

TAWAS CITY TRAINING STRATEGY

WHY TRAINING?

“In this era of unprecedented change, citizens expect more of their elected officials. The public expects responsiveness and accountability at all levels of government. What better place to start than at the local level, where citizens can directly experience the difference that good decision-making and ethical standards can make in a community?”

Local government is more important than ever before. People who are elected today must demonstrate their professionalism and integrity. As a leader in your municipality, you should place importance on continual training and updating your knowledge, as well as emphasizing the development of the knowledge and skills of employees.

As an elected official, mindful of the liability exposures to your municipality, you should be aware of established case law and its relevance to your municipality.”

Source: [Training of Municipal Officials](#)

WHO IS TRAINING FOR?

- City Council
- Planning Commission
- Downtown Development Authority
- Zoning Board of Appeals

Specifically, this best practice encourages communities to adopt a more strategic approach to training to ward off fatigue, apathy, and general time constraints that can hinder delivery of necessary training for board members to stay up to date on the information needed to make informed decisions.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

It is the expectation of the City of Tawas City to promote and encourage the continuing education of all its board members. By doing so, it will help make each member more knowledgeable about the roles they serve and be better prepared to carry out the City’s goals and objectives. The City believes this continued training is essential in giving board members the tools and knowledge to better carry out their duties. To help board members meet this goal, the following expectations are put into place.

- Each appointed and elected member of the City should attempt to complete two (2) hours of training per fiscal year.

- Each appointed or elected member should make every attempt to follow the requirements of training as indicated in the bylaws.
- At least one (1) training activity a Board Member undertakes should be related to one (1) of the Priority Training Areas listed in this policy guide.

METHODS OF TRAINING

There are plenty of methods of trainings that can be offered to appointed and elected officials. Methods now go beyond the traditional means and can be offered in a variety of environments. The City encourages board members to be proactive in seeking ways to improve their knowledge, skillsets, and experience for positions they hold. The following is a list of training methods that can be used:

- Webinars
- Conferences
- Joint training opportunities with other boards
- Podcasts
- Articles
- Community Visits

IMPLEMENTATION

At the end of each meeting, board members are encouraged to talk about training opportunities and discuss goals for the fiscal year. Members are also encouraged to attend trainings and report those attended to the appropriate staff member.

PRIORITY TRAINING AREAS

The following topics are considered priorities for additional board member training.

- Master Plans/Comprehensive Plans
- Pedestrian/Non-Motorized Traffic
- Placemaking
- Downtown Development
- Affordable Housing
- Infill Housing
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Zoning
- Equitable Development
- Small Businesses
- Development Financials

Training should also be prioritized based on the strategic goals of Tawas City as defined in the City's Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Plan, and DDA Plan.

RESOURCES

There are numerous resources and partners available for our board members. Examples include:

MSU Extension
Michigan Association of Planning
Develop Iosco
Tawas Area Chamber of Commerce

FUNDING

All board members will be reimbursed for the cost of approved training and other reasonable expenses (travel, food, lodging, etc.) related to approved training. This funding is included as part of the City's annual budget. In addition to direct funding by the City, several Michigan organizations offer scholarships to help with the cost of training. These include:

- John Barr Leadership Education Scholarship (MML Foundation) – Offers a one-time scholarship to active MML members of up to \$1,000 for training that provides local elected and appointed officials the knowledge and skills they need to lead and govern their communities. The training may not be partisan.
- Tim Doyle Scholarship Fund (MML Foundation) – The Tim Doyle Scholarship Fund helps provide access to the most critical information for newly elected officials through the Elected Officials Academy (EOA) Core Weekender seminar. There they can learn about finance management, leadership skills, legal issues, and planning and zoning.
- Elected and Appointed Officials Scholarship Program (Michigan Association of Planning) – The purpose of this scholarship is to provide training to members of the Michigan Association of Planning who serve in an appointed or elected capacity. The training provided is geared toward elected officials, planning commissioners, or zoning board of appeals members and support staff.
- Depending on the training, the City's insurance carrier may cover the cost of trainings that minimize litigation impact.

REPORTING

As the variety of available training opportunities is vast, it is important that each board member shares the knowledge gained from these sessions. To help facilitate this, all board members shall present a summary of any session, course, or approved activity that they completed, including what was learned and how it might be applicable to Tawas City in the future. Time for this sharing shall be done as follows.

- For the City Council , this will be done during the Council Reports agenda item at the first meeting after the activity.
- For the Planning Commission, this will be done during the Commissioners Comments agenda item at the first meeting after the activity.
- For all other boards, a separate agenda item will be added at the next meeting following the training session to allow commissioners to give their report. Board members shall coordinate these activities with City Staff or board liaison to ensure meeting time is allotted for this report.

TRAINING STRATEGY REVIEW

To ensure Tawas City stays on top of current trends and training best practices, the Planning Staff will review this plan every two (2) years and update it as necessary.