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Brenda Garton

Budget season. Two words that strike fear into the hearts of many.

Every year, as the CAO, you bear the ultimate responsibility to present a balanced budget to the governing body. And, in really tough years, you say to yourself, "This is the hardest budget I've ever had to put together!" for whatever reason. And, then, next year it gets harder.

Local government budgets are so complex. There are different kinds of taxes and fees and different sources of revenue. Some rates are set locally. Some funds you can count on, some you can't. Sometimes grants can help provide revenue streams and some grants come with matching strings attached. Then, there's waiting with baited breath to see what the Governor and the General Assembly are going to do with the funding streams that come from the state.

With the expenditures, you have a similar dilemma. Can you reduce spending in your libraries without jeopardizing the funding from the state? If you eliminate this position in the Constitutional Officer's staff, is it one of the ones for which the locality gets state Compensation Board funding? If you eliminate this position or program, does that decision jeopardize this other program? Which programs and functions are mandated or essential, and which are not? What amount to include as the local transfer amount to the schools is fair and enough? How much of what this program provides must also be supported by activities in these other programs or departments? Can we be more efficient? Should we consider privatization?

How do we ensure sufficient funding for capital needs?

And, then there are the really gut-wrenching decisions. When we can't fund the increase of the health insurance premiums and have to push a greater proportion of the costs to the employees either by way of the increased premium or by restructuring the program to reduce the premium through increased co-pays and deductibles, you know that the cost is being shifted to the employees, who will now have less money for their everyday expenses. If you eliminate this position, which is not vacant, someone goes home without a job. How long can you sustain morale without being able to fund raises? If you can't afford to increase funding for this program which provides in-home services for the elderly, what lovely person in your community is home alone without proper care?

A budget is really just a spending plan. But what an emotional roller coaster it can be to decide what gets funded in that spending plan. How do you weigh a new animal shelter when your old one doesn't meet state requirements against a much-needed upgrade to the science wing at the high school? When there isn't enough money to go around, which charitable organization gets the much-needed increase - the local domestic abuse shelter, the humane society, or the free clinic? Can you include funds for raises to staff without a reduction in force of some kind? Should you propose an increase in taxes, and if so, which one? Or did the governing body direct you to balance without increases?

It's really all about what each person believes is important, isn't it? That's why many speakers at your public hearing get so upset. Members of your governing body may dig in their heels in places - either in favor of something he wants funded or adamant about something she thinks should not be funded. Sparks are likely to fly.

All of the analysis in the world, all of the thinking about objectives, missions, priorities, and goals, excellent staff to help you prepare the budget, a multitude of spreadsheets and summaries, and many sleepless nights don't change the ultimate reality that within the very detail of the budget you propose, you convey to the citizens and the staff what you believe to be the programs and services valued by the governing body and, at a minimum by extension, you - and which ones are not. Of course, the governing body then goes through that same careful weighing of funding decisions that you've just spent weeks developing, and revises your proposed budget, through some complex series of work sessions, discussions, and processing of input from citizens, to compromise on what the members believe is the best spending plan for all the citizens and to make it their budget.

Whew! I can't even IMAGINE what the federal government's budget must be like. Just shoot me now! There's a silver lining in every cloud. So, let's be thankful we don't have to deal with THAT budget.

Wait....given the fact that we are required by law to present a balanced budget and that we've been balancing budgets with limited resources for years, maybe they SHOULD hire a bunch of us local government managers, finance directors, budget analysts, and the like to go to Washington and straighten out the national budget. Now, THAT would be worth seeing!

Thanks to Joe Casey for his excellent work as Chair of the Professional Development Committee and Winter Conference Co-Chairs Shawn Utt and Danny Davis for an excellent VLGMA Winter

Conference. If you were not able to attend, you missed an intense dive into economic development, how to attract and retain business, the economy, and related issues. And Melanie presented a lovely tribute to Mac McReynolds. Thanks to the organizers, the staff, the presenters, and the attendees for a great conference experience!

Good luck with your budgets! Wait....did I propose enough funding for economic development? Let me go look.....

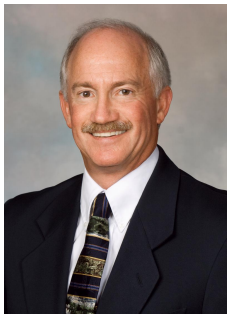
The Nominations Committee is seeking expressions of interest from members interested in serving on the VLGMA Executive Board. Interested members should contact the Chair of the Nominations Committee, Randy Wheeler, at randy.wheeler@poquoson-va.gov.

I would like to take a moment to recognize our new VLGMA members: Charles Dane, Hopewell Assistant City Manager; Eric Workman, Bland County Administrator; Patricia Weiler, Powhatan County Administrator and Cody Sexton, Botetourt Information Specialist.

-Brenda

[Contact Brenda Garton](#)

Tedd's Take



It's time for the 2014 EBIS Awards!

Each year, we recognize a few localities and individuals that, among many others, have contributed to the on-going success of the Institute's 17 year old

Email Broadcast Information System (EBIS). While it is impossible to recognize all the officials and localities that make a concerted effort virtually every day to assist their fellow localities by providing responses to our members' inquiries, we try, over time, to say thank you via these awards to as many as possible, as frequently as possible.

So, without further ado, here are the "Special Merit" awardees that were recognized at the winter VLGMA conference, and the secret-until-now Top Ten recipients!!!

SPECIAL MERIT: (localities)
Town of Blacksburg
Hanover County

SPECIAL MERIT: (individuals)

A DAO in the Life

I joined the City of Newport News as the Assistant to the City Manager in December 2013. A significant portion of my time would be assigned to "special projects" both internal to operations and externally with the community. Within a few weeks on the job, our City Manager Jim Bourey announced the bold vision to host the Peninsula's first full-length marathon in March 2015 with the intent of taking runners on a tour of Newport News by literally running from one end of the city to the other! This was a huge undertaking for the city involving all the departments plus multiple private partners. And guess who would be the project manager for this effort? Yes, me!

Talk about putting multiple skills to the test early. Not only did I have to learn the community in order to gain trust regarding the positive opportunities associated with the event, but also navigate a new organizational structure in order to build a team that could function and produce a successful game plan.

By spring 2014, we had already established an interdepartmental planning team of over 40 people and designed a preliminary course route. Later we would build a project budget, draft a work plan, design the course features, create several complementary race weekend activities, secure corporate sponsors and initiate a six month long community engagement strategy. City staff and others from various state and regional agencies have leveraged resources to support our public safety, infrastructural, volunteer management, marketing and

Mary T. Price - Shenandoah Co. administrator

Michael Stallings - Windsor town manager

TOP TEN:

Fluvanna County
Chesterfield County
Dinwiddie County
Arlington County
Augusta County
Henrico County
Nelson County
City of Roanoke
City of Danville
Town of Vienna

Congratulations to each, and we look forward to continuing this successful, cooperative program in the years ahead!

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

Position Changes
February, 2015



- Debbie Keyser, Jefferson County, WV administrator, has been hired as the first assistant county administrator for Rappahannock County.
- Johnnie Roark, town manager for Appomattox, resigned that position to return to his prior post as community development director for Appomattox County. Bill Gillespie, the outgoing town manager who planned on stepping after a transition period, will now stay on until May.
- Mark B. Taylor, former Spotsylvania County attorney (2000 - 2006), and Accomack County attorney since 2007, has been appointed Spotsylvania County administrator.
- Richard Huff, II, Franklin County administrator from 1985 - 1991, and from 1999 - 2015, has announced that he is leaving that post to enter the private sector, effective

sustainability needs. Through a competitive process, a locally owned and operated race management company, Flat-Out Events, was awarded the contract to be our partner responsible for course logistics promotion, registration, and race day management.

As the inaugural One City Marathon weekend approaches on March 13th - 15th, I can now reflect on how far we have come in a short period of time.

Each day I think about all the necessary items in my "project management" tool box to successfully deliver this assignment, i.e. communication skills, group facilitation and conflict resolution techniques, system thinking, consensus-building, capacity building, judgment and accountability to name a few. But most of all, I am reminded that as DAOs, we still manage "projects" but we have to lead people!

[Contact Telly Whitfield](#)

VLGMA Civic Engagement Article

April 2015 Local Government Education Week



Cindy Mester

Reminder: The first week of April is Local Government Education week and VLGMA requests that all localities governing adopt a proclamation as well as develop a student engagement program in coordination with their school districts.

Proclamation template and additional resource materials are posted on the

VLGMA website

at: http://icma.org/en/va/resources/civic_education

. More details can be found in the January VLGMA eNews edition archived

at: http://icma.org/en/va/resources/past_newsletters

[Contact Cindy Mester](#)

Innovation Edge



A fantastic lineup of keynote presenters is waiting for you at the Transforming Local Government Conference, April 13-15 in Phoenix, Arizona. You won't want to miss Tom Kelley, author of The Art of Innovation and partner at IDEO. Lauren Leader-Chivée is the founder and CEO of All in Together. Nancy Lublin is the CEO of DoSomething.org. All of these

July 1st.

- Brian Marks, town manager for Louisa since 2005, has retired.
- Tom Filer has been appointed town manager for Louisa. Tom's work background is in the banking, and Louisa is his hometown.
- David Ellis, assistant city manager for Charlottesville for the past 3 years, has been appointed deputy manager for Wake County, NC.
- Susan Adams, deputy administrator and economic development associate for Charlotte County, has been appointed Appomattox County administrator effective March 18th.
- Amity Moler, assistant administrator for Page County, has been appointed administrator there. She is the first woman to hold that position
- John Rowe, interim manager and then manager for the city of Portsmouth since 2012, has announced he is retiring (again) effective June 30, 2015.
- Anthony Akers, community activities director for Pulaski County, has been promoted to assistant county administrator for human services there.
- Karen Thompson, assistant administrator for Floyd County, has been appointed assistant administrator for management services for Pulaski County.

Certificate News

As the old saying goes, March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. This is especially true for our Certificate students who are busily working on mid-semester projects and case studies. Once they get over this hump, it should



talented speakers will address future thinking and building cultures of innovation in your organization. Read more about the keynotes here. Visit www.tlgconference.org to learn more about the conference, view the full program, register and book your room.

Questions? Comments? Please reach out to me at saburnett@transformgov.org, or 800-777-2509. [Contact Sallie Ann Burnett](#)

Virginia Tech's School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA)



Virginia Tech's School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) is pleased to announce the second of a three-part series exploring P3 Leadership on March 26, 2015, at the Virginia Tech Research Center in Arlington, VA.

There is no question P3s are emerging as a public policy vehicle of choice for public services and facilities across the Commonwealth. The purpose of P3s as a policy vehicle and as a business strategy is to bring different sectors together as well as to leverage individual capabilities and strengths. An outside observer may note several significant differences between partners - in language used to describe the deal, in financial metrics and expectations, in understanding the project and its impact on community or even in the definition of transparency. Leadership is faced daily with instances of cultural conflicts, but may not be armed with the tools to diffuse it.

The March workshop will open with a multi-perspective panel discussion and case study of an actual Northern Virginia unsolicited P3 that ultimately despite significant efforts by the submitting developer, never moved forward. This case is particularly dynamic for many reasons. It involves not only the concepts of P3 Leadership - building trust and understanding culture, but also other relevant topics such as:

- Economic development
- Affordable and workforce housing
- Transit and transportation

be smooth sailing to the end of the semester (at least if the students have been keeping up with the readings).

March, the herald of new beginnings and abundant flowers, is also a time of reflection. One of the common topics of discussion in our classes involves the question: "How did you start a career in local government?" While it is certainly true that some people have their hearts set on a local government career from the very beginning (the author included), more often than not, many people just happen to land in this world. Whether you started as a planner, an accountant, a secretary, or a food stamp clerk, the path to the manager's office can be as varied as each locality in the Commonwealth. Therefore, as springtime teaches us, no matter how strange or simple the seed, the flower that blooms is still beautiful and complex. So, take some time this month and think about where you started and where you came from, and share those stories with the next generation. There are lots of seeds and sprouts out there waiting to grow.

This spring, Bob Stripling will be taking his green thumb and fertilizer across the state to recruit the next class of Certificate students. If you are interested in having him visit and meet with prospective students, he can be reached at chars08@vt.edu or 540-448-1102.

Find the Certificate online:



Certified Public Manager Program(CPM)
School of Policy, Government and
International Affairs
George Mason University

- Land use and zoning
- Citizen and community involvement
- Political perspectives of P3s

Participants will have an opportunity to analyze the case in groups, digging into issues of culture and trust in particular. There will be ample opportunity for discussion and participation as well as perspectives on P3s shared by current and former Northern Virginia elected officials.

The workshop will wrap up with a general P3 discussion/analysis by two preeminent practitioners - retired Newport News city manager and VA Tech COTA Fellow, Neil Morgan and Dr. Michael Garvin, Associate Professor and Program Coordinator, VA Tech, Via Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Dr. Garvin's research and teaching are focused on infrastructure development with specific interests in the planning, financing and delivery of complex, large-scale projects and examining the role of the private sector in infrastructure provision and management.

The date for the third P3 Leadership conference is Wednesday, June 10, 2015. Details to follow.

Date: Thursday, March 26, 2015

Location: Virginia Tech Research Center
900 N Glebe Rd, Arlington, Virginia

Registration Fee: \$350 by March 6th; \$375 thereafter includes light breakfast, lunch, and parking
Registration Deadline: March 16th

Group Discount: 10% off for organizations that have 4 or more participants

This conference can be used for continuing education units (CEU). Participants may be eligible to receive up to five (5) credits as most professional associations award one (1) credit per hour of instruction.

To Register: <http://www.cpe.vt.edu/reg/partlead/>
Mel's Poetry Corner



In Celebration of the Life of Mac
James McReynolds, York County

To lead with a quiet cadence;
to seek collaboration rather than
divisiveness and



On January 8th, George Mason University's School of Policy, Government and International Affairs (SPGIA) had its first class for the newly-created Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program. This Program is designed to enhance the careers of those in public service management. The curriculum meets the criteria to be certified by the National CPM Consortium and is calibrated to provide management and leadership theory and practice to all enrollees.

The curriculum focuses on the 12 critical topics including strategic management, public budgeting and finance, governance and ethics. Students meet in person twice a month for 12 months to enable working professionals to spend meaningful class time with a cohort of peers exploring public administration management theory and strategy. Successful participants will earn the distinction as a Certified Public Manager enabling the use of the trademarked logo CPM following their name.

The first class was recruited from public safety agencies in Northern Virginia. With the experience gained from administering the first class, GMU will look to expand the CPM Program statewide. It is anticipated that the Program will be offered by region when a sufficient number register for the CPM Program. There is an Advisory Board for the Program to which VLGMA has appointed Cindy Mester, Assistant City Manager, Falls Church. The Program is directed by Tonya Neaves, Ph.D., at the Mason's Center on the Public Service (703-993-9377 or psc@gmu.edu). Dr. Neaves can be reached at

Mel Gillies

contribution rather than complacency.

To be compassionate, not selfish, and authentic, not artificial;
to advise astutely, mentor gently, work devotedly;
to embrace the democratic, the heroic with passion and grace,
to speak truthfully, feel deeply, listen pensively.
In a word, to let the inspiring, the remembered, blossom in the present.

This is your symphony, Mac.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)
[Calendar](#)

Upcoming Events

Deputies, Assistants and Others (DAO) Meeting - April 24, 2015 in Fredericksburg

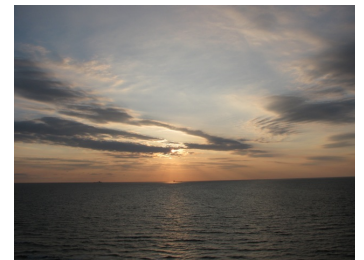
2015 VLGMA Summer Conference - June 10-12, 2015 at the Sheraton

[More Dates](#)

[Future Newsletter Articles](#)

A goal of this e-newsletter is to keep you informed on activities relative to our profession. As with any membership-based organization, contributions by members are welcome and encouraged.

Topics can range from a recent achievement in your locality to an upcoming event with networking potential to human interest stories about current or retired members. To contribute simply send your brief e-newsletter content (~5 sentences or less) via email to [Molly Harlow](#).



tneaves@gmu.edu.

Quick Links

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