
MINNESOTA GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

MnGFOA NEWSLETTER

March 2006

Excellence and Leadership in Government Finance

www.mngfoa.org

Message from the President

By Chris Miller

Just like riding a bike. You've heard that expression many times before. And it holds true for many of the things we do. But does it apply to government finance? Is government finance the same as it was 20 years ago or even 10 years ago? I think most people would agree that while many of the fundamentals are still in place, the environment we work in has changed dramatically. It's still like riding a bike, only we're riding a different bike than before.

I was a cycling fan long before Lance Armstrong won his record 7 Tour de France races. When I was in my 20's I used to ride in weeklong treks across Minnesota and Iowa. I rode a racing bike – the kind they use in the Tour de France; it was sleek, lightweight, and came with the most uncomfortable seat you could ever imagine. Things change of course. Increasing obligations to my family and employer have eaten into most of my free time. Add aging, injuries, and oh yeah, those extra few pounds that seem to creep in, and my bike of choice is now a mountain bike – fully equipped with shock absorbers, lots of low gears, an upright riding position, and a seat that is relatively speaking, comfortable.

Like my need for a different bike, my needs as a government finance officer have also changed. GASB 34 is well behind us, but GASB 45 is right around the bend. In addition, Finance officers are increasingly called upon to participate in strategic planning, economic development, and citywide

administration. We still need to know our debits and credits, but clearly our needs and our role are changing – evolving if you will. I'm thankful that our Committees are looking out for our changing needs.

I'm also thankful for having the opportunity to hear the presentation made by Bob Isaacson, an economist with the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development, at our February luncheon. Mr. Isaacson talked about five factors that are impacting our economy. They include; energy consumption, access to information, visionary employees, global focus, and a solid growth prospect. I found the presentation very informative on a number of levels but there were a few things that stood out for me. Specifically, Mr. Isaacson talked about how we are steadily moving towards a knowledge-based economy and we no longer are constrained by geographic boundaries. I couldn't help but reflect on how the same thing is happening in government as well. We're constantly implementing new technologies and new service delivery methods. And in numerous instances we've partnered with adjacent communities to share programs and services. Who says government can't be innovative? Clearly, the bike that government and government finance officers ride today looks a lot different than the one it used to.





March Meeting



Date: Wednesday, March 15, 2006
 Location: Minneapolis Sheraton 4 Points
 Topic: Annual CAFR Review
 Speaker: Peggy Moeller and Mark Gibbs from HLB Tautges Redpath, Ltd.
 Time: 10:30 a.m. - CAFR Award Review Session
 12:00 p.m. - Lunch & Business Mtg.
 Cost: \$20.00 **
 Meal: Southwest Turkey Club Sandwich
 ** - Due to the extended program – the cost is \$20 instead of \$15

Reservations: You may leave your reservation with Larry Jacobson, City of Plymouth at 763-509-5320 or on our website at www.mngfoa.org by Thursday, March 9, 2006. (Vegetarian meal choice is available.)

Speaker Bio...

Peggy Moeller and Mark Gibbs from HLB Tautges Redpath, Ltd., will be conducting the annual Certificate Review session again this year in conjunction with the March 2006 monthly meeting. This is a popular session, but requires some preparation and assistance. Peggy and mark are collecting comments from the 2004 audited financial statements, which will be used as examples in the session. Please forward copies of your 2004 CAFR and GFOA comments to: Peggy Moeller HLB Tautges Redpath, Ltd. 4810 White Bear Parkway White Bear Lake, MN 55110 Thanks for your cooperation.

2006 Meeting Dates

Monthly Meetings:

April 29(Quarterly Training)	No May Mtg.
June 21	July 19
August 16	October 18
Nov. 15(Quarterly Training)	December 13

Annual Conferences:

GFOA – Montreal, Canada	May 7-10
MnGFOA – Alexandria, MN	Sept. 20-22

Committee

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Executive Committee Update

At the February meeting, the following highlights took place:

- Approved minutes from January 18th meeting.
- Approved check registers and treasurer's report for January 2006.
- Approved Treasurers report for December 2005.
- Update on Conference Venue Task Force.
- Discuss welcome reception at the National Conference in Montreal.
- Agreed to have August 2006 Monthly meeting on St Croix River.
- Discussed policy of taking positions on legislative issues.

Congratulations

Congratulations to the City of Mahtomedi who on February 17, 2006 received a bond rating upgrade provided by Moody's Investors Service from an A2 to A1.

Upcoming Events

We have extended the Deadline for applications for the Lori Webster Advanced Government Finance Institute Scholarship. The deadline is now March 31st. Interested candidates should please send a completed application form to Robin Roland by that date. Blank copies of the application form can be found in the membership directory or on the website. If you have any questions regarding the application or the process please contact Robin!

The MnGFOA's Role in Legislative Affairs

As most of you know, the Legislature will convene on March 1st. This session appears to be rife with a number of issues that will impact many of us. We encourage you to stay informed on important issues and to work with your own legislative delegation to make sure your viewpoints are heard.

Historically, the MnGFOA has chosen not to get involved in lobbying efforts, deferring to the League of MN Cities, and similar organizations to represent our views. Periodically, the Executive Committee does hold a discussion on this topic. We've always concluded that it is essential to preserve the MnGFOA as a professional and educational organization, rather than a political one.

That being said, we recognize there is strength in numbers and there are available mechanisms to lend our support on issues that have unilateral impacts on the membership, such as proposed legislation that would restrict cities' ability to collect unpaid utility bills via certification to the property taxes. We're in the process of gauging whether our presence on this issue might give added strength to the positions of the League or similar organizations. Again, we feel that any direct participation by the MnGFOA would be inappropriate, but perhaps an occasional 'Statement of Position' might be acceptable.

As always, we welcome your thoughts on this or any other matter. If you have some guidance or feedback, please feel free to contact any of the Executive Committee members.



2006 Membership Books

Watch your mail towards the end of the month for the new 2006 Membership Directory. Please note that the new member database is now in effect. As always, feel free to contact Larry Jacobson with the City of Plymouth, should you need to make a change in your membership information.

2006 Executive Board Members

President	Chris Miller City of Roseville	651-792-7031
President-Elect	Greg Sticha City of Minnetonka	952-939-8254
Secretary	Robin Roland City of Farmington	651-463-1880
Treasurer	Larry Jacobson City of Plymouth	763-509-5320
Past President	Tom Pepper City of Eagan	651-675-5017
At-Large	Fred Espe City of Shoreview	651-490-4622
At-Large	Aaron Nielsen MMKR & Company	952-545-0424
State Rep.	Bonnie Burton City of Shorewood	952-474-3236

Introducing the New Committee Chairs for 2006:

Conference	Sue Iverson	952-467-1807
Education	Cindy Rollins	952-563-4702
Program	Michelle Pietrick	715-381-4304
Social	Tonya Weinert	651-430-6044

If you have any questions, want to help out, or have suggestions for the Executive Board or for any of the committees for 2006, please feel free to give them a call.

Greg Sticha
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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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