

2021 WCA Virtual Legislative Exchange Legal Updates

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Attorney Andy Phillips



How has the Role of County Government Changed in the Last 12 Months?

(A Legal Perspective)



The Business of County Government Must Go On!

Continuity of Governance

- Meetings occurred in a virtual environment
- Counties confronted the challenge of providing a forum for public attendance and participation in a virtual environment.
- Are virtual meetings here to stay?
- Neither Chapter 19 of the Statutes nor the Attorney General have all of the answers (through no fault of the Attorney General.)



Takeaway Number 1

Is now the time to start thinking about your county's board rules in relation to meeting procedures?

- Can members of the county board attend meetings virtually?
- Will the public be allowed to attend virtually?
- How do we deal with closed session in a virtual environment?



The Role of Local Health Officers and Departments

- Did anybody see this coming? (If so, I'd like to spend some time in Vegas with that person!)
- What have we learned about our role in public health?
- Counties were forced into a position of coordinating the education campaign AND potentially being the front-line regulator.
- Chapter 252 of the Statutes did not provide a clear roadmap.



Takeaway Number 2

Is now the time to start thinking about your local health ordinances?

- The role of the health officer
- The role of the health department
- The enforceability mechanism



Emergencies Do Not Wait for Politics

- The State's response to the pandemic was... well... underwhelming.
- Counties did not have a choice when it came to responding – we went to work!
- Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic is not the last emergency situation that will confront counties.
- Chapter 323 of the Statutes can be complicating when dealing with state and county authority.



Takeaway Number 3

Is now the time to start thinking about your emergency response ordinances?

- Have we established appropriate chain of command in a time of emergency?
- Who, from a governance standpoint, is in charge and what is he/she in charge of in a state of emergency?



**Thank You For the
Opportunity to Be of
Service!**



Questions?

