BEYOND THE BASICS

2026-2027 Program

Understanding Property Taxes and Assessing Basics

Date: January 21, 2026

Speaker(s): John Globensky, City of Grand Rapids Treasurer
Paula Jastifer, City of Grand Rapids Assessor

This session will cover key topics related to assessing, billing, and collecting a key component of municipal finance: property tax millages. Local taxing authorities rely on this critical work to fund our communities. This session will cover:

Assessment Notices	Property Taxes
• Principal Residence Exemption • Property Transfer Affidavit • Appealing Your Assessment • Uncapping of Taxable Values • Other Key Issues/Information	• Property Tax Bill • Key Components • Disbursement of Taxes • Personal Property Taxes – Delinquent • Other Key Issues/Information

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"A Vote of the People" - Millages, Voted Bonds, and Developing Bond Proposals

Date: April 28, 2026

Presenter(s): Tom Colis, Principal, Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone
Jeff Aronoff, Principal, Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone

Not every municipal finance undertaking requires direct approval of the electors, but some do. This session will address the issues that finance officials will confront in connection with voter-approved millages and debt. We'll discuss legal requirements and best practices for developing millage and bond proposals, how voter-approved debt levies are calculated, and how all millages are finalized and certified each year. We'll also discuss election and campaign finance laws and walk through important "dos and don'ts" leading up to an election.

BEYOND THE BASICS

2026-2027 Program

Balancing the Treasurer and Finance Director Roles

Date: August 6, 2026

Presenter: Adam Bonarek, Charter Township of Redford Director of Operations and Finance

In many communities, the Treasurer and Finance Director may share overlapping responsibilities that require close coordination and clear role definition. This session explores how to effectively balance these two critical positions to promote accountability, transparency, and operational efficiency. Participants will gain insight into best practices for managing cash flow, internal controls, investments, and reporting structures while fostering collaboration between elected and appointed officials. Through real-world examples, attendees will learn strategies for mitigating role conflict and ensuring that financial operations run smoothly and compliantly.

Collective Bargaining: Union Negotiation and Arbitration

Date: October 7, 2026

Presenter: John Clark, Chair of Municipal and Government Practice, Giarmarco, Mullins & Horton, P.C.

This session will focus on navigating the complexities of union negotiations and understanding your role as a finance leader in labor discussions. The session will provide strategies for preparing, conducting, and finalizing collective bargaining agreements, including managing arbitration risks and supporting management's position. Participants will leave with practical tools for proposal analysis, negotiation planning, and compulsory arbitration (Act 312) preparation tailored to Michigan's legal framework and public sector environment. The session will also explore real-world case studies and compulsory arbitration outcomes to uncover lessons and best practices.

BEYOND THE BASICS

2026-2027 Program

Communication, Coaching, Conflict Management, and Time Management

Date: January 20, 2027

Presenter: Jay Johnson, CEO, Coeus Creative Group, LLC

Leadership does not come with a map, and the terrain can be quite treacherous. This high-impact segment focuses on the core leadership skills every municipal finance professional needs: communication, coaching, conflict management, and time management. Participants will gain practical tools to navigate difficult conversations, manage competing priorities, and bring out the best in their teams—without burning out. Led by culture strategist and corporate trainer Jay Johnson, this session equips leaders to lead with clarity, confidence, and influence in high-stakes environments.

Communicating Finance to Non-Finance People

Date: May 4, 2027

Presenter: Brian Camiller, Partner, Plante Moran Government Accounting Professionals (PMGAP)

This seminar explores how finance professionals can translate complex financial concepts into clear, actionable messages for non-finance audiences. We'll examine strategies for building trust and credibility with elected officials while navigating political sensitivities. Participants will gain tools to communicate budget challenges with clarity, confidence, and impact.