



MINNESOTA GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

MnGFOA NEWSLETTER

November 2008

Excellence and Leadership in Government Finance

www.mngfoa.org

Message from the President

November is the month to give thanks. There's the traditional Thanksgiving holiday and all the Christmas who-ha that comes after it. It is also time to thank our veterans for their service to our country on the 11th. And oh yes, every other year we give thanks for the END to political commercials (at least for awhile.)

I think this year has been particularly nasty, no matter who your candidate is. Call me naive, but I thought this process should be about the issues and not about every ugly thing someone can say about their opponent. How did it become more about winning at all costs and less about good public policy? And why do we continue to allow it?

Then of course, there are all the local Council and Board races. I haven't seen a commercial for them yet, but there are enough signs on street corners to make your head swim. And that never stops ugly things from being said – they just get said on doorsteps and in “public forums” on local access cable channels. I have yet to hear a candidate who is against “economic development” and for “raising taxes”. One thing is certain; in the campaign each of them has the only answer.

One small problem: politicians from the president to the City council member cannot do it alone. They need others to help achieve their goals. Consensus, cooperation and compromise are what it takes in the real world. No individual has the one and only answer to any situation. We have to work together to get anything done.

I am still thankful for our political process on all levels. One City Manager I worked for said “you are only one election away from total chaos”. We have all seen *that* happen. But in fact, that must also mean that you are only one election away from turning that chaos into something positive. Together we can help that happen.

Our training this month on the 19th is all about Non-Tax Revenue sources. Make sure you see the information later in this newsletter. And the Social committee's reminder about the food drive at the luncheon.

This November, I am thankful for work I enjoy, the love of family, good health and time spent with friends. Everything else may be in chaos, but these things remain.

Whatever your list includes, Happy Thanksgiving! Have a great month.

Robin

2008 Meeting Dates

MONTHLY MEETINGS:

December 10 - Monthly luncheon, Sheraton Four Points

January 21 – Quarterly Training, Sheraton Four Points

ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

MnGFOA – Alexandria, MN

Sept 23-25, 2009

GFOA – Seattle, Washington

June 28 – July 1, 2009

November Quarterly Training and Networking Meeting

DATE: Wednesday, November 19, 2008
LOCATION: Four Point Sheraton Minneapolis
TOPIC: **Generating Non-Tax Revenue: Techniques, Issues and Case Studies**
SPEAKER: Bob Winthrop, PFM; Chuck Elliott, Chief Accountant for the City of Minneapolis; and Bob Kessler, Director of the St. Paul Department of Safety and Inspections.
TIME: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 pm sessions,
12:00 – 1:00 Lunch
LUNCH: Will be Provided
COST: Training \$80.00
Networking Lunch only \$20.00

REGISTRATION: The registration deadline is **November 12, 2008**. You need to register through **Government Training Services for this training or networking lunch**. A brochure and on-line registration is available on the Government Training Services website www.mngts.org, or at the Minnesota GFOA website, www.mngfoa.org.

Please remember that you can not use the MnGFOA website Meeting Signup to register for this training.

November Food Drive

Don't forget to bring non-perishable food items or cash to the quarterly MnGFOA training. They will be collected and delivered to a local food shelf for distribution to local needy families.

Congratulations To...

Congratulations to Jerilyn Erickson on her new position as the Finance Director at the City of Prior Lake. Jerilyn was previously the Accounting Manager at the City of Burnsville.

Congratulations to the City of Chanhassen (and Greg Sticha) for their double Bond Rating increase from Standard & Poors. They are now AA+.

Committee

Executive Committee Update

The Executive Committee met in October and took the following actions:

- Approved July 31st minutes
- Approved the check register July, August and September
- Approved the Treasurer's report for Sept.
- Discussed applications received for the Internship Grant for 2009. The Internship Grant was awarded to Arden Hills.
- Received a report from the Chris Miller on the activities of the Accounting and Auditing Student Conference. Darin Nelson has stepped forward to be one of the two representatives for the committee for 2009.

A Special Thanks To Chris Miller

Over the past ten years, the MnGFOA has been a sponsoring organization and exhibitor at the annual Accounting & Auditing Student Conference. In this role, the MnGFOA has had an opportunity to visit with over 500 students each year from area colleges and universities who are interested in learning about careers in governmental finance and accounting. This effort has been successful due primarily to the dedication of Chris Miller.

Chris' devotion to the Student Conference began in 1998 when Ed Burrell (past president and his boss at Roseville at that time) got involved with the first Conference and commandeered Chris to help out. After Ed retired, Chris continued to work with the Student Conference, sometimes as the only representative from MnGFOA. Chris has seen the Conference go from a group of organizations with very loose ties to a single sponsoring organization of the conference with MnGFOA represented on the board. Chris (MnGFOA) was the chair of this year's Conference which was held on September 30th. Once again, our profession was proudly represented.

After all his hard work, Chris has chosen to step aside after year end. Thank you Chris for all your efforts these last ten years to attract the next generation of government finance professionals. We really appreciate your dedication and hard work.

From the Education Committee - November 19th Training

The Education Committee is pleased to announce its November 19, 2008 training on "Generating Non-Tax Revenue: Techniques, Issues and Case Studies". The instructors for this training will be: Bob Winthrop, PFM; Chuck Elliott, Chief Accountant for the City of Minneapolis; and Bob Kessler, Director of the St. Paul Department of Safety and Inspections.

What are Non-Tax Revenues and how significant a source of revenue are they? These instructors will present the value of a "user fee policy" and how to develop it. Discussions on determining costs for service for different fees to maximize the amounts that can be charged, activity based costing in the public sector, determining fully loaded costs, and how to approach operational assessments in order to find opportunities for charging new fees will be presented at this training. Participants will leave the session with a workbook that explains how to go about increasing revenue through user cost analysis. Case studies will also be presented.

The training will run on Wednesday, November 19 from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. A networking lunch is also available for those who only want to attend the luncheon. Please see our website or the GTS website for registration and more information at www.mngts.org. If you have any questions, please call Sue Iverson, Education Chair at (651) 792-7816 or email at sue.iverson@ci.arden-hills.mn.us.

www.mngfoa.org) or register on line at Governmental Training Services at www.mngts.org.

Membership Information

Membership information can be updated on line at the MnGFOA website. You will need your username and password. If you have forgotten your username and password, select member, login and you can have the website send it to you.

JOB POSTINGS

County of Chisago

JOB TITLE: Deputy County Auditor –
Finance Manager
DEPARTMENT: County Auditor's
SUPERVISOR: County Auditor

SUMMARY OF DUTIES:

Prepare statements; responsible for combined general ledger; plans and executes controls; supervise work of others; analyze work-flow problems; designs, prepares, and submits periodic financial reports; develop new procedures;

QUALIFICATIONS & REQUIREMENTS:

Bachelor's degree in accounting or business administration with 3-5 years experience in the preparation of financial statements; excellent communication skills, written and verbal; strong computer skills in spreadsheets; proven ability to prioritize and organize work; thorough knowledge of Microsoft Office Products;

GRADE: 25

SALARY RANGE: \$21.19 - \$29.10 hr (DOQ)

JOB LOCATION: Chisago County Government
Center, Center City, MN

POSITION OBJECTIVE:

Under direction of the County Auditor, is responsible for the maintenance of financial records, accounts, and transactions for Chisago County and the preparation of the County's financial statements to be audited by an independent auditor. Prepares or assists in preparation of County Auditor's budget; prepares and monitors County wide department budget reports; prepares monthly trial balances; and supervises preparation of multiple, complex, accounting/statistical reports. Related work is performed as assigned. Work is performed in an office setting.

A complete job description and posting is available on the MNGFOA web site at MnGFOA.org.

Job posting are also made to the MnGFOA web site and you can check there on a continuing basis for new posting.

Larry Jacobson
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Message from the Editor

The month of November brings us the elections of 2008, (and the end of the campaigns!), the Thanksgiving holiday, the close of fall and the coming of winter. Take a few moments and send me any news you have to share with other members, job openings, career moves, or other items of note; to me by the 20th of each month and they will go in the next newsletter.

Thanks!

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