

# Town Fair



# Save the Date for the Next Town Fair!

## Wednesday, October 7, 2026

**DoubleTree by Hilton, South Burlington\***

*\*Note: Due to construction at the Killington Grand Hotel, Town Fair will return to South Burlington in 2026.*

**Please see below for last year's session titles and presentation details.**

### **Town Fair 2025 - Sessions + Presentations**

## **Keynote Address: Strategies and Skills for Bridging Political and Cultural Divides**

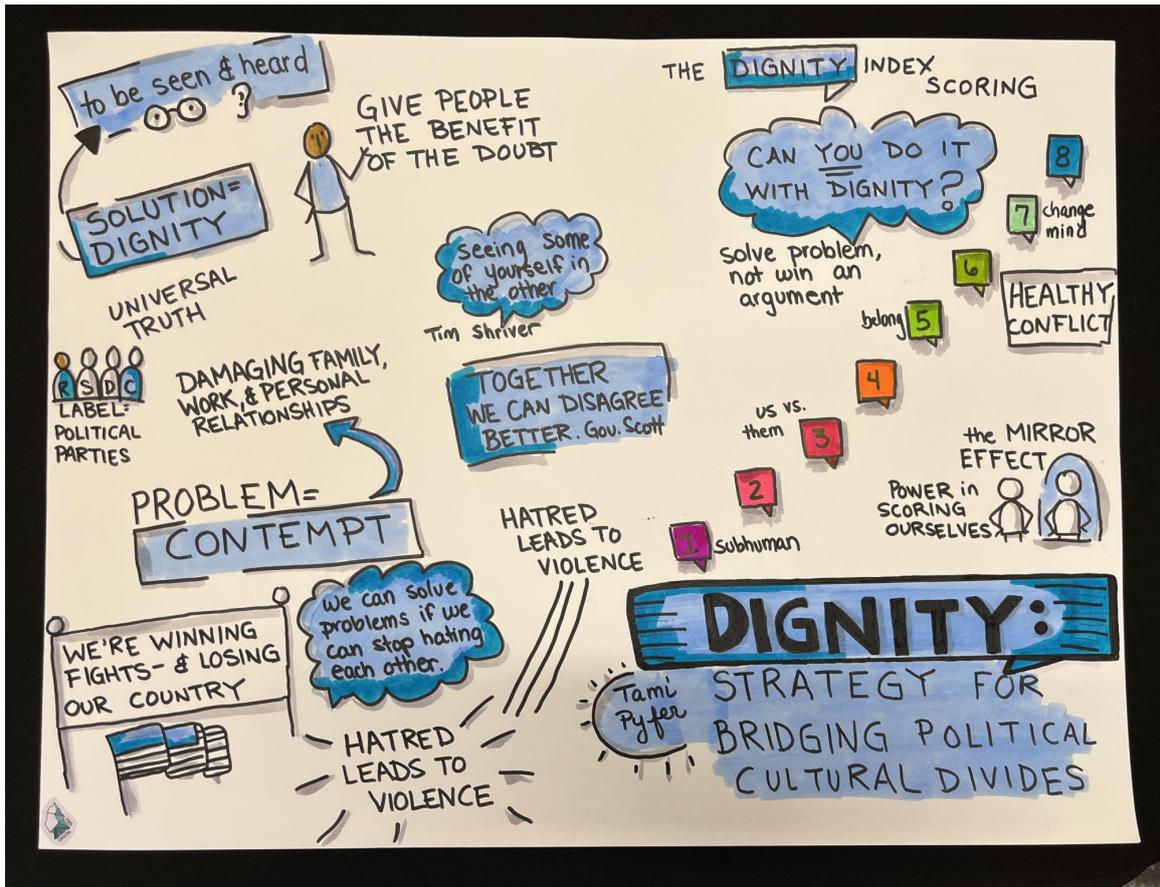
**Speaker:** Tami Pyfer, Co-Creator of The Dignity Index and Chief External Affairs Officer at UNITE

As tensions rise across the country, local government leaders are increasingly on the front lines of navigating political and cultural divides. In this timely and inspiring keynote, Tami Pyfer – former city council member, state school board member, and senior advisor to Utah's governor – will share how dignity can be a powerful tool to help leaders ease divisions and solve problems in our communities and our country.



With insight and deep experience in both policy and community leadership, Tami will explore how embracing dignity in our discourse can help build communities that are stronger, more connected, and more resilient.

*This presentation was not recorded and presentation slides are not available. However, Mellisa Cain from Iceberg Consulting created this graphic during the Keynote Address.*



## Concurrent Sessions

### The Dignity Index Interactive Workshop



An extension of the keynote address, this hands-on workshop is an excellent way to learn more about The Dignity Index and to practice using it to improve how you communicate. **(Part of the Selectboards Track)**

Speaker: Tami Pyfer, Co-Creator of The Dignity Index and Chief External Affairs Officer at UNITE

## **Capital Planning: Your Path to Long-Term Improvements**

### **[Download Presentation Slides](#)**

Are crumbling asphalt, unreliable vehicles, or tired buildings overwhelming you and your legislative bodies? Take some tips from finance experts: make a plan, follow the plan, and start small. Most Vermont cities and towns have informal capital plans – but a *formal* planning process, combined with discipline around following that plan, could improve your ability to get things done. Join the Vermont Bond Bank and VLCT to learn about resources available to help your community do capital planning right. **(Part of the Managers and Administrators Track)**

Speakers: Michael Gaughan, Executive Director, Vermont Bond Bank; Marguerite Ladd, Municipal Finance Specialist, Vermont League of Cities and Towns

## **Building a Municipal Road Crew: Tips to Recruit and Retain**

### **Talent**

### **[Download Presentation Slides](#)**



A good road crew is hard to find, and long-term vacancies are operationally frustrating and costly. This session will focus on how to set your town up for hiring success, including tips from members who have had success in highway hiring. This will include a live tour of VLCT's new hiring resources, including the [Highway/DPW Hiring Guide](#) and the [Vermont Town Careers website](#). **(Part of the Roads and Public Works Track)**

Speakers: Kathleen Ramsay, Municipal Operations Specialist, Vermont League of Cities and Towns; Elena Esteban, Director of Communications, Vermont League of Cities and Towns; Julie McKenzie, Assistant General Counsel, PACIF, HR and Employment, Vermont League of Cities and Towns

## **Breaking the Busy Barrier**

### **[Download Presentation Slides](#)**

This workshop will look at how to break out of the "crazy busy" culture. We'll unpack the language and mindset of our too-busy world, then explore strategies to help grow capacity and resilience so you can handle the many demands you face – without succumbing to stress and burnout. You'll leave able to work (and lead) in a way that is healthy, steady, and productive. **(Part of the Listers and Assessors Track)**

Speaker: Porter Knight, Principal, Productivity Vermont

## **Tips and Tricks for Collection and Remittance of Education Property Taxes**



### [Download Presentation Slides](#)

Vermont cities and towns are responsible for collection of both school and municipal taxes which must be done in accordance with a long list of state laws, rules, and processes. Seasoned Maidstone Town Treasurer Bob Champagne-Willis will discuss how to work with the education fund's cash flow statements, offer a refresher on important deadlines and remittance dates, and provide attendees with a few key tricks of the trade. **(Part of the Town Clerks and Treasurers Track)**

Speaker: Bob Champagne-Willis, Maidstone Town Treasurer

## **Should Your Town Office Be Using AI?**

### [Download Presentation Slides](#)

Vermont municipal officials are using artificial intelligence (AI) in both their personal and professional lives. Now available as personal assistants, note takers, graphic designers, and more, AI has likely already reached even our smallest members. Cassandra Madison of the Center for Public Sector AI provides government leaders with the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to responsibly explore AI and other emerging technologies. Join her for a discussion about expanding AI in your town office. **(Part of the Selectboards Track)**

Speaker: Cassandra Madison, Launch COO, Center for Public Sector AI  
(Invited)



## How to Comply with Public Records Requests Legally and Efficiently

The number of Public Records Act requests seems to be increasing exponentially. Attend this session to better understand how to comply with the law and to hear ideas being debated for ensuring transparency while fulfilling a high volume of requests. **(Part of the Managers and Administrators Track)**

Facilitator: Josh Hanford, Director Intergovernmental Relations, Vermont League of Cities and Towns **or** Samantha Sheehan, Municipal Policy and Advocacy Specialist, Vermont League of Cities and Towns

Panelists: Carl Andeer, Staff Attorney II, Vermont League of Cities and Towns; Lisa Hango, Representative (Franklin-5), Vice Chair of House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, Vermont General Assembly; Lauren Hibbert, Deputy Secretary of State, State of Vermont; and Sarah Buxton, Town of Mendon Selectboard, Attorney and Former Legislator

## Improve Your Roads' Resiliency

### [Download Presentation Slides](#)

Making your roadways more resilient can save your municipality money, improve safety, and reduce disruption. This workshop will help you understand roadway rigidity, how to conduct risk assessments and identify vulnerabilities, and how to enhance roadway resilience. **(Part of the Roads and Public Works Track)**



Speaker: Todd Eaton, Branch Manager, Vermont Local Roads Program,  
Vermont Agency of Transportation

## **Verbal De-Escalation**

Part 1: Download Presentation Slides

Part 2: [Download Presentation Slides](#)

Join us for dinner October 7 to hear part 1 of this training. During the second session, there will be a brief review of session one. After the review, specific communication skills will be presented as well as methods for improving staff communication around and during a crisis. The remaining time will be used to practice some of the skills presented from both sessions.

Speaker: Mourning Fox, Caldera Associates, LLC

## **Municipal Bonds: Best Practices to Get Voter Approval**

[Download Presentation Slides](#)

[Download Handout](#)

When a municipality needs financing for large-scale infrastructure projects, its voters must approve a bond (or other debt tool) at an annual or special town meeting. Preparation for such a vote is a complicated process with many legal requirements often coordinated between the town clerk and municipal bond attorney. This session will review best practices to stay on track and not miss any important steps ahead of and beyond the voter authorization. **(Part of the**



## **Clerks and Treasurers Track)**

Speakers: Elijah Emerson, Esq., Vice President; Primmer, Piper, Eggleston & Cramer PC; Corinn Julow, Town Clerk and Selectboard Executive Assistant, North Hero Town

## **Heard Around the Garage: A Facilitated Discussion of Municipal Transportation Challenges and Solutions**

### **[Download Presentation Slides](#)**

Join fellow road crew and public works staff to discuss the issues facing your municipality. This session is designed to give you time to talk with your peers, share your challenges, and explore various solutions. **(Part of the Roads and Public Works Track)**

Facilitator: Brittney Kohler, Transportation and Infrastructure Policy Lead, National League of Cities

## **Vermont's Ethics Law: Overview and New VLCT Conflict of Interest Decision Tree**

### **[Download Presentation Slides](#)**

Act 171 of 2024 created a significant shift in the ethical regulatory framework for municipalities by removing municipal authority to enact conflict of interest prohibitions specific to their communities and instituting a new statewide



Municipal Code of Ethics. The State Ethics Commission, which is responsible for advising and training municipal officials on these changes, suspended their municipal services earlier in the year. To help our members, VLCT's Municipal Assistance Center has developed a Conflict of Interest Decision Tree that municipal officials can use to guide themselves through the complicated analysis of determining whether they have a conflict of interest and, if they do, what to do about it.

This session will provide attendees with an overview of the new state ethics law and walk them through how to use VLCT's decision tree tool. **(Part of the Clerks and Treasurers Track)**

Facilitator: Garrett Baxter, Senior Staff Attorney, Vermont League of Cities & Towns

