Agenda

20th Annual Town Finance School

May 14 & 15, 2020 – The Gideon Putnam
(24 Gideon Putnam Road, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866)

May 21 & 22, 2020 – Ramada Geneva Lakefront
(41 Lake Drive, Geneva, NY 14456)

Co-sponsored by the Association of Towns of the State of New York (AOT) and the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC), Division of Local Government and School Accountability.

Thursday, May 14 & 21

8:00 A.M.  Breakfast and Registration

8:50 A.M.  Welcoming Remarks from the Office of the State Comptroller and Association of Towns

9:00 A.M.  Building Budget Guardrails: Five Financial Policies that will Boost Budget Performance
(60 minutes)  Matt Horn, Director of Local Government Services, MRB Group
Managing local government finance has never been more challenging. Increasing mandates, pressure from constituents to keep tax rates low, deferred capital maintenance… it all adds up to a potential budget disaster. Developing a sound policy framework means that you can make critical decisions about your town’s finances before there’s a fire. Cooler heads prevail, and your financial position remains strong.

10:00 A.M.  Break

10:15 A.M.  Accounting for Capital Projects
(75 minutes)  Local Official Training Unit, Division of Local Government and School Accountability, Office of the State Comptroller
Dealing with capital projects is often a source of confusion for local officials. In this session, we will discuss the significance of properly planning and accounting for capital projects. A case study capital project will be presented, with a class discussion on the proper accounting entries.

11:30 A.M.  Lunch

12:30 P.M.  Policies and Procedures to Manage Your Town
(75 minutes)  Local Official Training Unit, Division of Local Government and School Accountability, Office of the State Comptroller
State law mandates that local governments adopt certain policies to provide standards and guidance for their employees. In addition, there are a host of other subject areas where “best practices” guide operations and where towns should adopt policies and procedures tailored to suit their needs. This session will focus on the many programmatic areas where written policies are either required or highly recommended.
1:45 P.M. Break

2:00 P.M. Tales from the Field: Town Audit Findings
Local Official Training Unit, Division of Local Government and School Accountability, Office of the State Comptroller
While OSC auditors may review financial activities, our audits often focus on whether a local government is performing activities in line with established criteria. In this session we will discuss several examples of OSC town audits to illustrate the various scope areas auditors may review, some specific audit findings and our recommendations.

3:15 P.M. Break

3:30 P.M. Ask the Auditor, Ask the Attorney
Local Official Training Unit, Division of Local Government and School Accountability, Office of the State Comptroller and Katie Hodgdon, Counsel, Association of Towns of the State of New York
Representatives from the OSC and AOT attorneys will answer questions in an open forum.

4:30 P.M. Reception Sponsored by NYMIR
Enjoy some hors d’oeuvres and network with other town officials and the staff from OSC and AOT. The reception is sponsored by NYMIR, which is a licensed, regulated, non-profit municipal insurer owned by its policyholders - over 900 municipalities across New York State.

Friday, May 15 & 22

8:00 A.M. Breakfast

9:00 A.M. Multiyear Financial Planning
Local Official Training Unit, Division of Local Government and School Accountability, Office of the State Comptroller
Long-term planning can improve a local government’s overall financial condition by integrating financial, capital and strategic planning. It can also support the decision-making process by enabling local officials to demonstrate the long-term financial impacts of choices made today. This session will discuss some of the elements of a good multiyear financial plan.

10:15 A.M. Break

10:30 A.M. Whose Money is it Anyway: An Overview of Managing the Highway Fund
Katie Hodgdon, Counsel, Association of Towns of the State of New York
Nothing can spark debate quite like the highway fund. This session will provide a general overview of the highway fund and then delve into the intricacies that lie within, including the roles of the town board and the highway superintendent, the importance of the 284 agreement, DA versus DB, transfers between funds and appropriate expenditures.

11:45 A.M. End