

Municipal Law

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Drummond Woodsum has provided practical, cost-effective legal advice to municipalities for more than twenty years. Our attorneys serve as general counsel for towns and cities in Maine and New Hampshire and as special counsel for towns and cities on matters requiring particular expertise such as cable television contract negotiations, environmental law, election law, tax abatements, municipal investment and appellate litigation.

Our municipal law attorneys represent municipalities in state and federal courts, and before state and federal agencies such as the State Property Tax Review Board, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the Board of Tax and Land Appeals and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. We draft zoning and land use ordinances covering a range of topics, including subdivisions, signs, scenic character, wetland resources, beach use, impact fees, sewers and solid waste collection.

Our attorneys and consultants also represent public sector employers in all aspects of employment and labor law, including collective bargaining, grievances, arbitration, litigation, wage-hour disputes, human rights complaints and problem-solving.

Drummond Woodsum believes in the practice of “preventative law.” We provide education to our municipal clients through workshops so as to minimize the chance of successful legal claims against them. Topics are customized to meet local needs and have included land use law for planning boards, appeals boards and code enforcement officers, personal property tax collections, tax abatements, tax increment financing, boardsmanship, and Freedom of Access Act and Right to Know Law compliance.

We understand that municipal officials often must make difficult decisions quickly and in response to public demands, and we take pride in providing advice in a timely and professional manner.

Public Finance

Drummond Woodsum’s public finance law team serves as Bond Counsel and issuer’s counsel on behalf of municipalities, school districts, counties and other governmental entities. The firm is approved as bond counsel by both the Maine Municipal Bond Bank and the New Hampshire Municipal Bond Bank, and is listed in the “Red Book” as recognized bond counsel for Maine and New Hampshire. We have extensive experience with many aspects of public finance law, including public and private offerings of tax exempt bonds, tax credit bonds, TRANS, equipment lease purchasing, energy/air quality project lease purchasing, and post-issuance continuing

disclosure and tax compliance. More generally, we advise our clients on a wide range of financial and business matters, including local budget and bond authorization, tax assessment, state funding, reorganization, employee benefits, public bidding and procurement. We have extensive experience representing the public owner in all aspects of construction projects.

Land Use and Permitting

Our attorneys have vast experience representing both municipalities and private clients in a variety of matters involving land use, zoning and permitting issues. We provide assistance to local municipal boards in their review of permitting applications and also provide representation of private clients before municipal boards and state permitting agencies. We are available to attend land use board meetings and provide guidance on applications, to protect the interest of our municipalities and to avoid potential litigation from applications.

Specialty Practice Areas

We have extensive experience serving municipalities in a variety of other legal service areas, including the following emerging and specialized municipal issues:

- Marijuana regulation, licensing, and moratoria
- Affordable housing development projects
- Major subdivision and development proposals
- Land conservation and environmental issues
- Labor and employment
- Public finance
- Tax increment financing (TIF)
- Municipal litigation
- Law enforcement defense and litigation
- Telecommunications law and utility franchise agreements
- Public meetings and Freedom of Access issues
- Town meetings and elections
- Legislation and government relations
- Negotiating state agency contracts
- Real estate and land use
- Ordinance drafting and enforcement