



Thomas M. Melody

Partner

Chicago

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Overview

Thomas Melody's experience includes the general practice of school and municipal law, with a focus on labor and employment law. He has negotiated many collective bargaining agreements, and represented employers in all facets of labor and employment law, including contract administration and grievance arbitration, compliance with State and Federal labor and employment laws, and employment litigation in both State and Federal courts and administrative agencies.

Tom has a thorough knowledge of all State and federal labor and employment laws and related regulations and case law. He has represented numerous public sector employers in both state and federal courts, as well as before state and federal administrative agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Department of Labor, the Illinois Department of Human Rights, the Illinois Department of Employment Security, the Illinois Labor Relations Board and the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board. He has also handled numerous matters before local Civil Service Commissions and Fire and Police Commissions.

Tom graduated from Loyola University of Chicago in 1988 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. He received his J.D. degree from Loyola University School of Law in 1994. Thomas has been admitted to the Bars of the State of Illinois, the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

Professional Affiliations

- Tom is a member of the Illinois State and Chicago Bar Associations, Illinois Municipal League, IPELRA, NPELRA, the Illinois Local Government Lawyers Association, National Council of School Attorneys and currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Illinois Council of School Attorneys.
- Tom is also certified by the Illinois State Board of Education to provide required School Board leadership training and has provided that training to multiple school districts throughout the state.

Awards and Recognition

- Tom has been named a Leading Lawyer for many years. Leading Lawyer is a peer-recommended distinction awarded to fewer than 5% of attorneys in Illinois.

Publications

- Labor-Management Cooperation in a Fire Department Closure: The Highwood Story – author, Chicago Kent College of Law in the Illinois Public Employee Relations Report Volume 33 Issue 4, Fall 2016
- Answers to FAQs Regarding the Gift Ban Provisions of the State Officials and Employee Ethics Act, co-author, ICSA, June 2014
- Manual on Municipal Forms of Government – co-author, Illinois Municipal League, 2014 Edition
- Illinois Municipal League Manual on Home Rule Versus Non-Home Rule Status (What's Best for your Municipality?) – co-author, 2014 Edition.
- Manual on Police & Fire Disciplinary Matters – co-author, Illinois Municipal League, Revised 2010.
- Formal Dismissal and Suspension Procedures Under Illinois Tenure Law, co-author, IICLE, 2012 Edition of Illinois School Law: Personnel and Student Issues

Tom has written numerous articles on school law, municipal law, employment law and labor issues in addition to those listed above.

Presentations

Chicago Kent Annual Illinois Public Sector Labor Relations Law Conference

- Nuts and Bolts of Contract Negotiation, November 15, 2019
- Mandatory Subjects of Bargaining, November 30, 2018
- Hot Topics in Employee Discipline & Discharge, December 1, 2017

- Consolidation and Other Creative Alternatives to Outsourcing, December 2, 2016
- The Basics of Civil Service, December 4, 2015
- Collateral Proceedings & Ethical Obligations, December 5, 2014
- Consolidation of Governmental Bodies, December 6, 2013

Civil Leadership Academy

- Labor and Management Relations: A Primer for Negotiations, May 28, 2013, and October 23, 2012

DuPage County Regional Office of Education

- Teacher Evaluation and Remediation: Practical Consideration for Principals, October 3, 2014
- Teacher Evaluation and Remediations: Changes in the Law and Practical Considerations for Principals, October 4, 2013, January 11, 2013, January 13, 2011, and January 13, 2010
- School Board Practices and Procedures: A Legal Roadmap, June 11, 2009
- Human Resource Issues for School Districts, November 7, 2008

IASBO/IASB/IASA

- Weathering the Scorn – Public Business & Difficult Citizens, November 17, 2018
- State Mandated New Board Member Training, November 17, 2017
- Collective Bargaining in Uncertain Times, November 19, 2016
- Mock Expulsion Hearing, November 21, 2015
- Employment Discrimination a Refresher and Update, November 22, 2014
- Collective Bargaining for Administrators, June 12, 2009
- Carousel of Panels – When to Call Your Lawyer, November 19, 2022

Illinois Association of Municipal Management Assistants

- Current Trends in Municipal Labor Relations, September 14, 2011

Illinois Council of School Attorneys

- Should We Expect a Union Challenge to PERA Evaluations, November 16, 2012

Illinois Municipal League Annual Conference

- 9-1-1 Dispatch Systems Consolidation, September 23, 2016
- 9-1-1 Dispatch System Consolidation – Roadmap for Regional Consolidations and Legislative Updates, September 19, 2015
- Collective Bargaining: A primer for Negotiations, September 18, 2014
- Skilled-Based Pay and Effective Employee Evaluation, September 17, 2011

- Identifying and Avoiding Conflicts of interest, September 24, 2010, and September 25, 2009
- Conflicts of Interest, September 26, 2008
- Conflicts of Interest, October 19, 2007
- Identifying and Avoiding Conflicts of Interest, September 23, 2005

Illinois Municipal League's Local Government Seminar

- Recent Updates to and Compliance Issues Regarding the Open Meetings Act, the Freedom of Information Act and Ethics, June 9, 2012

Illinois Public Employer Labor Relations Association

- Dealing with the Medicated Worker: Current Issues Involving Medical Marijuana and Anticipated Issues with Recreational Use, October 28, 2019
- Blurred Lines: Off-Duty Conduct & Social Media, October 24, 2017
- Consolidation and Other Creative Alternatives to Outsourcing, December 2, 2016
- Consolidation Considerations for Public Safety Services, October 25, 2016

LaSalle County School Superintendents

- Hiring School Employees, January 24, 2008

Metro Managers Association

- How the Arbitration Process Unfolds in Illinois, April 19, 2012

NIU Center for Governmental Studies

- Performance Appraisals and Hot Topics in Employment Law, March 12, 2015
- Legal Question and Answer for Municipal Officials and Staff, February 7, 2007

South Suburban Association of Chiefs of Police

- Internal Police Investigations, September 27, 2012

South Suburban School Business Officials

- Legal Updates in Illinois School Law, January 10, 2020

WILCO

- Competitive Bidding for Illinois Schools, September 4, 2019

Will County Governmental League

- Fiscal Sustainability: How to Respond to the Fiscal Consequences of a Changing Land Development Environment, 2010

Will County Police Chiefs Annual Conference

- Employee Use of Social Media, October 6, 2016
- Labor Law Update, September 4, 2014

Related Practices

- Municipal Law
- School Law
- Library Law
- Special Districts
- Corporate Law
- Labor and Employment