



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) *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) *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) *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) *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**