



CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

PAUL M. ZIEHLER
City Administrative Officer
Clerk/Treasurer

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March 1, 2013

The Honorable Mayor Dan Devine
and Members of the Common Council
7525 West Greenfield Avenue
West Allis WI 53214

Subject: Communication from City Administrative Officer requesting a \$1,000.00
Contribution to the Public Policy Forum regarding its 100th Anniversary Celebration

Dear Mayor Devine and Common Council Members:

This letter is to request your approval to make a \$1,000.00 contribution to the Public Policy Forum regarding its 100th Anniversary Celebration. This year is the Public Policy Forum's 100th Anniversary and many events are planned for 2013, including its 100th Anniversary Gala Dinner on May 9. If approved, this money can be taken out of our \$10,000 General Expense budget for special studies.

The City of West Allis has been a member of the Public Policy Forum for many years, and over the years, some City individuals and projects have been recognized for our accomplishments. The Public Policy Forum has been an important organization in the greater Milwaukee area in conducting public policy research and providing suggestions for the improvement and more efficient operation of local government. Some of its recommendations have been ideas that are directly or indirectly applicable to our efforts to continue to make West Allis more streamlined and have cost effective operations.

Attached is some information from the Public Policy Forum about this year's 100th anniversary celebrations, some Milwaukee Journal Sentinel articles about the Forum, and the Public Policy Forum's suggested anniversary gift categories. Although the sponsorship gift categories show a minimum of \$2,500, an additional \$1,000 gift category also exists which includes two tickets to the May 9 Gala event. The value of the two tickets is \$500 (\$250 each).

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, or need further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul M. Ziebler".

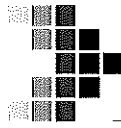
Paul M. Ziebler,
City Administrative Officer
Clerk/Treasurer

PMZ:jfw

Attachment

cc: Rob Henken

ADM\ORDRES\MCC.PPF Anniv



Public Policy Forum

Impartial research. Informed debate.

January 17, 2013

Mr. Paul Ziehler
City Administrative Officer
City of West Allis
7525 W. Greenfield Avenue
West Allis, WI 53214

Dear Paul:

As you know, the Public Policy Forum's 100th anniversary celebration is off to an outstanding start. The impressive media coverage we recently received in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (see the attached reprints in case you missed it) and our well-attended annual meeting have successfully launched a year's worth of activities that are designed to elevate our profile and enhance our financial sustainability.

You and your organization have been staunch supporters of our efforts and major contributors to our success. Consequently, we wanted to reach out to you to determine your interest in participating in our Gala Dinner and other anniversary activities that will take place during the remainder of 2013.

The 100th Anniversary Gala Dinner will be held on May 9, 2013, at the We Energies auditorium on Michigan Street in Downtown Milwaukee. The dinner will feature national columnists David Brooks and E.J. Dionne, who will participate in a moderated discussion on national policy issues. We also will use the dinner as an opportunity to honor our most generous and longstanding supporters. A save-the-date notice is enclosed.

Other special events will include a pair of special Viewpoint luncheons on Wisconsin Act 10 in March that we will jointly host with the Milwaukee Rotary Club, which also is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year; a unique Salute to Local Government luncheon in June that will honor several individuals for lifetime achievement in public service; and a series of informative forums with governmental researchers from across the country who will be in Milwaukee when we host the annual Governmental Research Association conference in July.

Capacity at the Gala Dinner is limited to 300 people. Tickets will go on sale to our general membership and friends in late February, but before that time we wanted to offer you a special opportunity to participate. You have two options to do so:

1. Your organization can participate as a 100th anniversary sponsor, which will entitle you to **premier seats at the Gala Dinner (the number of seats is determined by sponsorship category) plus various forms of recognition at the dinner, at other activities throughout the anniversary year, and in printed and online materials. Details on sponsorship categories and benefits are enclosed.**



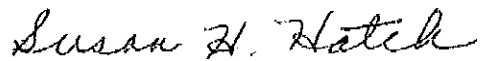
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Mr. Paul Ziehler
January 17, 2013
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2. If you are unable to commit to a sponsorship, you can purchase up to two individual tickets to the Gala Dinner at a price of \$250 per ticket.

Rob Henken will contact you in the near future to discuss this opportunity to be a major participant in the Forum's 100th anniversary celebration, or you may contact Rob first at 276-8240 or rhenken@publicpolicyforum.org. Thank you for your consideration and for your support of the Public Policy Forum.

Sincerely,



Susan H. Hatch
Chairman, Board of Trustees

ELIZABETH BRENNER, *Publisher* MARTIN KAISER, *Editor*

DAVID D. HAYNES, *Editorial Page Editor* ERNST-URICH FRANZES, *Associate Editorial Page Editor*

TODAY'S TOPIC: PUBLIC POLICY FORUM

A century of research that makes government better

We salute an organization that for 100 years has provided the raw materials to build a more efficient government.

Facts are stubborn things, it has long been said. And it's just that notion — that facts matter — that has propelled one of Milwaukee's most productive institutions through 100 years of community service.

The Public Policy Forum was founded in 1913 by some of the city's industrial giants, including Charles Allis, the first president of Allis-Chalmers Co., and August H. Vogel, a top executive at Pfister & Vogel Leather Co. These civic-minded leaders decided that Milwaukee needed an organization to help local government become more efficient.

OUR VIEW

Their answer: the Milwaukee Citizens' Bureau of Municipal Efficiency.

As Jeff Bentoff, who wrote a book detailing the Forum's history, notes elsewhere in *Crossroads* today, the establishment of the bureau was an outgrowth of a national movement with roots in the city's Socialist leanings. The Socialists had established a city-run agency a couple of years before that had fallen victim to politics.

From those early beginnings, the organization that eventually came to be called the Forum went to work. It can take credit for such things as modern budgeting practices, the county executive position, the county operation of the parks and the airport, the widespread use of voting machines, the merger of city and county sewerage commissions, creation of the federated library system — and many more worthy ideas.

The Forum's first executive, Thomas L. Hinkley, once noted: "It's not guess work. It is simply the study of facts, the correlation of facts, comparison of facts and presentation of the results of such a study of facts."

Rob Henken, the current president, puts it this way: "We see ourselves as professional researchers and not as partisans and not as politicians."

"When they take a position, they back it up," said Rocky Marcoux, commissioner of the Department of City Development. "I like the fact that they don't take sides. They put the issues out there and set the tone for a good public discussion."

The Forum's exhaustive reports offer clear-eyed analysis. One recent example: After looking into the five-year fiscal forecast for Milwaukee Public Schools, the Forum turned up a surprising finding — that while MPS faces a projected \$41 million deficit in 2017, it's actually in a bit better shape than the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County.

Or take a November 2011 report on economic development programs. It argued persuasively for "assembling the parts" for promoting job growth in the region under the umbrella of a comprehensive strategic economic development plan.

Under Henken's watchful eye, the Fo-

rum has returned to its roots. With governments facing increasing budget stress, it once again focuses on thorough examination of budgets. This renewed focus on the nitty-gritty details of government at work is perfectly in the spirit of its longest-serving chief: Norman N. Gill.

Gill was legendary in government circles. He served in his post at the Forum from 1945 until his retirement in 1984. In his book on the Forum, "Just the Facts: The 100-Year History of Milwaukee's Public Policy Forum," Bentoff quoted a Milwaukee Sentinel article on Gill:

"State representatives miss meetings and so do county supervisors and aldermen, but Gill, like the agenda, always seems to be there. He is an important part of the roll call of local government."

Gill didn't like the term "watchdog." Too negative, he thought. He saw the Forum as a partner to government, but a partner that wasn't afraid to suggest better ways to do things. And keep suggesting them.

Henken sees it much the same way. He's used, instead, the term, "Seeing eye dog," meaning that the idea is to guide government with facts. There's that word again.

We salute the Public Policy Forum for its nonpartisan, rigorously independent and rigorously fair and thoughtful work. Governments throughout the region are better for it. Facts are stubborn things, indeed, and we'll rely on the Forum to keep providing them in abundance.

♦ ♦ ♦

LOCAL

Public Policy Forum celebrates 100 years

Milwaukee think tank marks anniversary with 'Just the Facts' book

By JAN UEBELHERR
juebelherr@journal-sentinel.com

School choice, boiler inspection services, lakefront ownership, the fiscal health of the Milwaukee Public Schools, shared fire protection services — the Public Policy Forum has methodically tackled them all

in its 100-year history. They've attended a lot of public meetings, too.

Always with an eye on government efficiency, its reports may be dense and "somewhat wonkish," forum President Rob Henken acknowledges. But he believes Milwaukeeans see it as an organization "that is dedicated to promoting more efficient government and doesn't have an ideological fish to fry."

That part about the fish is a key to being heard in a sometimes fren-

zied, politically polarized time, he said.

The bureau prides itself on being independent and nonpartisan. It issues 18 to 20 reports each year, and has produced more than 1,000 studies on a range of issues over the years. It marks its centennial with a look back in new book, "Just the Facts: The 100-Year History of Milwaukee's Public Policy Forum."

That wonkish reputation is fine by Henken.

"What we feel we are successful

in doing is trying to take the emotion out of the issue and saying, 'Here's a set of facts. Here's a trend analysis,'" he said. "We're very subtle at times. That's a strength and a weakness. We're not out there joining the many voices that are yelling and screaming and calling names."

Please see **THINK TANK, 3B**

► **More coverage:** Editorial and related coverage in today's Crossroads.

From page 1

THINK TANK

For a century, forum sticks with facts

That can make it a bit easier to be heard. "I do think there's a certain receptivity among public sector leaders and even the general public for a calm, rational fact-based voice of reason."

He added, "People may not agree with everything we say, but few would say there's an ideological bias."

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett quipped, "I agree with them every single time they're right."

Over the years, he said he's had a solid relationship with the bureau. "I view them as an honest broker," Barrett said. "When it is operating at its best, it is a very, very important honest broker."

In these politically polarized times, the bureau's voice is more relevant than ever, he said. "I think it has credibil-

ity with many factions in the community," Barrett said.

That voice began as the Milwaukee Citizens' Bureau of Municipal Efficiency in November 1913. It was born of the "efficiency bureau" movement, aimed at helping local governments improve the way they operate.

Milwaukee's efficiency bureau could also trace its lineage to the city's Socialist politicians, who three years earlier had created a similar, city-run group aimed at cleaning up and improving government, according to the centennial book.

While the Socialist bureau was productive, it was shut down in 1912, when a non-Socialist mayor was elected. Business leaders who liked the idea didn't waste time in recreating it as an independent entity. They gathered on a chilly November morning for the first meeting of the new bureau. The men at the table had names that are familiar even now: August H. Vogel of the Pfister & Vogel Leather Co. was president of the group; Charles Allis, president of Allis-Chalmers Co., was vice president. It had an annual budget of \$10,000, funded by 20 "subscribers"

who paid \$500 each. Today, its annual budget is about \$750,000.

The bureau would change names three times — the first change aimed at eliminating the "efficiency" moniker, which staffers chafed at. The group had been nicknamed "the efficiency boys."

Milwaukee's bureau has survived while many others across the country have either closed up shop or become affiliated with universities for the sake of funding, Henken said.

With such affiliations, "it's hard to maintain the same reputation for independence and impartiality," Henken said. Not so for the Milwaukee bureau.

Funding comes from a variety of sources — about a quarter from membership revenue, another 40% in grants from local foundations. "It's very splintered. Nobody can point to a small group of entities that are funding our research," he said.

Civic and business leaders here have a history of backing the bureau, he added.

A big reason for that was Norman Gill, who led the bureau from 1945 to 1984. A fixture at meetings of all kinds,

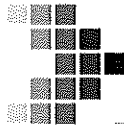
he fostered relationships that provided funding to keep the bureau going, Henken said.

Gill, a Washington High School graduate, seemed to personify the bureau's dedication to the quiet study of policy in the public interest. In his first report to the board, he called such bureaus "as American as apple pie and baked beans."

While Henken believes people need to read an entire report to fully grasp its nuances, he realizes in a sound-bite world, that's unlikely. Bureau staffers summarize their work at the "Milwaukee Talkie" blog in the bureau website, publicpolicyforum.org.

"We can boil down our 84-page MPS report and hopefully get the essence of it," Henken said. "But it's still longer than a tweet or a sound bite. It's something that we work hard on. That said, we are a think tank . . ."

Looking to the future, Henken said, "Somewhat ironically, I think the need for an independent, nonpartisan policy analysis is greater than ever because of the increasing partisanship that we're seeing at all levels of government."



Public Policy Forum

Impartial research. Informed debate.

Public Policy Forum 100th Anniversary Gift Categories

Pillar of Public Policy - \$100,000 or more

Recognition and Benefits include:

- Award to be designed by local artist and presented at May 2013 Gala Dinner.
- Two tickets to attend VIP Reception and photo opportunity at Gala Dinner.
- Premium table for 10 at the Gala Dinner with one guest invited to sit at head table.
- Recognition, complimentary admission for two, and premium seating at all other Forum events related to the Anniversary.
- Story highlighting each Pillar in a 2012 or 2013 quarterly newsletter and on the website.
- Citation in Forum publications released in 2013.
- Recognition as a Pillar of Public Policy in the Annual Reports for 2012 and 2013.
- Prominent recognition in the 100th Anniversary Gala Dinner program book and all Gala-related publicity.
- Mention as part of media sponsorships associated with 100th Anniversary.

Guardian of Good Government - \$50,000

Recognition and Benefits include:

- Introduction and a premium table for 10 at the Gala Dinner in May 2013.
- Two tickets to attend VIP Reception and photo opportunity at Gala Dinner.
- Recognition, complimentary admission for two, and premium seating at all other Forum events related to the Anniversary.
- Recognition as a Guardian of Good Government in the Annual Reports for 2012 and 2013 and citation on website.
- Citation in Forum publications released in 2013.
- Recognition in the 100th Anniversary Gala Dinner program book and all Gala-related publicity.

Sentinel of Civil Conduct - \$25,000

Recognition and Benefits include:

- Recognition and a premium table for 10 at the Gala Dinner in May 2013.
- One ticket to attend VIP Reception and photo opportunity at Gala Dinner.
- Recognition, complimentary admission for one, and premium seating at all other Forum events related to the Anniversary.
- Recognition as a Sentinel of Civil Conduct in the Annual Reports for 2012 and 2013 and citation on website.
- Citation in all Forum publications released in 2013.
- Recognition in the 100th Anniversary Gala Dinner program book and all Gala-related publicity.

100th Anniversary Gala Platinum Sponsor - \$10,000

Recognition and Benefits include:

- Recognition and six premium seats at the Gala Dinner in May 2013.
- Recognition, complimentary admission for one, and premium seating at all other Forum events related to the Anniversary.
- Recognition as a Gala Platinum Sponsor in the Annual Reports for 2012 and 2013 and citation on website.
- Recognition in the 100th Anniversary Gala Dinner program book and all Gala-related publicity.

100th Anniversary Gala Gold Sponsor - \$5,000

Recognition and Benefits include:

- Recognition and four premium seats at the Gala Dinner in May 2013.
- Recognition as a Gala Gold Sponsor in the Annual Reports for 2012 and 2013, citation on website, and recognition at other 100th Anniversary events.
- Recognition in the 100th Anniversary Gala Dinner program book and all Gala-related publicity.

100th Anniversary Gala Silver Sponsor - \$2,500

Recognition and Benefits include:

- Recognition and two premium seats at the Gala Dinner in May 2013.
- Recognition as a Gala Silver Sponsor in the Annual Reports for 2012 and 2013, citation on website, and recognition at other 100th Anniversary events.
- Recognition in the 100th Anniversary Gala Dinner program book and all Gala-related publicity.