



MINNESOTA GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

MnGFOA NEWSLETTER

March 2010

Excellence and Leadership in Government Finance

www.mngfoa.org

Message from the President

By Cathy Shuman

Are you waiting for the fish houses to come off the ice and the snow to melt? Here's hoping that March brings some warmer days and hints of Spring. March also brings our annual CAFR Review, which happens to coincide with St Patrick's Day. The wearin' o' the green would be most appropriate whether you participate in the training or just show up for the monthly luncheon. In addition, a second session of the CAFR Review will be held on March 24 in St Cloud. See inside this newsletter for more details.

The Education Committee has been hard at work this year, planning training events for 2010. In addition to the CAFR Review, there will be a two-day training in October for Beginning and Intermediate Accounting and a November half day training with Northland Securities. The Education Committee is laying out ideas for 2011 to take advantage of speakers such as Stephen Gauthier for the accounting sessions. They are looking at expanding to add higher level training for finance directors, staff level training in areas such as payroll issues and sales tax, and a GASB 54 implementation session. The Education Committee is happy to announce that Tom Kelly has accepted the vice chair position.

Susan Gaffney of the national GFOA sent out an email this week to alert government officials of efforts to have federal legislation mandate the collection of taxes on internet sales in those states, including Minnesota, that have adopted the Streamlined Sales Tax Project Agreement. Please read the article in this newsletter to see how you can get involved with a survey related to this legislation.

Thank you to:

- The Programming Committee for bringing the Risk Management overview to the February luncheon. Chris Smith from LMCIT did a great job explaining risk management and how cities can utilize various resources to help reduce their risks and, hopefully, insurance costs.
- The Education and Technology committees who will be providing registration and support for the training events instead of utilizing GTS.
- The subcommittee that has been formed to work on a new contract for our Annual Conference. The committee will be looking at several different sites and requesting proposals prior to making a recommendation for a new contract to start in 2011.
- Several Minnesota entities for hosting the CPFO (Certified Public Finance Officer) exam this year. These include Forest Lake in March; KDV, St Cloud in May; Annual Conference in September; and Arden Hills in November. Contact Jim Knutson for more information.
- The Exec Board members who are working on some new ideas for advertising options. Details should be released in the near future.

Membership Renewals



By now you should have received your MnGFOA renewal notice in the mail. **Don't Miss** You can also complete the renewal process online on the MnGFOA website. Renewals and payments are currently past due. Renewal forms should be mailed (**even if you register on line**) to: Cory Kampf, City of Brooklyn Park, 5200 - 85th Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443. Please note that you can help save on postage and printing by requesting your newsletter by email. Mark your membership renewal form in the appropriate spot.



MONTHLY MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, March 17, 2010
LOCATION: Ramada Plaza, Minneapolis
TOPIC: CAFR Review & GASB 54 Update
SPEAKERS: Peggy Moeller, Dave Mol and Dave Blumberg, HLB Tautges Redpath, LTD
TIME: 9:30 am - Check in available
10:00 am – Program
11:45 am– Networking Luncheon
LUNCH: Minnesota Meatloaf
COST: \$20

Note: *This session will be repeated March 24th in St. Cloud – signup for this session available on the website*

Topic: CAFR Review and GASB 54 Update: The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) reviews the reporting comments received by Cities and Counties in the past year. The instructors will share comments, discuss why the comments were received and more importantly provide examples on the proper presentation to avoid a comment in the future in your CAFR.

They will also present information on ***GASB 54 – Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions***. This pronouncement will likely impact all of our financial reports and even though adoption is not required until 2011 it is recommended that you start planning for actions to be taken prior to implementation.

If you haven't already shared your CAFR review comments, please mail a hard copy of your CAFR to: Peggy Moeller, HLB Tautges Redpath, Ltd., 4810 White Bear Parkway, White Bear Lake MN 55110 by March 5th.

Speakers:

David Mol, CPA and Peggy Moeller, CPA are Partners and David Blumberg, CPA is a Senior Manager at the firm of HLB Tautges Redpath, Ltd. They specialize in providing audit and other services to local governments.

David Mol is a former national reviewer of the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting Program. David received his Bachelor of Science Degree from Augsburg College and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), Minnesota Society of Certified Public Accountants (MNCPA) and the Minnesota Government Finance Officers Association (MNGFOA).

Peggy is a current reviewer of the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting Program. Peggy received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Minnesota and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), Minnesota Society of Certified Public Accountants (MNCPA) and the Minnesota Government Finance Officers Association (MNGFOA).

David Blumberg received his Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), Minnesota Society of Certified Public Accountants (MNCPA) and the Minnesota Government Finance Officers Association (MNGFOA). He also is a committee member with current roles on the MNCPA City Audit Task Force and GFOA Special Review Committee; and former roles on the MNGFOA Conference Committee and the MNCPA City Audit Task Force.

Reservations: It is preferred that you register on the MnGFOA website (mngfoa.org) – there is a link on the home page to go to register for the luncheon event. You can pay for the luncheon online also!!

You could also send an email to Cory Kampf @ cory.kampf@brooklynpark.org or leave a voice mail for Cory at 763.493.8150 no later than Friday, February 12th.

Please remember to register for the meeting to provide that enough meals are ordered and tables set up for the meeting. Thank you.

COMMITTEE

ORNER

Executive Committee Update

The Executive Committee met on February 17th and took the following actions:

- Approved meeting minutes for January
- Approved check registers and Treasurer's reports for January
- Took action to discontinue the printing of the membership directory
- Discussed online services including on-line member directory, and plans for the future of the Resource Guide
- Took action to involve GTA for planning training activities on an as needed basis.
- Discussed the contract for the Annual Conference for 2010 and 2011.
- Discussed the upcoming CAFR review session to be held in Minneapolis and a repeat session to be held in St. Cloud on March 24th.
- Discussed the upcoming CPFO examination being held in Forest Lake and GFOA's request for additional test sites later in the year.
- Discussed the annual renewal process
- Discussed updates to the fund balance policy

CPFO Testing-March 3 & June 3, 2010

The City of Forest Lake will be hosting the spring CPFO examination on Wednesday, March 3, 2010 from 1:30 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. at the Forest Lake City Hall. For further information on the examination, please see the GFOA website. For information about the test site, contact Ellen Paulseth, Finance Director, City of Forest Lake.

CPFO Testing - Additional Sites and Dates

- June 3rd - City of Forest Lake
- September 21- Annual Conference
- November- still being confirmed

If you would be willing to host a test site additional sites could always be used. The dates they are looking for are during the week of May 31st and during the week of November 1. They are asking for sites to commit to one day during these weeks. The basic requirement is to have a room that will hold up to 10 people and having a proctor the exam. If you are willing to host a site you can contact Jim Knutson at jknutson@ci.maple-grove.mn.us for more information.

Important Dates For 2010

MONTHLY MEETINGS/EVENTS:

- March 3, 2010 - CPFO Exam, Forest Lake City Hall
- March 17, 2010 - CAFR Review and Monthly Luncheon, Ramada Plaza Minneapolis
- March 24, 2010 - CAFR Review and Lunch, (repeat session) St. Cloud City Hall
- April 21, 2010 - Monthly Luncheon, Ramada Plaza Minneapolis
- May 19, 2010 - Monthly Luncheon, Ramada Plaza Minneapolis
- June 3, 2010 - CPFO Exam, Forest Lake City Hall
- June 6-9, 2010 - National GFOA Conference, Atlanta, GA
- June 16, 2010 - Monthly Luncheon Ramada Plaza Minneapolis
- July 21, 2010 - Monthly Luncheon, Ramada Plaza Minneapolis
- August 18, 2010 - Monthly Luncheon, Lake Minnetonka
- September 22-24, 2010 - Annual Conference, Alexandria
- October 20, 2010 - Monthly Luncheon, Ramada Plaza Minneapolis
- October 2009 - Beginning & Advanced Governmental Accounting, TBD
- November 17, 2010 - Quarterly Training (topic TBD), Ramada Plaza Minneapolis
- December 15, 2010 - Monthly Luncheon, Ramada Plaza Minneapolis

CONGRATULATIONS TO ~

Brian Swanson on being named the Controller for the City of St. Louis Park on January 18th. Brian has worked with the City of St. Louis Park in various roles over the last 7+ years with the most recent being the Finance Manager and Assistant Finance Director."

Local Telecommunication Taxes

The GFOA has been working with other local government associations (National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, US Conference of Mayors) on efforts to allow for the collection of sales and use taxes on sales made over the Internet. For nearly 10 years, the Streamlined Sales Tax Project has been working to create a unified approach to sales tax collection (uniform definitions, streamlining tax forms, etc.), and 21 state legislatures have adopted the “Agreement” which is the output of the Project.

For the states that have adopted this Agreement, retailers – on a voluntary basis – collect taxes on remote sales, and remit them to the state. GFOA and the other local government organizations serve on the State and Local Advisory Committee in order to provide important technical input from the local government’s perspective.

There also efforts underway to have federal legislation mandate the collection of taxes on Internet sales in the states that have adopted the Agreement. However, this legislation is likely to include an unrelated provision that calls on state and local governments to streamline and simplify their telecommunication taxes and fees (which currently are not part of the Agreement) before being able to collect taxes on Internet sales.

GFOA, NLC, NACo, and USCM strongly oppose this effort. In an effort to study this issue, the SSTP sent a survey to all of the states’ tax commissioners/SST representatives regarding their states’ telecommunications taxes/fees structure. While our groups continue to oppose either SST’s or congressional interference in telecommunication issues, as it would cause extensive harm to local government and pre-empt their taxing authority and give the state greater authority over these tax structures, we think it is important for the surveys to be completed so that the SSTP understands the great complexities in the telecommunication tax/fee arena.

Therefore, we would like to ask if you or other local officials would call your state tax commissioner’s office at your earliest convenience and offer to assist them with completing the survey to ensure that the information about the local government telecommunications taxes/fees structures in your

state are correctly reflected in the survey. A copy of the survey is included in this posting, and FYI, a copy of the SSTP Agreement can be found at: www.streamlinedsalestax.org.

If you have any questions about the survey or SST, please do not hesitate to contact Susan Gaffney at sgaffney@gfoa.org.

Membership Directory

The Executive Committee voted in February to discontinue printing a membership directory. The reasons besides cost were that the membership directory represented a snapshot in time and did not reflect the changing nature of our membership. At this time, all of the membership information is readily available on the website at each member’s fingertips—just go to www.mngfoa.org and select members and member directory. Also, the website offers members the ability to update their record as needed with a username and password. If you have forgotten yours or are in a need of a username and/or password to access your record on the website, please visit www.mngfoa.org and select members and login. Follow the instructions for reporting forgotten usernames and /or passwords. Please direct any account access questions to Cory Kampf at cory.kampf@brooklynpark.org or 763-493-8150.

Membership Directory Ads

With the discontinuation of the printed membership directory, the Executive Committee has notified each Associate Member and will be revising the advertisement process over the next few months. We ask that the Associate Members stay tuned for new and improved advertisement opportunities. We would also like to thank our associate members for their continued support and commitment to helping the MnGFOA promote excellence and leadership in government finance throughout our State.



Minnesota Chapter of Public Risk Management

Minnesota PRIMA will be holding a meeting on March 11, 2010 that will include a few topics that may be of interest to you. You must register by March 8, 2010.

- **Allocating Self-insurance Costs to Departments**
- **Sewer Back-Ups**

March 11, 2010

10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

MCIT

Visit the MN PRIMA web page for additional information <http://www.mnprima.avenet.net>

The *Public Risk Management Association* (PRIMA) is North America's largest Risk Management Association dedicated solely to the practice of risk management in the public sector. **PRIMA** provides education, training, professional development, and publications.

Minnesota PRIMA is the Minnesota chapter of this organization. Our members are comprised of staff from Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Public Works, Risk Management and Safety Departments. They are responsible for benefits coordination, claims contracts, insurance, and loss control and safety programs for cities, counties, and school districts.

10:30–11:30 Allocating Self-insurance Costs to Departments

Receive a brief introduction on how to read actuarial reports, as well as identifying strategies on how to allocate costs to individual departments. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches, and gather ideas on how to use loss/actuarial data to motivate stakeholders to reduce their losses.

11:30 - 12:00 Lunch

Your meeting sponsor, MN PRIMA, invites you to join your fellow members for a tasty lunch between presentations.

12:00–1:00 Sewer Back-Ups

Full presentation yet to be determined, but prepare to hear about Public Entities, Sewer Back-Ups, State Statutes, plus a whole lot more.

MnGFOA Scholarships Announced

Applications for the **Lori A. Webster Advanced Government Finance Institute Scholarship** are now being accepted through March 30, 2010. The Advanced Institute is a 5-day program which provides an opportunity for government officers to address big picture issues facing public finance and participate in seminars with your peers. The AGFI will run from July 25-30, 2010 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. More information can be found on the national GFOA website at www.gfoa.org. The MnGFOA provides a scholarship for eligible members of our organization that serve as public finance officers. Scholarship recipients are reserved a spot at the AGFI in Madison.

MnGFOA also provides scholarship opportunities to undergraduate students of accounting or government finance attending any college or university located in Minnesota. The application deadline for the **John Lilja Undergraduate Scholarship** is April 15, 2010. The amount of each scholarship is \$1000, and the MnGFOA awards at least one a year.

Scholarship application forms are available on the MnGFOA website or you can contact Secretary Jesse Hart for information. Completed applications should be emailed to Jesse at jessie.hart@ci.white-bear-township.mn.us

ASST. FINANCE DIRECTOR CITY OF BAXTER

The City of Baxter (pop. 8,000), a growing, progressive, regional center in the heart of the Brainerd Lakes Area, is accepting applications for the position of Assistant Finance Director. The successful candidate will assist the Finance Director in providing direction and leadership for all finance functions. Responsibilities include monthly financial statement preparation, project accounting, report preparation, financial analysis, annual audit assistance, CAFR, and budget observation and preparation, including the development of the capital improvement plan. The position also oversees and supports other finance functions as needed. Visit the city's website at www.ci.baxter.mn.us for complete requirements, job description, and application packet. Completed City application, resume, and cover letter must be received by Wednesday, March 31, 2010. EOE

Ron Hedberg
City of Apple Valley
7100 147th Street West
Apple Valley, MN 55124



Message from the Editor

Hello to all members of the Minnesota GFOA. I am serving as the Editor of the newsletter for the 2010 year. Please send me any news for our newsletter: job openings, ads related to government finance, career moves, committee updates, or other noteworthy items.



The cutoff date is the 20th of each month, and the newsletter will be emailed or mailed about the first day of the upcoming month.

Thanks.

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