institutional partnership base** needed to produce, sustain, and expand a Civic Governance model. Deadline December 2016. **Evidence:** Official approval from governing bodies, fiscal support for leader's time to learn, to organize and govern the regional civic organizing agency. **Evidence:** Lead organizing capacity and budget that supports members of the civic organizing agency to sustain and expand the model and govern within the larger base. (See criteria for Stage 1). Deadline-June 2017.

- **Sustain 2 existing regional civic organizing agencies. Evidence:** MN-St. Croix, Interstate achieve their Focus for Organizing (FFO) and in doing so are the key factor in completing Stage 1 of civic organizing. Deadline-December 2016.
- **Test capacity to expand. Evidence:** Educational Track sustains current base and produces increased membership. Lay the groundwork for MLR (statewide nonprofit) to launch a 3 year CG Pilot. Mankato agrees to establish a southern Civic Governance OA. Deadline: June 2017.

**Gaps** in achieving the over-all focus for organizing (Determined at Midpoint Evaluation and at each OA Meeting). Over-all ranking for closing the gaps between now and June 2017. **2.7** Goal is 3.0+.

- Need for existing members of civic organizing agencies to link their organizing to the meaning of Civic Governance
- Need to get enough institutional support to sustain each civic organizing agency.
- Need to test capacity to expand through the educational track we have developed.
- Determine lead organizing capacity (which includes budget decisions and relationship between the parts of the Demonstration and MACI.

**2016 Civic Governance Organizing Agencies.** All current and potential civic organizing agencies are being organized in alignment with criteria for Stage 1.

The following individuals produced all of the information and content for the 2016 Civic Governance Case Study through standardized practice of civic organizing disciplines that define a civic organizing model.

- **Civic Governance Demonstration Organizing Agency:** Peg Michels (Civic Organizing, Inc.), Lynne Kolze (on her private time), Jeff Forester (MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates). Jeff attends this meeting to get support for a plan to organize MLR as a Civic Governance Expansion Pilot.
- **MN St. Croix Organizing Agency:** Deanna Pomije (Kanabec Soil and Water Conservation District), Susan Shaw (Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District). Continue to focus on how to apply a civic organizing approach to ensure more effective governance between Soil and Water Conservation District Board and staff. Their deadline for achieving a 3.0 is later in 2017.
- **Interstate Organizing Agency:** Dan Prestebak, Amanda Hanson and Chris Gaetzke (Dunn County Land and Water-Chris G is also launching a nonprofit organization using a civic organizing model), John Haack (University of WI Extension), Buzz Sorge (Wisconsin DNR), Kyle Kulow (Sportsman Alliance and St. Croix County), Ron Verdon (Tainter-Menomin Lake Association), Dan Zerr (University of WI Extension). They will focus their case study presentation on the value of an institutional partnership base as it relates to particular soil and water conservation practices.

## Potential Expansion Pilots:

- **Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates.** Jeff Forester. Jeff will be presenting a plan for a civic organizing approach to Board development as it would support a civic organizing outreach effort with regional lake association leaders.
- **Southern expansion.** Kim Musser (Water Resources Center, Minnesota State University, Mankato), Paul Davis (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency), Dusty Anderson (GBERBA), Jessica Nelson (Water Resources Center, Minnesota State University, Mankato), John Knisley (Brown County), Jesse Walters (Martin County SWCD), Joanne Boettcher (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency).
- These leaders are in a Civic Organizing 101 educational track exploring their interest and capacity in establishing a southern Civic Governance Organizing Agency. Kim Musser will be addressing why they are pursuing this strategy, what is working, and the barriers they see at this time for moving forward.

## II. BASED UPON THE 2016 FOCUS FOR ORGANIZING AND EVIDENCE WHAT IS WORKING WELL IN THIS DEMONSTRATION? WHAT ARE IDENTIFIABLE SUCCESSES? GAPS? NEXT STEPS.

### WORKING

- a. We have the MACI Lead Organizing Capacity to achieve criteria for Stage 1.*** See update above.
- b. There is enough practice on the ground (see above) to provide evidence members have produced a Civic Governance Model that could be applied to any public policy issue. The issue is whether or not members can own and articulate the model, expand it, and sustain its integrity in the process.***
  - Agreement that the proposed content for the Civic Governance Model for Water Quality can be mapped within a civic organizing power analysis. The model goes to scale through a base of civic organizing agencies with a shared civic purpose, criteria for roles and standardized practice of the civic organizing disciplines, providing a method for governance within and across the base.
- c. Evidence from outcomes documents that members who are in existing civic organizing agencies have or are working through the barriers listed in previous case studies.***
  - *I want to sustain membership because the need is real and we have evidence civic organizing could meet the need. I understand what I need **to be able** to do to sustain the integrity of the civic organizing agency.*
  - *Civic organizing works if you stick with it, focus on the discipline of a Principle Driven Calendar week by week, guided by Individual Work Plan strategies.*
  - *The Individual Check-in portion of the meeting shows evidence of good ownership of Individual Work Plans.*

- *Clear from check-ins that we know our goal is to apply “the approach” (summarized in the Individual Work Plan) to achieving the goals in our jurisdiction. This is what we mean by the phrase meeting criteria for the use of civic organizing disciplines and linking our organizing to the meaning of and purpose for Civic Governance.*
- *We practice the civic organizing approach within the Civic Governance Organizing Agency. We share experience from the organizing we are doing in our jurisdictions which helps all of us learn new behaviors, take governing responsibility for our partnership, and we identify next steps to advance work plan strategies and goals in our jurisdiction.*
- *We see that overtime- we are becoming more confident in our capacity to articulate the value of civic organizing/Civic Governance because of evidence of increased capacity to achieve our goals.*
- *We have different roles, are advancing strategies in different jurisdictions, and have clear evidence that with these differences but using the same method, our partnerships make a big difference within our whole region. And we can see how much more influence we could have in scale of impact by sustaining and expanding our practice and our partnerships*

***d. Evidence of members capacity to make a case for the value of the process of civic organizing as it relates to achieving institutional goals. This evidence reflects progress in advancing civic leadership development as an institutional policy.*** (See Civic Governance Policy Agenda)

- The following illustration comes from a document produced by Dunn County staff to request Board support for Civic Governance:

“Dunn County Land and Water Conservation staff have successfully provided leadership using civic governance standards and principles organizing farmer led watersheds, invasive species cooperatives, and environmental education events. By bringing stakeholders together and expanding citizen engagement we have been able to harness and capitalize on the passion and great work harbored within our citizens.

The staff of Dunn County Land and Water Conservation Division have adopted the following purpose statement and civic standards that will be used in implementing our Land and Water Resource Management Plan: **Purpose Statement:** To work with people to sustainably use, enhance and preserve Dunn County’s natural resources by developing the civic imagination and infrastructure needed to make a case for Civic Governance as a way to govern for the common good.

All Dunn LWCD decision making is based on these Civic Standards (listed in the document.....” Dan Prestabak-Manager LWCD and staff.

This document is being used to inform the Dunn County Board and back a budget request for \$5,000.00 to support Interstate Civic Governance Organizing Agency.

- e. Current members have a deeper ownership that stated barriers in the 2015 Update are “indicators” of the need for change, which is different from a barrier to advancing a civic organizing approach.***

**Civic Organizing Language**

A model has a language that embodies an analysis of something that is necessary to produce, a method for doing so, an evaluation process. Language accurately grounded in roles and structure is how a model is replicated. The civic organizing model has all of these features.

A pattern in which “civic organizing language is the problem” is actually an indicator of where an individual may be in the process of organizing people to identify with its meaning. Current members organized themselves to the meaning of the language in the process of organizing others and are building upon what works in the organizing process. It is a developmental approach but starts with language in the *Civic Governance Policy Document* that resonates with them and builds from there.

Civic organizing 1-1 meetings are the best venue for translation and these meetings are the way they are advancing their Individual Work Plan.

The leaders who have gotten over “the problem of language” have invested **time** doing a weekly principle-driven calendar, 1-1’s with their key stakeholders testing the resonance to the Civic Governance Policy Document, integrating civic standards into draft governing documents for their jurisdiction and using the document to link practice to their meaning. Some write down their insights and some are teaching with certified civic organizing curriculums.

If too much time goes by and the member of a civic organizing agency is using 1-1’s to achieve specific goals but not linking practice to the meaning of Civic Governance, the gap needs to be closed or organizing will advance existing approaches. This is not necessarily bad, but it is not the purpose for civic organizing. (See gaps identified by members)

There are many illustrations of member ownership of language achieved through the organizing process. The following is an excerpt from a written document developed by Ron Verdon which illustrates having integrated civic organizing into his role-President of Tainter-Menomin Lake Association:

*... There is significant evidence that working as individuals or only within our organization has failed to produce the outcomes necessary to ensure water quality in the future for children, communities and our planet.....*

*Building community capacity to achieve this end, requires a new mindset and new approach that starts with building civic (the decision-making) capacity within and between individuals and institutions to address complex, challenging problems that promotes productive results for the common good....Essential to the success of this process is the recognition that each person is a citizen and a policy maker, no matter what agency, organization or position one holds.*

*Civic Governance provides a way to achieve this new mindset and we have good evidence it produces successful results..... Organizers of civic governance activities encourage citizen participation within a framework of group alignment, agreement and accountability. Astute political awareness and engagement is key to the success of civic organizing. This approach, however, is not affiliated with any political party. This process recognizes the need to negotiate and compromise, while remaining accountable.... encourages stakeholders to suspend judgment, exercise civic imagination and cultivate their civic leadership while leveraging existing resources to find productive solutions to problems..... working one-on-one with key stakeholders, citizens begin to gather and learn about other points of view in order to shape actions to address community problems and to get work done. Organizing purposeful and strategic group meetings that include an evaluation process can foster*

*productive outcomes as it demonstrates a respect for people's time and the need to achieve common civic purposes. Providing a written summary of outcomes from each meeting ensures participants have a chance to accurately reflect on meeting activities, their role in addressing the purpose and their responsibility in meeting the group's desired goals and outcomes.. process establishes an accurate record, reduces redundancy, inspires accountability and guides purposeful actions.... This approach can help ensure long-term sustainable results for the common good...*

## **No Time**

*In the beginning of testing civic organizing, I found myself "not having time to do a weekly principle-driven calendar discipline", I realized that it was an indicator that I was not ready to commit to doing what I knew would be required. Mostly I had not figured out a specific jurisdiction where I felt confident I could test the approach and was not ready to make a commitment until I figured that out. . When I moved forward with a plan for staff to impact the district strategic planning process, I found time to plan weekly, and to ultimately establish a time certain for restructured staff meetings and 1-1's with staff members in between meetings.*

*The outcome though useful only helps to just barely manage the increased flow of projects coming at us. I found I was not using time to link practice to civic standards at the meetings because our practice did not reflect them. At the same time, I stopped doing the weekly calendar discipline.*

*Now I realize this is an indicator of a more systemic governing issue that needs to be addressed before I can move forward with civic organizing: The problem with time relates to the fact that the Board and project funding sources sees success as 'projects on the ground'. The time and process it takes for organizing relationships related to administering project grants, supervising staff, building long term sustainable partnerships with community members, is not understood so therefore not seen as necessary to achieve success. My administrative and managing function is the natural place for making a case for civic organizing but if these core functions are not recognized as significant, there is a disconnect between Board understanding and support for civic organizing. Without Board support based upon their understanding and role for themselves and staff, I cannot move forward contributing to a Civic Governance Model for staff development-(Our 2016 Focus for Organizing)*

*Next steps is to take time to make this case to my Board. Susan Shaw and Deanna Pomije.*

## **Jurisdiction**

Members found that it takes time for them to figure out what is expected in a civic organizing approach and then to determine where they would have the best chance at testing it. The Individual Work Plan provides that flexibility. However, starting in the place where we have the greatest authority needs to be the first consideration. However, without civic organizing being anchored within institutional governance, the resources to sustain and expand the model can not be leveraged.

**d. Evidence of capacity to expand the model.** (See potential pilot expansions and next steps)

## GAPS:

- We have evidence that most current members in existing civic organizing agencies own and can articulate the purpose for Civic Governance. Those members need to produce evidence they can organize their key stakeholders to Civic Governance. **In process.** Key update at each civic organizing agency meeting. Progress is being tracked.
- Need to test capacity for existing civic organizing agencies members to expand through the educational track we have developed. **In process.**
  - Members have been introduced to the criteria for an integrated educational track with the primary track being membership in a civic organizing agency, 1-1 work with key stakeholders, and introducing civic organizing practice within Individual Work Plans.
  - The 2 potential expansions were recruited through an Introduction to Civic Governance track led by Lynne Kolze and are now in a Civic Organizing 101 track led by Peg Michels to determine if they will move forward as a civic organizing agency.
  - The December endpoint evaluation process will determine who will be moving forward and during the 2017 strategic planning process, members will determine the educational strategies and timeline needed to support expansion of their civic organizing agencies.
- Lead organizing and budget for 2017 grounded in institutional partnerships. **In process.**
  - A key criteria for membership in a civic organizing agency is to contribute to a dues paying base to ensure autonomy, sustainability in each stage of civic organizing.
  - In 2011, the following fiscal policy was established and has been adhered to: Dollars raised to support one civic organizing agency contributes to organizing the whole demonstration. This policy supported practice to date.
  - Additional fiscal policies being proposed:
    - Dues policy is institutionally based. Individuals can be sponsored or can contribute whatever they can but primary goal is institutional commitment. Amount of dues are negotiated based upon each situation. Members will decide what is a just range.
    - Dues include governing obligation. Governance occurs within and across Civic Governance and MACI. Dues include participation in the MACI Institute.
    - The 7,500 dues needed to become a MACI governing demonstration would be taken out of the whole budget as first fiscal obligation. After that obligation is met, COI can negotiate developmental costs for each civic organizing agency based upon each situation.
    - Costs for developing a civic organizing agency: 5,000-10,000 based upon circumstances. This includes supporting educational tracks in alignment with COI/MACI Integrated Educational Track.
- Achieving governing status within MACI based upon criteria for Stage 1. See above and Appendix A for Lead Organizer summary of outcomes against criteria.