
MINNESOTA GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

MnGFOA NEWSLETTER

August 2005

Excellence and Leadership in Government Finance

www.mngfoa.org

Message from the President

By Tom Pepper

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

I recall invoking that proverb in the newsletter a year ago when we were cranking up our first survey. The "it" I was referring to was our MnGFOA machinery—our trainings, our gatherings, our information output. A year later, results from two surveys are in, and the question is: Is the MnGFOA machine broke? I think not. Nevertheless, I'm starting to like a variation on the old adage better—a challenge to get out of the box and try something new:

If it ain't broke, break it and make it better.

Former Texas Governor Ann Richards and accountant/futurist Jim Carroll were the keynote speakers at the GFOA Annual Conference in San Antonio. A common thread woven into their presentations was developing the habit of asking, "Why are we doing things this way?" If "that's the way we've always done it" is our first answer, it's time to rethink what we're doing and/or how we're doing it.

Ann and Jim would subscribe to the "break it and make it better" philosophy. Our approach to the surveys was much the same—let's find out how we can make your MnGFOA better.

Just to be clear, we're not going to smash the whole machine. To continue the metaphor, it's more like we're breaking and rebuilding a few components—specifically, first, within our education program. In July, the Executive Committee agreed to move forward on the Membership Services Task Force recommendations to:

- Add quarterly, half-day training sessions to our current educational offerings, with registration at, say, 9:00 and the half-day session beginning at 10:00 to facilitate those who must travel a longer distance. Such a schedule, with a break for lunch, also creates networking opportunities.

- Alternate training session locations between St. Cloud area, North or NW Metro, and South Metro, with easy access for members coming from outside the Metro area.

- Make CPE credits available at all training sessions.

We'll be studying ideas for change in two other areas as well: the frequency and format of the existing monthly luncheons, and education by way of webcasting. We understand the importance of the networking opportunities afforded by the monthly lunches—for both active and associate members. When we roll out the quarterly trainings in 2006, we are not sure yet whether the trainings will supplant the lunch meetings for those months or be in addition to them. If the trainings replace the lunches, a lunch-only option at the trainings may be offered.

A high percentage of survey respondents were interested in webcasting. We will ask our Technology Committee to research this subject over the coming months. Webcasting may have significant costs associated with it, whether MnGFOA invests in the necessary website technology itself or contracts the service out.

If you're interested, survey results are posted at: http://www.zoomerang.com/reports/report_authenticate.cgi?ID=L22CM2FLGDP6. Password is MNGFOA (all caps). Your input is driving the changes and enhancements being proposed. Thanks again to all of you that participated in the surveys!

No, it ain't broke now, but we think some good changes are ahead for the MnGFOA machine. And we are keeping in mind our ultimate objective in this process isn't to break it; it's to make it better.

August Meeting



Date: Wednesday, August 17, 2005
Location: Minneapolis Sheraton 4 Points
Speaker: Alice Seagren, Commissioner,
MN Dept. of Education
Topic: Funding Education in Minnesota
Meal: Roast Beef & Cheddar
Time: 11:30 a.m. – Welcome & Program
12:15 p.m. – Lunch & Business Meeting
1:00 p.m. – Executive Committee Mtg.
Cost: \$15.00

Reservations: You may leave your reservation with Robin Roland at the City of Farmington at 651-463-1880 or on our website at www.mngfoa.org by Thursday, August 11, 2005. (Vegetarian meal choice is available.)

Speaker Bio ...

Alice Seagren was appointed by Governor Tim Pawlenty as the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in July 2004. As Commissioner, she is responsible for MDE operations and policymaking for all aspects of K-12 education, implementing the *No Child Left Behind* Act in Minnesota, early learning, libraries, and adult, career and technical education.

Prior to her appointment, she served six terms in the Minnesota House of Representatives. During her legislative career she was Chair of the House Education Finance Committee and member of the Education Policy, Education Finance, Ways and Means, and Transportation Policy committees. Before winning election to the Legislature, she served on the Bloomington School Board and has been a volunteer in her church and in the community. She is currently a board member of the Normandale Community College Foundation Board and Fraser Community Services, an organization providing services to the disabled. On the national level, Representative Seagren has served as Chair, Education Committee, National Council of State Legislatures, Assembly of State Issues, reflecting her commitment to education and helping people become self-sufficient.

A graduate of Southeast Missouri State University with a B.S. in Marketing, Commissioner Seagren is married to Fred and has two children, Christina and Greg.



Committee

Executive Committee Update

At the July 20th meeting, the minutes of the May 18th meeting were approved. Highlights of those minutes include:

- Approval of the check registers and Treasurer's Report for April. Robin reported that revenues and expenditures for the year have continued as expected
- The Membership Services Task Force provided an update on a secondary membership survey
- The Executive Committee approved a new policy to reimburse members for selected costs incurred in MNGFOA-approved student outreach efforts
- A revised Listserv policy was approved
- Two scholarships were awarded for the Advanced Government Finance Institute. Recipients were Brenda Davitt, from the City of Roseville, and Fran Windschitl, from Rice County
- The Executive Committee agreed to use the Government Training Service (GTS) to assist in future training events

2005 Meeting Dates

Monthly Meetings:

August 17 [no Sept mtg] October 19
November 16 December 14

Conferences & Training:

MNGFOA – Alexandria, MN; Sept 21-23
National GFOA – Minneapolis, MN; August 22-25

Upcoming Events:

Saints Game – August 11th at Midway Stadium

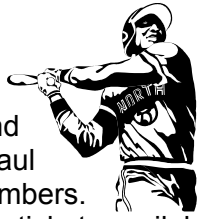
National GFOA Announces Training Event

The National GFOA is sponsoring a series of training events to be held at the Minneapolis Hyatt Regency from August 22-25, 2005. Topics include; Accounting for Capital Assets, Evaluating Internal Controls, Effective Budget Presentations, Financial and ERP System Acquisition and Implementation, Financial Planning and Multi-Year Budgeting, Advanced Financial Reporting, and the Planning and Sale of Municipal Bonds.

Look for more information in your National GFOA newsletter, or on the GFOA's website at: www.gfoa.org.

St. Paul Saints Tickets are Here

It's time once again for another fun and entertaining evening with the St. Paul Saints and your fellow MNGFOA members. The MNGFOA has 64 reserved seating tickets available for the Saints game on Thursday, August 11th at 7:05 p.m. If you are interested in joining your fellow colleagues at the Saints game, please fill out the enclosed form by Monday, August 1, 2005. Tickets will be mailed to you prior to the game. If you have any questions, please call Roxanne Matson, City of Roseville at (651) 792-7183.



Thomas J. Moran Award

The Thomas J. Moran Award is given by the MNGFOA in recognition of extraordinary service rendered by an individual to advance the quality of public financial administration, promote the development and education of governmental accounting and accounting personnel, and promote high standards in the field of government finance in Minnesota.



This honor is awarded annually when, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, an individual has clearly demonstrated by outstanding effort that he or she is dedicated to the improvement of public financial administration as best exemplified by our past member and president, Thomas J. Moran. Any member of the MNGFOA may nominate a candidate for the award. Any person engaged in governmental finance or accounting in the State of Minnesota, whether an active or associate member of the MNGFOA, is eligible for the award.

Information and nomination forms for the award are available at the MNGFOA's website at: www.mngfoa.org, or in the MNGFOA Membership Directory. Nominations should be submitted by August 19, 2005, to Tom Pepper by email at: tpepper@ci.eagan.mn.us, or by mail at 3830 Pilot Knob Road, Eagan, MN 55122.

MnGFOA Logo Contest Winner

Congratulations to Tom Pepper from the City of Eagan for submitting the winning design for a new MNGFOA logo. Tom will receive a free conference registration at the Annual Conference in September for his efforts. Over the next few months, we'll put some finishing touches on the new logo and unveil it in the coming months. In submitting the winning design, Tom once again displayed a talent that was previously unknown. I'm starting to think that there is no end to his repertoire. Perhaps he can help me get my LGA restored. Thanks for everyone who participated in the contest, and congratulations again to Tom!

Treasurer Applications

The MNGFOA Selection Committee is now seeking nominations or applications for the 2006 Treasurer. The Committee encourages all members to consider making a nomination. Members may also apply themselves.

Officers of the MNGFOA provide direction and ongoing support for the organization. They are key to keeping the MNGFOA a well-regarded and valuable association to its membership. Please help maintain the high quality of officers by nominating someone who is committed to the government finance profession and can provide leadership to the organization. Treasurer candidates must be an active member in the association for at least three years. Nominations/applications are due by August 19, 2005. Please send nominations/applications to:

Al Rolek
City of Lino Lakes
600 Town Center Parkway
Lino Lakes, MN 55014

Annual Conference

Make plans now to attend the 2005 Annual Conference "Maximum Effort – Maximum Results", to be held at Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria from September 21 to 23. Included in this month's newsletter are the registration forms for the conference registration and for the hotel reservation.

Please make sure to send the proper forms and payments to the following: Conference registration form along with payment should be mailed to Cory Kampf at the address indicated on the form; Hotel reservation form should be mailed or faxed to Arrowwood Resort at the address or fax number indicated on the form. Also included is a tentative agenda of topics and speakers for the conference. From Wednesday's opening session to Friday's closing session – this year's conference offers a wealth of information on a variety of topics. In addition the Social Committee has plan evening activities that are sure to provide fun and great networking opportunities for every one. The conference committee and the social committee look forward to seeing you there.

If you have any questions about the conference, please contact Sue Iverson at: siverson@ci.mahtomedi.mn.us or 651-426-3344 or Tom Kelly at: tom.kelly@ci.white-bear-township.mn.us or 651-429-5827.

SCSU Career Fair Help Needed

On October 6, 2005, the MNGFOA will be sponsoring a booth at St. Cloud State University's Career Fair Day. Greg Sticha is looking for volunteers to staff the booth and/or assist with preparing for the event. This is a great opportunity to connect with students and share your career experiences with them. If you're interested, please contact Greg at 952-227-1149.

Message from the Editor

As always, if you have any job openings, career moves, or any items of note, please forward them to me by the 20th of this month so I can put it in the next newsletter.

Thanks

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Annual Conference Roundtable Discussion on Outreach Efforts

Nearly a decade ago, the MNGFOA initiated a new effort to reach out to prospective government accountants and finance officers. The purpose was to inform and educate individuals about career opportunities in government. At the time, it was recognized that a void existed within most career and student centers, which primarily directed individuals to private firms. Over the past decade, members of the MNGFOA have participated in the annual Student Conference, attended on-campus career fairs, and visited local colleges and universities to talk directly with students.

At this year's Annual Conference, a roundtable discussion will be held on Thursday morning from 8:30 – 10:00am in the Lake Le Homme Dieu room. Members are encouraged to stop by and share your thoughts and suggestions on how we can enhance these outreach efforts. We're also looking for individuals whom are willing to actively participate in these outreach efforts first-hand.

Annual Conference Advertising Opportunity

This year's Annual Conference theme this is "Maximum Effort – Maximum Results." Associate members are invited to achieve maximum results by placing an advertisement in the annual conference book. Your ad will be seen by hundreds of finance officers and other finance professionals and will help to defray the costs of the conference for all members. There will again be no increase in ad prices this year. The advertising opportunities and related costs are as follows:

¼ Page Ad	(3 ¼" W x 4 ½" L)	\$200.00
½ Page Ad	(7" W x 4 ½" L)	\$325.00
Full Page Ad	(7" W x 9" L)	\$450.00

Please adhere to these sizes and orientations when submitting your ads. Email a "clean" copy of your ad to George Eilertson at geilertson@northlandsecurities.com by **August 10, 2005**. The quality of your program ad will only be as good as what you send us. Acceptable ads will be the appropriate size and acceptable in Adobe (.pdf); MS Word (.doc); MS Publisher or MS PowerPoint (.ppt).

Make your check **payable to "MNGFOA"** and forward to:

George Eilertson, Sr. Vice President/Partner
Northland Securities, Inc.
45 South Seventh Street - #2500
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

This is an awesome way to keep your name in front of the general membership and support the Association at the same time. Thanks to all of you who purchased ads last year. We are looking forward to a great conference and hope to see you at Arrowwood this fall.

MNGFOA is Working to Attract Tomorrow's Financial Leaders

Over the past seven years, the MNGFOA has remained a sponsoring organization and exhibitor at the annual Accounting & Auditing Student Conference. In this role, the MNGFOA has an opportunity to visit with over 500 students from area colleges and universities who are interested in learning about careers in governmental finance and accounting. We need your help in getting the message out! The MNGFOA is looking for members from governmental organizations that are willing to spend some time planning the event, and/or helping out during the event at the registration desk, as a conference ambassador, or in the exhibit booth.

This year's conference is Thursday, September 29, 2005, and runs from 9:30 – 3:30pm. We could use your help especially in the morning hours, but if you can stay the whole day, there will be a free lunch plus a motivational speaker during the break!

----- ALSO -----

Has your organization recently hired employees that have recently completed a degree program? At the annual Accounting & Auditing Student Conference, a forum is provided where students interested in careers in governmental finance and accounting can visit with employees that have recently completed a four-year or two-year degree program, and have gone on to work for governmental agencies. This has proven to be extremely popular as the sessions are held 'behind closed doors' which gives the students a chance to find out what it's like to work in government, and how rewarding it can be.

We need your help in introducing students to careers in governmental finance and accounting. If you are a recent grad or your organization has hired a recent grad in the past three years, we would like to extend an invitation to the conference so that they can share their success stories with our future hiring prospects. If you are willing to help us out on these important efforts, please contact Chris Miller at 651-792-7031, or by email at chris.miller@ci.roseville.mn.us.

JOB POSTINGS

Finance Director - City of Northfield

Finance Director, City of Northfield, MN (pop. 18, 256). Starting salary \$80,000 to \$87,000. Rapidly growing community on the southern edge of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The position reports to the city administrator and is responsible for managing all aspects of the city's financial systems including the long range financial planning, budgeting process, capital improvement program and investments along with the motor vehicle licensing function. Manages a staff of six employees and a total budget of \$30 million. Will work closely with the city administrator and department /division managers to provide financial planning and reports. Qualified candidates will have a bachelor's degree (MA preferred) in business, finance, public administration with a public finance specialty, or accounting with five years work experience developing, planning and managing financial systems in a local government. Position profile available. Send resume by 8/22/05 to The Brimeyer Group Executive Search; 50 S. 9th Ave. #101; Hopkins, MN 55343; Phone: (952) 945-0246 Fax: (952) 945-0102 E-mail: brimgroup@aol.com. Web: www.brimgroup.com

City of Anoka - Assistant Finance Director

The City of Anoka is seeking an Assistant Finance Director. Primary responsibilities include directing and monitoring utility billing and services, assistance of annual budget and financial reporting to state/federal agencies and maintaining the city investment portfolio. Position also includes supervision of employees. Qualifications include a BA in Accounting, Business or Public Finance. Minimum of three years previous municipal/managerial experience, knowledge of governmental accounting, auditing and budget preparation. Experience in municipal electrical utilities desired, valid MN Drivers License and satisfactory driving record required. Salary range is \$59,121 to \$73,902 plus excellent benefits. Applicants must complete a City of Anoka application and supplemental application on or before 4:30 p.m. Friday, August 5, 2005. Apply at Anoka City Hall, 2015 1st Avenue North, Anoka, MN 55303 or visit www.ci.anoka.mn.us for more info, application and supplemental application or call 763-576-2740. AA/EOE.



Finance Director City of Vadnais Heights

The City of Vadnais Heights, MN (population 13,500) is seeking a Finance Director responsible for planning, directing and participating in the accounting, payroll, utility billing, internal auditing, capital improvements/long range financial planning; cash management, investment of funds and other financial record keeping; overseeing and participating in accounting procedures and the preparation and maintenance of the budget and comprehensive annual financial report, financial records and systems; coordinating information technology and communication systems; and providing assistance for development including tax increment financing.

Requires: Bachelor's degree in Finance or Public/Business Administration; seven years of related experience or equivalent; five years of supervisory experience. Certified Public Accountant or Certified Local Government Finance Officer required.

Qualified candidates must have thorough knowledge of general laws governing municipal financing, and principles and practices of accounting and budgeting in government; competent in computer applications and relevant software programs; ability to supervise and provide effective leadership; strong customer service orientation; and ability to communicate both orally and in written form. Annual salary range is \$66,518 - \$79,830. Expected hiring range is \$66,518 - \$73,174, plus benefits. EOE

Send resume, cover letter and completed city application to the City of Vadnais Heights, c/o Kathy Keefe, Assistant City Administrator, 800 East County Road E, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127. For additional information contact Kathy Keefe at 651.204.6013 or kkeefe@cityvadnaisheights.com. Position closing is 4:30 p.m. Monday, August 22, 2005.