



MnGFOA Newsletter

May 2026

Excellence and Leadership in Government Finance

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President's Message

By: Tina Lannes

May is already here... which is impressive, because I'm still mentally somewhere in February. The months seem to move faster every year - pretty soon we'll be putting up holiday decorations again whether we're ready or not.

Many of us are wrapping up audits (congrats, you survived), planning vacations, counting down to fishing opener, or just staring longingly out the window waiting for Minnesota to fully commit to spring.

May 3-9 is Public Service Appreciation Week. This is one of those weeks that tends to sneak by quietly, so I want to say a sincere *thank you*. Whether you're at the federal, state, county, or local level, your work makes a difference in our communities every single day. What you do matters - even if the only feedback you get some days is... more work.

And then there's May 4th. For the Star Wars fans - this is your time. Personally, I'm a fan of the dark side. Darth Vader has it all: style, mystery, and that voice that makes even breathing sound intimidating. He has always been my

favorite, a tragic villain whose final act becomes one of redemption and sacrifice. May the 4th be with you, wherever your allegiance lies.

Speaking of sacrifice - Happy Mother's Day! Parenting is a strange journey. When your kids are toddlers, you dream of the day they become independent. Then they become teenagers, and suddenly you'd pay good money for them to need help tying their shoes again.

As they grow up, they spend less time with you - which is exactly what's supposed to happen - but you wish you could slow time down. The time you spend together changes, becoming less frequent but no less meaningful - but it still makes you wonder: did I do enough, say enough, embarrass them just the right amount in public, prepare them well enough?

That's where I find myself this year, as my youngest graduates. Planning the second (and final) graduation party *should* be easy. I'm cautiously optimistic - mainly because it would be hard to top my oldest's party, which included a surprise emergency appendectomy the morning of. Tough act to follow.

Memorial Day weekend is the unofficial start of summer - meaning BBQs, parades, and outdoor activities...or at least talking about them while checking the weather app every 10 minutes (again, Minnesota).

On a more meaningful note, consider pausing at 3:00 p.m. on Memorial Day to honor those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. And if you see a veteran offering poppies, grab one and wear it proudly in remembrance of fallen soldiers - it's a small gesture that carries a lot of meaning.

Wishing you all a great May, filled with both the traditions you cherish and the moments you create along the way. Also, hopefully it is full of sunshine, fewer surprises than my last graduation party, and just enough warmth to remind us why we live here.

Congratulations!

The MNGFOA recently awarded the John B. Lilja Undergraduate Scholarship to Cameron Dolbow, a student at Carleton College. Congratulations, Cameron!

Spring Break Out Sessions

May 6, May 13 and May 20

Ride the financial wave at MNGFOA's Spring Break Out Sessions! Multiple in-person offerings featuring the next best thing to fun in the sun. Join us rain or shine for speakers on digital accessibility, AI chatbots, and software conversion followed by the opportunity to network with fellow attendees. Please register online at www.mngfoa.org.

May 6, 2026 ~ 1:00-3:00PM

Subject: Digital Accessibility and the Legislative Coordinating Commission

Overview: Representatives from the State of Minnesota and the Legislative Coordinating Commission (LCC) will be speaking to how they are handling Digital Accessibility within the State of Minnesota, and provide practical information on how other governmental entities may implement and operate that with the upcoming ADA compliance changes. The LCC provides nonpartisan coordination of diversity and inclusion, accessibility compliance efforts, and written and spoken translation and interpretation services across the Minnesota Legislature for official legislative business. Regarding digital accessibility, this session will dive into what the legislature does, practices, helpful tools, approach, etc. As Minnesota's Chief Information Accessibility Officer (CIAO), Wyant works with state agencies to set policy, define best practices, design and implement strategies to change organizational culture, improve procurement processes, provide training, and organize communities of practice, all focused on ensuring that the State's information and services are fully accessible to its citizens and employees.

Speaker(s): Jim Melby (Legislative Coordinating Commission) and Jay Wyant (State of Minnesota)

Location: Wakefield Park Community Building
1860 Hazelwood Street
Maplewood, MN 55109

May 13, 2026 ~ 1:00-3:00PM

Subject: AI Chatbots

Overview: A growing range of AI large language models—such as **ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, Grok, and Claude**—now offer practical, everyday value for local government accountants who need to work quickly, accurately, and with limited resources. These tools can help staff generate **complex Excel formulas**, build **RFPs**, draft **Council agenda items**, and produce clear, professional **emails and staff communications** in a fraction of the usual time. Because many of the most useful features are available in **free versions**, every finance professional can experiment with AI without needing special software or budget approvals. AI also supports statutory research, policy drafting, and audit preparation by summarizing long documents, checking for inconsistencies, and offering alternative wording that improves clarity. During the presentation, participants will see real examples drawn from common municipal finance workflows, highlighting both time savings and quality improvements. Audience questions, ideas, and live problem-solving will be encouraged to help everyone walk away with practical, ready-to-use techniques.

Speaker(s): Joe Rotz (City of Apple Valley)

Location: Albertville City Hall
5959 Main Ave NE
Albertville, MN 55301

May 20, 2026 ~ 1:00-3:00PM

Subject: Software Conversion

Overview: Panel discussion including multiple city and county representatives and audit insights related to software conversions. We will discuss what went well, and what to avoid, as well as take questions from attendees for the panel to address.

Speaker(s): Tracy Thoma (City of Lino Lakes), Greta Pudas (City of Medina), Cory Kampf (Anoka County), Brandon Zabel (Carver County), Lindsey Meyer (Wright County), Troy Gabler (CLA)

Location: Lake Waconia Regional Park – Paradise Commons Sun Room
8170 Paradise Ln
Waconia, MN 55387





MNGFOA Cinco de Mayo Social Gathering



Join us for a fun and relaxed evening to connect with fellow MNGFOA members at Rum Row Tiki in Chanhassen. It's a great chance to catch up, meet new colleagues, and enjoy a change of scenery together.

Thursday, May 7

4:30 PM

590 W 79th Street, Chanhassen

<https://rumrowtiki.com/>

We'll provide a variety of shareable appetizers to enjoy, such as smoked chicken wings, chips and salsa, queso fundido, BBQ pork nachos, and fresh table-side guacamole. Additional menu items will be available for purchase.

Whether you can stop by for a quick visit or stay a while, we'd love to see you there! It's all about good conversation, great food, and spending time together.

Please click on this link to RSVP on the MNGFOA website:

[Register Now](#)





Join us at Cragun's Resort in Brainerd on September 22-24 for the 2026 MNGFOA Conference!!

"Rock & Roll Hall of Fame – Keeping Government Finance in Tune"

If speeches had platinum records, these keynotes would go multi-platinum!

- Tues. Sept. 22 - Tim Furlong (Quarter Turns, Change, Opportunity & the Next Normal)
- Wed. Sept. 23 - Kristen Brown (Powered by Energy – Rock Steady Through Change; Stress to Strength)
- Thurs. Sept. 24 - Erik Therwanger (Linked for Impact – Hall of Fame Teamwork)

REGISTRATION FOR CABIN STAY IS NOW OPEN!!!

With limited single-room availability at the main lodge, Cragun's cabins are a smart and inviting option for Minnesota GFOA Conference attendees, September 22–24 and they're available to reserve *before* single-room registration opens.

Choose spacious cabins ranging from 2 to 7 bedrooms – many with an equal number of bathrooms, so everyone enjoys their own space and privacy. With full kitchens, comfortable living areas, and beautiful lakeside settings, these cabins make it easy to relax and recharge.

Even better, they create a natural setting for networking. Connect with colleagues in a more casual, social environment. Whether it's sharing coffee in the morning, recapping sessions in the evening, or simply enjoying the view and atmosphere that Gull Lake has to offer.

It's more than a place to stay - it's part of the experience. Cabins are likely to go quickly. Reserve yours early and make the most of your conference getaway. The registration link is available on the MNGFOA Annual Conference webpage.

https://mngfoa.org/Annual_Conference_Info

2026 MNGFOA Networking Events: SAVE THE DATES!

The Social Committee is excited to share a great lineup of networking events for 2026. Mark your calendars and join your colleagues for opportunities to connect, recharge, and have fun:

- **June 2026:** Puttshack Edina event
- **July 23, 2026:** Lake Minnetonka Boat Ride
- **August 2026:** Service Project
- **September 22-24, 2026:** Attend the Annual Conference in Brainerd, MN with exciting networking events in store
- **November 5, 2026:** Service Project

JOB POSTINGS

Summary of Current Job Openings:

Position Title	Entity	Closing Date
Assistant Finance Director	City of Maplewood	May 3, 2026
Assistant Finance Director	Otter Tail County	May 4, 2026
Finance Director	City of Norwood Young America	May 10, 2026
Facilities Finance Specialist	City of Saint Cloud	Until Filled

Links and further details can be found on the [Jobs & Volunteering](#) page

2026 OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

<p>President Tina Lannes City of Albertville 763.496.6802</p>	<p>At-Large Dalton Larson Anoka County 763.324.1755</p>
<p>President-Elect Gina Foschi City of New Brighton 651.638.2105</p>	<p>At-Large Tyler See ABDO 952.939.3230</p>
<p>Secretary Joel Merry City of Minnetonka 952.939.8254</p>	<p>State Representative Sarah Rathlisberger City of Monticello 763.271.3201</p>
<p>Treasurer Justin Juergensen City of Hutchinson 320.234.4256</p>	<p>Past President Mark Ebensteiner City of Becker 763.200.4250</p>

WANTED: Day to Unite Captains

The MNGFOA is looking for volunteers willing to be a host site for the 4th annual MNGFOA Day to Unite on Wednesday, August 19th. We are hoping to add more locations and build upon the last three years! Please reach out to Hannah Lynch hannah.lynych@moretoncm.com and/or Nate Reinhardt nreinhardt@shakopeemn.gov

2026 Committee Chairs & Vice Chairs

<p>Conference Committee – plans and coordinates topics, speakers, and all other aspects of the annual fall conference Co-Chairs Jackie Heinz, City of Montrose Josh Kent, City of Buffalo</p>	<p>763-575-7435 763-684-5465</p>
<p>Social Committee – plans and organizes social activities for the membership through the year Co-Chairs Kari Carlson, City of Bloomington Michelle Hoffman, Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority</p>	<p>952-563-8725 612-335-3513</p>
<p>Program Committee – plans and coordinates topics and speakers for the monthly meetings Chair Hannah Lynch, Moreton Capital Markets</p>	<p>952-777-7930</p>
<p>Education Committee – plans and coordinates October accounting classes and other training sessions during the year other than the fall conference Co-Chairs Brandon Zabel, Carver County Brent Foiles, City of Eagan</p>	<p>952-361-1938 651-675-5018</p>
<p>Student Outreach Committee – The Student Outreach Committee is responsible for connecting with students to introduce them to career possibilities in government finance. Committee members attend career fairs and on-campus events, and also promote the John B. Lilja Undergraduate Scholarship. Chair Dalton Larson, Anoka County</p>	<p>763-324-1755</p>
<p>Technology Committee – operate and improve the organization’s website and other technology Co-Chairs Jeanette Boit-Kania, Ramsey County Joe Rotz, City of Apple Valley Janice Brandt, City of Coon Rapids</p>	<p>651-266-8057 952-953-2547 763-767-6442</p>
<p>Mentorship Committee – The committee helps engage our members in developing our future and the future of local government finance in Minnesota Co-Chairs Cory Kampf, Anoka County Lynn Cornwell, Moreton Capital Markets Nate Reinhardt, City of Shakopee</p>	<p>763-324-1751 952-777-3227 952-233-9326</p>

Please contact any member of the Board of the Committee chairs directly if you are interested in participating on any of the committees. Committee participation does not require a lot of time and is a great way to meet people and share ideas.

Message from the Editor

This is YOUR newsletter. If you wish to share items of interest with the membership, such as job openings, career moves, or retirements, please email them by the 21st of the month for inclusion in the next newsletter. Thank you!

Gina Foschi
MNGFOA President Elect
651-638-2105

