Agenda

23rd Annual Town Finance School

May 8 & 9, 2023 – 41 Lakefront Hotel, Trademark Collection By Wyndham
(41 Lakefront Drive, Geneva, New York 14456)

May 15 & 16, 2023 – Marriott Albany
(189 Wolf Rd, Albany, NY 12205)

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.

Monday, May 8 & 15

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. Inflation and Supply Chain Issues and Stagnant State Aid, Oh My: Developing a Town Budget in Uncertain Times
(75 minutes)
Sarah Brancatella, Counsel and Legislative Director, Katie Hodgdon, Counsel, Association of Towns of the State of New York
While things may change – inflation may rise and supply stock may dwindle – a few things remain the same, including the need for government to function and provide essential services. As the 2024 budget cycle approaches, join Sarah Brancatella, Legislative Director and Counsel, and Katie Hodgdon, Counsel, as they provide a thorough overview and analysis of the cornerstone of these services – the town budget. Discussion will range from the basic (by when does the budget have to be adopted) to the not-so-basic (how fund balance impacts budget and levy), while offering tips and insights into how town boards can effectively manage the budget during tumultuous times. This course is designed for both the seasoned official and those new to the office. Bring your questions.

10:15 A.M. Break

10:30 A.M. Tales from the Field: Town Audits
(75 minutes)
Staff, 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 audits to illustrate the various scope areas auditors may review, some specific audit findings, and our recommendations.

11:45 A.M. Lunch

12:30 P.M. Establishing and Accounting for Reserves
(75 minutes)
Staff, Local Official Training Unit, Division of Local Government and School Accountability, Office of the State Comptroller
Properly established reserves can provide many benefits to municipalities. This session will assist local officials in understanding the purpose, benefits and proper use of reserves. We will discuss several
commonly used reserves, the distinction between accounting and legal reserves, and the accounting treatment for reserves.

1:45 P.M.  Break

2:00 P.M.  NYSLRS - Reporting Elected and Appointed Officials
(75 minutes)

2:00 P.M.  NYSLRS - Reporting Elected and Appointed Officials

Staff, Pension Integrity Bureau, New York State and Local Retirement System, Office of the State
Comptroller

This session will explain how the New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) calculates service credit for elected and appointed officials who are members of NYSLRS. We will cover the requirements for elected and appointed officials (a record of activities) and employers (a standard workday and reporting resolution and adjustments to days reported).

3:15 P.M.  Break

3:30 P.M.  Ask the Auditor, Ask the Attorney
(60 minutes)

Ask the Auditor, Ask the Attorney

Staff, Local Official Training Unit, Division of Local Government and School Accountability, Office of the State Comptroller; and Sarah Brancatella, Counsel and Legislative Director, Katie Hodgdon, Counsel, Association of Towns of the State of New York

OSC auditors and AOT attorneys will answer questions in an open forum.

4:30 P.M.  Reception Sponsored by CompAlliance and NYMIR

Enjoy some hors d’oeuvres and network with other town officials and the staff from OSC and AOT.

Tuesday, May 9 & 16

8:00 A.M.  Breakfast

9:00 A.M.  Safeguarding Our Assets: Fraud Prevention and Detection
(75 minutes)

Safeguarding Our Assets: Fraud Prevention and Detection

Staff, Local Official Training Unit, Division of Local Government and School Accountability, Office of the State Comptroller

This session will identify steps local officials can take to help detect and prevent fraud and abuse. Participants will learn about the fraud triangle, which consists of common red flags, organizational vulnerabilities to fraud and how to minimize risks.

10:15 A.M.  Break

10:30 A.M.  Common Pitfalls in Budgeting
(75 minutes)

Common Pitfalls in Budgeting

Staff, Local Official Training Unit, Division of Local Government and School Accountability, Office of the State Comptroller

OSC audits often reveal problems with municipal budgeting practices, including the use of unrealistic estimates; improper use of fund balance; and failure to monitor the budget. We’ll discuss several common areas of concern and provide best practice suggestions and resources to help the town board, the town supervisor, and other department heads avoid these pitfalls.

11:45 A.M.  End