

CANADIAN

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FINANCE MATTERS

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Committee on Canadian Issues (CCI) Highlights

Chicago, IL | Saturday, June 9, 2012

Co-chairs Eric Sawyer and John Martin welcomed the committee to Chicago for the twenty-eighth meeting since the committee's inception in San Francisco in 1998.

New GFOA Executive Board Member from Canada



Congratulations to John Martin for being elected to the GFOA Executive Board at GFOA's Tuesday business meeting. John will join Eric Sawyer as the two GFOA Executive Board members from Canada.

New Committee Members and Advisor

The following new members and advisor have joined the committee: Nicole Deveaux, Cindy Fernandes, Suzanne Fillion, Mark Gilbert, Glen Jarbeau, and Valentina Todoran. Nicole Deveaux is the General Manager of Finance and Information Technology for the District of North Vancouver; Cindy Fernandes is the Department Controller and Manager of Finance & Administrative Services for the Community Services Department of the City of Winnipeg; Suzanne Fillion is the Manager of Financial Services for the City of Surrey; Glen Jarbeau is the Finance Manager for the City of Spruce Grove; and Valentina Todoran is the Assistant Treasurer for the Town of Hampstead. Mark Gilbert is a Professor at Dalhousie University and is the committee's advisor. Mark Gilbert was one of the committee's founding members.

Standards Task Force Best Practices Survey

An important focus of the committee is to adopt

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COMMITTEE ON CANADIAN ISSUES (CCI)

Members

Eric Sawyer, Co-Chair, City of Calgary, AB

John Martin, Co-Chair, City of Moncton,

GFOA's best practices and advisories that are applicable in Canada; the Standards Task Force is responsible for this process. A survey was recently distributed to all of GFOA's Canadian members to assist the committee in identifying which GFOA best practices are most helpful in day-to-day work, and to suggest potential Canadian-specific best practices that the committee could examine further. The results of the survey will be discussed at the committee's next meeting in Halifax. The best practices and advisories that have been adopted by the committee can be accessed in the [Canadian section of GFOA's website](#).

Professional Development Task Force GFOA Training

A major focus of the task force is coordinating the Canadian session and the Canadian Update at the GFOA annual conference. At the most recent GFOA annual conference in Chicago, the Canadian session focused on two specific examples of energy initiatives: one involving a neighborhood utility that uses sewage as an energy source in Vancouver, and the other involving the development of the heat/power system needed to support a 30,000-person sustainable community in Edmonton. The Canadian Update covered a wide variety of topics, including the results of an [alternative service delivery survey conducted by Dalhousie University](#), municipal long-term asset management planning, succession planning, and considering the public good versus personal benefit. The task force will examine potential topics for the next Canadian session and the Canadian Update at its winter meeting.

The Professional Development Task Force continues to assist GFOA in recruiting reviewers from Canada for the two GFOA Awards Programs, the Canadian Award for Financial Reporting Program and the Budget Awards Program.

Advocacy & Communications Task Force GFOA Canadian Newsletter

The Advocacy & Communications Task Force is responsible for the development of the GFOA Canadian newsletter, *Canadian Finance Matters*. The task force continues to seek interesting and informative articles on government finance that it can incorporate in the newsletter.

The committee is also updated at each meeting on the important events occurring at the key provincial associations throughout Canada, since many of the committee members are active in the provincial associations. For example, committee member Ron Kaufman is the President of the MFOA in Ontario.

NB

Marlys Bilanski, City of Saskatoon, SK

Trevor Bingler, Province of Ontario,
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing,
ON

Carl Bird, City of Yellowknife, NT

Robert Bishop, City of St. John's, NL

Marion Brass-Yellowfly, Siksika Nation, AB

Catherine Brubacher, City of Brantford, ON

Nicole Deveaux, District of North
Vancouver, BC

Cindy Fernandes, City of Winipeg, MB

Suzanne Fillion, City of Surrey, BC

Teresa Florizone, City of Regina, SK

Bruce Fisher, Halifax Regional
Municipality, NS

Glen Jarbeau, City of Spruce Grove, AB

Ronald Kaufman, Town of Caledon, ON

Greg Kliparchuk, City of Edmonton, AB

Esther Lee, City of Vancouver, BC

Lorna Rosen, City of Edmonton, AB

Richard Sun, Town of Hampstead, QC

Valentina Todoran, Town of Hampstead,
QC

Committee Advisor

Mark Gilbert, Dalhousie University,
Halifax, NS

GFOA Staff Members

Stephen Gauthier, Jim Phillips

Other Business

The co-chairs of committee's three task forces have been updated. The co-chairs for the Advocacy & Communications Task Force are Esther Lee and Carl Bird. The co-chairs for the Professional Development Task Force are Ron Kaufman and Greg Kliparchuk. The co-chairs for the Standards Task Force are Trevor Bingler and Bruce Fisher.

GFOA President Christopher Morrill and Past Presidents Linda Davidson and Len Brittain visited with the committee and thanked the CCI for their outstanding contributions to GFOA and for their work on behalf of GFOA's Canadian members.

Acknowledgement of CCI members

The committee thanked Betty Holsten Boyer, Diana Lokken and Ed Hankins for their valuable contributions to the Committee on Canadian Issues. Letters were provided by the co-chairs to the members to express this gratitude, since their final term on the committee expires at the end of December.

Next meeting

The next meeting for the committee will be held in Halifax on February 1 and 2.

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Highlighted Best Practice

A section of the GFOA website is dedicated to [GFOA's best practices that are applicable in Canada](#). One of the best practices that the Committee on Canadian Issues would like to highlight is the [Establishing Appropriate Capitalization Thresholds for Capital Assets](#). This best practice provides important guidelines to consider in establishing capitalization thresholds.

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The City of Calgary's Zero-Based Review Program

The City of Calgary; Eric.Sawyer@calgary.ca

Like many municipalities across Canada, The City of Calgary is putting an increased focus on improving service efficiency and effectiveness and has recently begun to implement a Zero-Based Review (or ZBR) Program. The Program is a made-in-Calgary approach to systematically looking at which programs and services the municipal government will provide as well as how they are provided to citizens. At the core of a ZBR are five standard questions on service scope, service level, efficiency, effectiveness and funding.

The term "Zero-Based Review" stems from an initial interest from a few members of Calgary City Council to investigate Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB) as an avenue to achieve fiscal restraint, particularly during the recent economic downturn. To address this, the Calgary Administration commissioned the GFOA to undertake research on ZBB, particularly in light of questions that have been raised about the value derived from ZBB versus the cost required to put it into practice. The GFOA research generally indicated that there are few pure practitioners of ZBB, and that a number of alternatives to ZBB exist, which can achieve many of the same objectives while sidestepping some of its disadvantages.

The GFOA's research helped The City of Calgary administration focus our response to Council on the ends, or objectives, that our Council had identified (i.e., to manage expenditures well and increase fiscal

discipline) rather than on one particular tool, such as ZBB. On the latter point specifically, our investigation found that reviews of government services are most effective when conducted outside the budget process.

The approach ultimately developed by The City of Calgary has relatively little in common with zero-based budgeting except for the concept of looking at all services from a “zero base.” What this means is that ZBRs start by asking whether all existing services should continue to be provided to the same degree and in the same way. ZBRs are not simply about reducing costs or setting budgets, but rather focus on effectiveness, and how services can achieve desired results, as well as service efficiency.

A guiding principle of the ZBR program is to ensure that every dollar we spend is used well to create the city where Calgarians have said they want to live. To this end, one of the key concepts of the ZBR process is an examination of services in the context of The City’s long-term policy goals. These include our 30-year Municipal Development plan, which, in turn, was created based on an extensive community engagement project, called imagineCALGARY – a long-range urban sustainability plan that includes a 100-year vision for our community.

The depth and rigor required of a ZBR means that each review will take approximately one year to complete, and that not all services or business units can be reviewed at one time. It is not necessary to review every service each year, nor even in each business plan and budget cycle (currently three years at The City of Calgary). The ZBR program is intended to be a multi-year improvement initiative, and not a short-term fix.

The ZBR Program began in early 2012, with a pilot review project to test the method. Based on an evaluation of the pilot, the Zero-Based Review Program has been refined and will continue through 2013-2014. Four additional Business Units have been selected to be reviewed in the next two years. In the spirit of continuous improvement, it is expected that the ZBR method will continue to be refined as we learn from our experience.

More information on Calgary’s ZBR program can be found at The City of Calgary website, www.calgary.ca.

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Vancouver Moves Towards Using Service Metrics in Budgeting to Make Strategic Decisions

Melinda Munro, Manager of Performance Measurement and Business Transformation, City of Vancouver;
Melinda.Munro@vancouver.ca

Municipalities and other local governments across North America are still recovering from the financial crisis of 2008 and 2009 along with dealing with the perennial demands of the infrastructure deficit and the desire for more citizen accountability.

The City of Vancouver started on its accountability journey in 2009 with the commencement of the Vancouver Services Review and its close examination of better methods of service delivery. The journey began when Vancouver faced the shock of having development charges drop for the first time in recent memory. It became clear that reliance on steady growth was now a risky strategy and the city needed to obtain a better understanding of the details of its service delivery and rigour around decision making. Along with examination of individual services, fiscal accountability requires the ability to take both a close up view and a strategic view of the services offered.

In 2012, the City turned its attention to the way it presents its budget for approval by City Council. Faced with questions about the level of detail provided to Councillors, the CFO engaged PWC to

research best practices in public sector budgeting and offer options for how Vancouver could improve and become a leader in transparent and participatory budgeting.

Among several elements of the new approach, the City decided to focus on two key improvements: combining the Capital and Operating Budgets into a single document and adding performance metrics to illustrate the relationship between the financial investment and the outcomes for citizens.

Combining the Capital and Operating Budgets enables Council to see the relationship between the immediate operational focus and the long term service building decisions. Adding performance metrics illustrates how the investment decisions relate to the quantity, quality and results of the services both in the immediate term and the long term.

This article will focus primarily on the effort undertaken to build performance metrics into the budget, but the 2013 Proposed Budget as a whole represents an enormous effort and commitment of a large number of people and a willingness to expose many years of hard work to close scrutiny by Council and the public and should be recognized for the achievement it is.

Building Performance Metrics into the Budget

Under the leadership of the General Manager, Financial Services/CFO and the Director of Financial Planning and Analysis, the General Managers and Directors of the largest departments (by budget) were invited to provide performance metrics which showed the quantity (volume of effort), quality (efficiency, satisfaction) and result (outcome) of their services.

This sounds simpler than it is. In order to identify metrics, it is necessary to understand services in a fairly precise way. Departments are not the same as services. For example, in Vancouver the Engineering *Department* is responsible for the Water, Sewer, Solid Waste and Neighbourhood Energy (District Energy) Utilities as well as Street Construction, Street Cleaning, Transportation Planning and Parking. Within the Solid Waste Utility, there are also multiple services such as curbside collection, landfill management and waste diversion. Setting metrics at the department level is too general to make meaningful decisions, but setting them at the process level (tonnes of garbage per truck) is too granular and overwhelming for the governance level of decision making (Council and the public). Finding the sweet spot for public reporting is more of an art than a science. Vancouver reported 154 metrics for 9 departments and 30 services. This only represented a sub-set of the complete inventory of services of the City, and future budgets will expand the range of services reported.

The second challenge in reporting performance metrics is ensuring a reasonable degree of reliability and repeatability in the data reported. In the initial review there were lots of suggestions for what could be measured and what should be measured, but in many cases these were things that had not historically been measured. For the 2013 budget it was decided to mainly report those things that had data, with only a sprinkling of suggested future measures.

For statistics specialists, the idea of "reasonable" reliability may seem problematic, but one of the pieces of information that emerged early on is that within different services and different disciplines there are different approaches to metric precision and collection. Government is very good at measuring and tracking "inputs" and "effort" but less good at tracking "outputs". The tracking of "outcomes" like public wellness or business health is even more difficult and raises the spectre of suggesting that local government is alone responsible for outcomes that require significant partnership with other levels of government and the private sector.

Vancouver found that across services there were different levels of commitment to tracking data and different preferences for levels of granularity. It was possible to report on the square metres of road paved annually, but not on the modal split of road users. There were also lively debates about what

constituted an “outcome” for a service like Recreation Programming – should residents be fitter? Happier? Better swimmers?

Because this was a first effort and the metrics were gathered very quickly, the resulting tables illustrate the different approaches across services and disciplines. Comparing approaches and applying some analysis to inputs v. outputs v. outcomes over 2013 will support more robustness in future budgets and in future decision making.

Critical now to consolidating the efforts for the 2013 budget is to build a system capable of sustaining this work, including a data dictionary which records where the data is located and how to replicate in future data calls, and identifying what resources will be necessary to maintain the data gathering and management over time. Metrics collection that is treated as a “one-off” can never support long-term decision making.

Using the performance metrics in decision making

Listing tables of metrics and data is only the most basic approach to performance management. Using the data to confirm understanding and make future decisions is where the true value of the effort is determined. Do improvements in capital planning for sewer separation actually result in a decline in flooding issues and improved effluence? What role do external factors such as precipitation play? Does the utilization rate for civic theatres represent sufficient usage for publicly subsidized space? Do increased social grants result in more employment? This kind of analysis enables senior administrators and Councillors to better focus investments in fiscal and other resources to achieve the outcomes the public has asked for.

Vancouver is now only at the beginning of the “analytics” journey. Some of the steps that will be taken in 2013 include:

- Identifying benchmarks among other local governments – we know how well we did, but is it good enough?
- Identifying better or more relevant metrics.
- Allocating resources systematically to the services being measured in order to do financial and FTE analysis. Not unlike many other local governments, budgets and FTEs are allocated by department, not by service, and the allocations are therefore not very helpful in deciding on appropriate resourcing at the service level.
- Building a culture of analytics in which all employees begin to ask rigorous questions about resource usage, space utilization, community outcomes, and advancing Council’s long term goals.

Vancouver’s 2013 Budget can be viewed at www.vancouver.ca/your-government/budgets.aspx.

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Asset Management Update:

Bringing Australia's National Asset Management Strategy to Canada

Andy Wardell, Co-Chair, Asset Management BC, and GFOABC representative; Wardella@dmv.org

Steve Brown, Secretary, Saskatchewan Municipal Asset Management, GFOA Saskatchewan; cfo.cityofhumboldt@sasktel.net

The common vision of Asset Management BC (AMBC) and Saskatchewan Municipal Asset Management (SMAM) is a systems-based approach to asset management best practices that supports integrating the political, administrative, technical, operational, financial and planning aspects of asset management. The primary purpose is knowledge transfer and promoting the “learning experience” on asset management.

Over the past two years AMBC and SMAM have worked closely together to bring Australia’s National

Asset Management Strategy (NAMS) to Canada. Why NAMS? NAMS was built by municipal government for municipal government and provides a clear well-documented path to successful asset management. As of November 2012, 337 municipalities in Australia follow the NAMS program. One of the keys to the NAMS training is its emphasis on building interdisciplinary team skills that involve your personnel engaged in financial, technical and operational services. Also fundamental to its success are tools and templates that are easy to use and provide a solid approach to creating asset management plans. Those plans, based on PSAB 3150 inventories, include condition and risk assessments, and enable planning of the entire asset life cycle. Asset management plans are designed in such a way that they are short (20 to 30 pages) and easily understood by both management and Council. The program is also scalable from large cities down to small rural towns.

Led by Australia's best trainers, we have held eight 3-day training sessions for 15 municipalities in BC and 21 municipalities in Saskatchewan. Some of the larger municipalities include the City of Vancouver (population 651,000), City of Regina (population 193,100), and the City of Burnaby (population 229,000); the smallest community is the Village of Torquay (population 236). Further training sessions are planned for 2013, with dates being booked in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the United States.

Working together on asset management plans strengthens interdisciplinary learning and builds trust. Strong asset management plans provide essential financial information and feed into long term financial plans. In fact, how can you have a strong long-term financial plan without strong asset management plans? As Government Finance Officers we need to think strategically and challenge ourselves to confirm that when we balance municipal budgets we have a clear road map to financial sustainability that includes the replacement of necessary municipal infrastructure throughout its life cycle.

Working with our Australian partners, Asset Management Saskatchewan has created four powerful videos that tell the story of Asset Management. We encourage you to take a few minutes to watch them at the following link: www.assetmanagementsk.ca/asset-management.

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Emerging PSAB Issues

Brian Szabo, CA, Partner, KPMG Public Sector Practice, Vancouver; Leader, BC Local Government Practice; bszabo@kpmg.ca

Although no new standards have been released over the past year, the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) has recently released two Exposure Drafts which, when approved, are expected to be applicable for year ends beginning on or after April 1, 2015:

- **Related parties and**
- **Use of Appropriations**

The implications of these proposed standards are significantly less than most of the new standards issued in recent years; nevertheless, financial statement preparers will need to implement policies and procedures to ensure the relevant requirements are incorporated into financial reporting.

This summary is a high level overview of the proposed requirements. Depending on the responses received relating to the Exposure Drafts, further changes may be made prior to finalization of the standards. Readers are encouraged to remain alert to such developments by visiting the PSAB website at www.cica.ca/applying-the-standards/accounting-standards-for-public-sector/index.aspx.

Related Party Transactions - Exposure Draft

PSAB has not, to date, provided any guidance over the identification of, disclosures over transactions with, or accounting for transactions with related parties, other than those that are controlled or

otherwise within the Government Reporting Entity of the reporting government. The current exposure draft was issued on September 18, 2012, and comments were required by November 21, 2012.

Scope

Under the proposed standard, related parties will be defined as those entities that control or are controlled by the reporting entity, are under common control or have shared controls or are subject to shared control of a reporting entity. The definition is proposed to extend to key management personnel and close members of their families. Transactions with management that are in the normal course of operations such as salary/benefits and expense reimbursement are not required for disclosure.

Recognition and measurement

The proposed standard would require all related party transactions to be measured at the exchange amount. Depending on the structuring of the transaction, the exchange amount may be the carrying amount, the fair value or the consideration paid or received. When a substantive change in ownership of an item transferred does not occur, normally the carrying amount is the appropriate measure. With the exception of contributed goods and services, related party transactions should normally be recorded on a gross basis by both parties to the transaction. The recipient of contributed goods and services MAY record the revenue and expense provided the goods and services would otherwise have been purchased. (PS3150 requires that contributed tangible capital assets be recorded at their fair value.) The contributing entity would record an expense related to the goods or service provided.

Disclosure

Related party transactions need not be disclosed when they are not considered material to the financial statements. However, judgment should be used in making this determination, as often a simple quantitative measure would not indicate the significance of a related party transaction to the user of the financial statements. When disclosure is considered appropriate, it should include the nature of the relationship between the transacting parties, the nature of the transaction, the amounts recognized and the measurement basis, any outstanding balances and terms and conditions attached to them, any contractual obligations or contingencies connected to related parties, and any related party transactions for which no amounts have been recognized.

Transactions that are considered to be in the normal course of operations and under standard commercial terms are not required to be disclosed.

Transitional provisions

The new standard is expected to be applicable for year ends beginning on or after April 1, 2015 (with earlier adoption permitted).

Use of Appropriations - Exposure Draft

PSAB released an exposure draft on September 25, 2012, which would provide guidance on accounting for appropriations, which are defined to be funding provided by a legislature or council to a public sector entity in the form of an authorization for spending a designated amount for an approved purpose. The guidance is distinct from that related to government transfers (PS3410), and would provide for an appropriation to be recognized in the financial statements of the ultimate recipient when the enabling authority is in effect and an eligible transaction has occurred. In this case, the recipient entity would record the revenue associated with the appropriation either in the statements of operations (as a separate line item) or as a reconciling item to the closing accumulated surplus or deficit.

A reconciliation between the use of appropriations and the authorized amounts is required. The

standard would be effective for year ends beginning on or after April 1, 2015.

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Public Sector Accounting Board ("PSAB") Measuring Financial Performance in the Public Sector Financial Statements – Consultation Paper 2 ("Paper 2")

Nancy Gomerich, BBA, CA; Principle, NG Consulting; nancy@ngconsulting.ca

Paper 2* is the second consultation paper prepared by PSAB's Conceptual Framework Task Force ("Task Force"). The purpose of the Task Force has been to complete research and identify issues and options for possible changes to PSAB's current conceptual framework ("Framework") (primarily sections 1000, 1100 and 1201 in the PSA Handbook). The Framework is the basis for all other PSA standards, and financial statement presentations and all financial reporting practices must be consistent therewith, *thus any significant changes to the existing framework will have a pervasive impact on government financial accounting practices and reported financial statement numbers.*

Paper 2 proposes two Alternative Financial Reporting models (Revenue/Expense Model and Hybrid Model) that are significantly different than the Current Model (Asset/Liability Model). If either Alternative Financial Reporting Models are ultimately adopted:

- A new/sixth financial statement, "Statement of Deferred Inflows and Outflows," will be required;
- The reported surplus/deficit on the existing Statement of Operations will be a different number than what would be reported under the Current Model and will mean something different;
- The reported Accumulated Surplus on the existing Statement of Financial Position as reported on the face of this statement, will either be a different number than currently reported (Revenue/Expense Model), or be required to be separated into three distinct components: Accumulated Operating Surplus/Deficit, Accumulated Remeasurement Gains and Losses, and Accumulated Deferred Inflows and Outflows; and
- Deferred Inflows and Deferred Outflows will need to be identified, deferred and then ultimately recognized over time in the Statement of Operations (requiring an appropriate tracking system to be maintained by the local government) after running through the Statement of Deferred Inflows and Outflows.

And, under the Hybrid Model, the Balance Sheet /Statement of Financial Position will not articulate with the Income Statement/Statement of Operations (i.e. the surplus/deficit will not agree to the total change in accumulated surplus).

A webinar hosted by NG Consulting on Paper 2 was held November 8th, 2012, with both Martha Denning (author of Paper 2 on behalf of the Task Force) and Tim Beauchamp attending and presenting. The webinar was attended by over forty finance officers in BC. A summary of the concerns raised by webinar attendees on Paper 2 were:

- Local government representation on the Task Force was significantly disproportionate, with only two local government representatives out of ten members (the remainder being provincial and federal government representatives).
- The Alternative Financial Reporting Models would complicate the financial statements and reduce their overall understandability for most users. Understandability is a fundamental characteristic of the financial statements that should be foremost considered.
- Exactly what will constitute a deferred inflow or outflow is not specifically addressed in Paper 2. However, it is extremely likely that, at a minimum, deferred inflows would include ALL capital grants received by a local government with the requirement that they be deferred and amortized

into revenue (Statement of Operations) over the life of the related capital asset. In any case, the addition of deferred inflows and outflows will create a (potentially significant) administrative burden.

- Local governments currently disclose a break-out of various components of Accumulated Surplus in the notes to the financial statements. Both Alternative Models would likely require a reconciliation between the way the local government breaks-out accumulated surplus and the resulting required break-out (Hybrid Model) or different amount (Revenue and Expense Model), and increased complexity in general ledger accounting.
- The Current Model Statement of Operations surplus/deficit is meant to measure the change in a local government's net assets (i.e., accumulated surplus) or the extent to which revenues of the period are sufficient to cover the costs of providing the goods and services in the period. While not a perfect measure, what it means is very clear – the change in net assets, being the change in financial and non-financial assets. Under the Alternative Financial Reporting Models, the Statement of Operations surplus/deficit is intended to be a measure of “inter-period equity” and meant to provide “information to help assess the extent to which the current generations of citizens shift the burden of paying for current-year services to future-year taxpayers.” The concerns/questions raised during the webinar were: (1) Is it really possible that an accounting statement that does not measure and account for a huge amount of environmental, social and economic and other “spin-offs” or impacts of the way governments operate, can provide a meaningful measure of inter-period equity? Are we not asking too much of the Financial Statements (given they are explicitly intended to be general purpose financial statements), and likely providing misleading information and confusing the issue of inter-period equity even more? (2) Determination of what would constitute a deferred inflow or outflow (and consequently reported surplus/deficit) will require significant judgement (unless specifically defined) and accordingly different accounting treatments may be applied by different governments for the same flow. Or, if what constitutes a deferred inflow or outflow is specifically and narrowly defined, the exclusion of similar types of revenues and expenses as deferred in/outflows, may result in even greater confusion as to what the reported surplus/deficit is supposed to measure.

*The deadline to submit comments to PSAB on this important Paper 2 is January 31, 2013. Comments must be submitted in writing by (paper) mail, e-mail (ed.psector@cica.ca), or by completing PSAB's on line form.***

This paper was prepared by Nancy Gomerich (NG Consulting, 604-463-9845, nancy@ngconsulting.ca) with the intent to bring the significance of providing comments to PSAB on this paper to the attention of the GFOA membership.

* Link to Paper 2: www.frascanada.ca/standards-for-public-sector-entities/documents-for-comment/open-for-comment/item55550.aspx

** Mail Comments to: Tim Beauchamp, Director, Public Sector Accounting, 277 Wellington Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5V 3H2. To complete the on-line response form: click on the link to Paper 2 above, on the line for the Paper click the “RQ” document – takes a bit of time to open so be patient.

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Western Canadian GFOA Conference Report

Sam Weller, Executive Director of the GFOA of BC; weller@gfoabc.ca

At the beginning of October, over 350 finance officers converged on the old Fairmont hotel in downtown Vancouver for the 2012 GFOA Western Canada Conference. Old friends connected with each other and new contacts were made at the Welcome reception on Tuesday evening, held in the Starlight room on the 14th floor of the hotel with a panoramic view of downtown Vancouver.

The conference proper opened on Wednesday with an inspirational presentation by Colin & Julie Angus, Adventurers & Authors, who have circumnavigated the globe under their own power. It gave us all pause for thought about what we might accomplish if we put our minds to it. Concurrent technical sessions followed for the remainder of the day giving delegates choices of sessions ranging from Enterprise risk management to Lean Government and from Infrastructure funding to Emerging technology.

After a free evening on Wednesday night, the conference resumed on Thursday morning with our keynote speaker, Senator Mike Duffy, who entertained and informed us with stories from his days at the CBC and his appointment to the senate, which he described as a “task less thanks”. The annual PSAB update followed together with more concurrent sessions and forums for small communities and budget officers. That evening, we transported the whole group on buses to the Vancouver aquarium where we were entertained by the dolphins, amazed by the displays and presented with a dazzling array of food and beverages. It was a wonderful evening and sets a new standard for conference entertainment.

On Friday, we started the morning with a debate on PSAB standards, a lighthearted treatment of a technical subject which was very popular. After the traditional economic update by Eric Lancelles, Harold Calla of the First Nations Financial Management Board closed the conference with a presentation of the importance of financial standards in all communities. Our new President Lorrie Schmalenberg thanked the local committee for a great conference and invited everyone to Saskatoon to do this again next year.

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2013 Government Finance Officers Association of Western Canada Conference

Brian Parschauer, President, Saskatchewan GFOA; bparschauer@citypa.com

The Government Finance Officers' Association of Western Canada is holding its 2013 conference in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, on September 18th-20th. Why Saskatoon? Because it is one of Canada's sunniest cities and it can also offer visitors the opportunity to experience a bustling nightlife, or the opportunity to relax with a walk, jog, hike, or bike ride along the Meewasin riverbank trail with its scenic and relaxing atmosphere along the South Saskatchewan River amid an array of fall colors. Complementing Saskatoon's natural beauties are its many cultural institutions exhibiting the cultural diversity of the community. An added benefit is the opportunity to stay in one of the City's finer hotels that offer a sense of down-home hospitality second to none. Close to these hotels are trendy shopping districts for the avid shopper and a variety of restaurants to satisfy the pickiest palette. If science peaks your interest, why not tour the Canadian Light Source Synchrotron? These are just a few of the reasons to come experience the hospitality and friendliness of the City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. You won't be disappointed.

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2013 GFOA Annual Conference

Register early and save!

If you're not yet signed up to attend GFOA's 107th annual conference, *Bridges to Financial Sustainability*, on June 2-5 at Moscone Center North in San Francisco, California, sign up by January 31 to take advantage of the early registration fee. [Click here](#) to view the brochure, register, and reserve your housing online through GFOA's official hotel block.

As part of the conference, once again a Canadian-specific session will be held that will focus on one of the key topics currently impacting Canadian government finance officers. A Canadian discussion group

will also meet to cover a wide range of informative topics and to provide delegates the opportunity to share information and concerns with members of GFOA's Standing Committee on Canadian Issues.

Earn additional CPE credits by signing up for GFOA's preconference seminars on Friday, May 31, and Saturday, June 1, at the San Francisco Marriott Marquis. [Click here](#) for seminar descriptions and to register.

Questions? E-mail [GFOA Conference](#).

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GFOA Training

Plan this year's training now.

Visit GFOA's training schedule page for the latest course offerings, speaker listings, and to register. Take advantage of earning CPE credits at an affordable cost and save with group discounts.

Don't miss these upcoming courses taking place at GFOA's offices in Chicago, Illinois:

- *Budget Analyst Training Academy* (March 5-8, 2013)
Earn 24 CPE credits
[Click here](#) to read more / [Brochure](#), including details on hotel / [Register online](#)
- *Hands On with Lean Process Improvement for the Public Sector* (April 4-5, 2013)
Earn 16 CPE credits
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