

President Kevin Wachtel, Incoming President's Remarks

The more things change, the more they remain the same. Over the past 6 months, we have all been required to pivot in the way we get our work done, and the way we provide service to our customers, residents and businesses. But the mission has remained the same. We innovate, transform, modify, adjust, create, but we continue to focus on the tasks and responsibilities that are critical to success.

The IGFOA, just like each one of our organizations, and each one of us as individuals, has experienced tremendous changes and challenges. While we thought we would be addressing concerns brought on by pension fund consolidation, we were rocked to the core with a pandemic that makes face to face interaction a risky behavior. We pivot, and find ways to provide value to our members.

The IGFOA is the premier organization for government finance professionals in Illinois. Even though our landscape is changing, we will still move forward with this primary objective in mind. When we do, we may be reaching back to basics, and focusing on the core of what makes the IGFOA, and doing that better than we have done before.

So let's get back to basics. Starting with a reminder of what we stand for.
In 2019, the Executive Board updated its Strategic Plan, which built upon planning efforts of the past. We first confirmed our mission and tagline.
Our Mission: IGFOA promotes excellence in government finance.
Our tagline: Learning, Connecting, Progressing

That plan confirmed four primary "Thrusts" or focus area for the organization.

1. Deliver high quality, relevant, accessible training and resources.

This is our core service, and where we shine. We continue to look for topics of interest, speakers and volunteers. We want your fresh ideas and perspectives – please reach out to Committee chairs, Executive Board members or IGFOA staff to get involved or to get your ideas moving in the right direction.

2. Provide expert government finance perspective on appropriate emerging issues.

The IGFOA has often served as a resource to other entities, such as the Illinois Municipal League. Recently, the IGFOA has started relationships with the newly

formed fire pension investment fund to offer expertise that will only serve to improve local government.

3. Foster growth in the government finance profession.

We continue to inform our membership of current IGFOA news and events. But more importantly, we encourage the next generation of finance officers by nurturing relationships with colleges and universities. I encourage each one of you to reach out to your local high school or college to see if you can speak at the next career fair.

4. Inspire IGFOA members to be good stewards of local communities and the government finance profession.

The IGFOA is full of generous and thoughtful volunteers. You all dedicate time and talent, not only to IGFOA, but other organizations as well.

Without our committee chairs, IGFOA would not be able to accomplish anything outlined in our strategic plan, and they make us the premier Illinois Government finance professional association.

- PEC- Rachel Musiala
- Membership – Linda Dalton
- TARC – Christina Coyle
- Partners Forum – Sue Kling
- Legislative – Bill McCarty

Thanks, too, to all of those who have served on these committees. These working groups really do make a difference. I would like to specifically thank the members of the Annual Conference Planning Team – who had quite a different challenge this year

Jennifer Johnson - Conference Team Leader

Bill Hannah

Tricia Dubiel

Rachel Musiala

Nick Bava

Susan Jones

Mike Malatt

Emma Montegu

Ethan Salsinger

Brian Smith

There are IGFOA members serving in a wide variety of different boards. Here are just a few that I know of:

- Elizabeth Holleb and Jeff Rowitz are currently serving on the interim statewide public safety investment fund boards
- Sue Stanish and Tom Kuehne serve on the IMRF Board of Trustees
- Brian Caputo serves on the Board for GASB
- GFOA Committee Members:
 - Elizabeth Holleb and Patrice Sutton, Budget
 - Marty Lyons, Economic Development
 - Sherry Thomas, Treasury and Investment Management
 - Mark Nannini, CORBA
- Chris Minick and Bill McCarty serve on IML Committees

I know there are many more of you who spend countless hours volunteering in the communities where you live and work – far too many to mention. Keep up that spirit of volunteerism – your contributions and gifts to others make a difference.

Over the next several months, the way we interact with IGFOA colleagues will be different than in years past. Starting off, the Annual Conference is using a new webinar platform. Look for additional programs, including CPE credits, in the coming weeks and months. PEC has been working on educational webinars, including the Debt Institute in mid-October. GEN and Chapters, please plan for programs of interest. As of now, the IGFOA will be hosting only virtual events, so continue to be creative with engaging programing and ways to connect with our colleagues.

As an organization, we need to be mindful that we are part of a larger society that is not always the best it can be. Gone are the days when we can quietly sit back and ignore the significant racial and cultural issues in our society. We are a diverse organization, and we need to find ways to be more inclusive. Please reach out to me with ideas and suggestions to help us move forward in this objective, and be the best we can be.

In order for the IGFOA to continue to be the leader in government finance, we must strive to serve finance officers from all corners of Illinois, the small and large, well-funded and cash strapped, highly professional and those looking to learn. Let's find ways to serve those who want and need it.

One thing that will change, and will not be the same, and that is our dear friend and colleague, Ruth Limpers. Ruth has tirelessly served the IGFOA for years, always with a smile and a friendly face. Thank you, Ruth, for your service and friendship. We wish you well as you step back in your role with the IGFOA.

The more things change, the more they stay the same. It may be some time before we see each other in person. Until then, we can continue the good work we do for our governments, and the good work we do for IGFOA.

Thank you, and I look forward to a great year for IGFOA.