

Who is the Municipal Attorney?

By Gregory Stremers



Municipal attorneys provide a guiding hand and apply legal principles for the health, safety, and welfare of our communities. We:

- Are ethical and principled.
- Are versed in constitutions, charters, home rule, and other state statutes that provide structure for self-governance.
- Provide apolitical guidance.
- Assist those who provide essential public services—water, public safety, housing, and schools.
- Advise at board meetings, facilitating reasoned public decisions by elected officials and a greater public understanding and appreciation of the decisions.
- Review applications, codes, and site plans for orderly zoning and land use.
- Provide direction for open government and accessing public records.
- Participate in court proceedings to ensure responsibilities and liabilities are not compromised.

Members of the State Bar of Michigan Government Law Section provide practical and sound advice and guidance to municipal attorneys through listserv posts. In precedential cases, the section procures amicus briefs, which are available to all through our section web page at <https://connect.michbar.org/govlaw/home>. Our section's quarterly publication, *Briefly*, covers current topics in municipal law. Annually, we plan two

educational seminars: our winter seminar in February and our joint Government Law and Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys summer seminar in June. Topics include economic development, code enforcement, and many other areas of interest to municipal attorneys.

As demonstrated by the articles in this issue of the *Michigan Bar Journal*, municipal law practice encompasses multiple areas of law and is constantly changing. We're grateful for the opportunity to highlight a few of the challenging areas of our practice.

As chair of the Government Law Section and on behalf of the board of directors, I want to express our many thanks for your continued support of our section. We sincerely appreciate the professionalism, camaraderie, and commitment of our more than 800 members, and invite you—whether you're a municipal attorney, an appointed or elected board or committee member, or just interested in government—to join us. We need the next generation of municipal attorneys to accept the mission of advising our local government leaders. ■



Gregory Stremers is chair of the SBM Government Law Section and a partner with Touma, Watson, Whaling, Coury, Stremers & Thomas in Port Huron. He represents more than two dozen local governments in the Thumb and Bluewater area.