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Collaborative Governance Council

~ Nine-member council created to increase collaboration in government ~

By Rebecca Otto, State Auditor

This past legislative session, the Collaborative Governance Council was created in a bipartisan effort and signed by the Governor. The Council will bring together key representatives from local governments to develop recommendations for increasing government collaboration, cooperation and innovation at all levels. The only way the bill survived this last session was that there will be no per diems, and no paid staff.

The legislation requires that the State Auditor Chair the meetings. The Office of the State Auditor, which publishes Best Practices Reviews for delivery of local government services, is holding the Council's first meeting in July of this year.

The Makeup of the Council

The Council will bring together key stakeholders from local governments, including cities, counties, towns, and school districts, and from three major unions that represent local government employees. The members will be appointed by their respective associations and unions referenced in the statute.

Developing Recommendations

The Council will work to create recommendations to increase government cooperation, innovation, and collaboration at all level for the legislature. The Council work may include:

- The review of statutes, laws and rules that slow or prevent collaborative efforts;
- The use of collaboration to improve the delivery of governmental services;
- The use of technology to connect entities and share information, including broadband access;
- The modernization of financial transactions and their oversight by facilitating financial credit and debit card transactions, electronic fund transfers, and electronic data interchanges; and

- The creation of model forms for joint power agreements.

The final recommendations from the Council may be in the form of a report, but will more likely be recommended legislative changes in the form of a bill. They will be presented to the governor and certain legislative committees by early next year.

The Council will hold regular meetings, which will be open to the public. Meeting notices and materials will be posted on the Office of the State Auditor website at www.auditor.state.mn.us.