

# 2019 - 2020 FGFOA CANDIDATES BIOGRAPHIES

## Secretary / Treasurer (1 Candidate)



**Shannon Ramsey-Chessman, CPA, CGFO, Chief Operating Office of Finance Clerk & Comptroller, Palm Beach County**

### **FGFOA Activities**

- Served on the Legislative Committee for 3 years
- Board Liaison to the Legislative Committee for 2 years
- Conference Program Committee for 1 year
- Conference Host Committee for 1 year
- Technical Resource Committee for 1 year
- Certification Committee for 1 year

**How many FGFOA Annual Conference or Schools of Governmental Finance have you attended? 18**

**Have you ever been a speaker at an FGFOA training program?**

Annual Conference (2014)

**What significant contribution have you made to the FGFOA?**

In addition to participating in “routine” matters as a member of the Board, I am very proud of my participation in the mentoring program and support of the emerging leaders program. Additionally, I was part of the strategic planning team that was responsible for recommending the development of the Leadership FGFOA program, originally intended as a succession planning tool. As a Board liaison to five (5) different committees, I have actively, rather than passively, worked side-by-side with committee members to develop the educational program, provide critical legislative information and analyses, assisted with technical review and enhance recognition for our CGFO’s and awareness for the CGFO program.

**Have you prepared material for an FGFOA newsletter or research project?**

- Legislative Policies/Recommendations (Annually 2011-2-13)
- Local Chapter Updates (October 2012, and February 2013)

**Do you participate in any other professional organization and/or civic/fraternal/public interest activities?**

- Leadership Palm Beach County – Leaders in Schools and Civic project committees
- Strikers soccer coach
- Community of Hope church youth leader
- Suncoast High School PTSA auditor
- Harvard award-winning annual financial and judicial literacy internship program
- Clerks\$Arts community partnership program

**Education/Certifications**

- COA
- CGFO

**What do you believe should be the objective(s) of the Florida Government Finance Officers Association?**

I believe the overall objective of the FGFOA is to provide government finance professionals, at every level, with educational and networking opportunities, government finance expertise, and to encourage and promote the value of choosing to serve the public as a government finance officer. In addition, FGFOA serves as a

vehicle to promote innovative ideas, increase transparency and disclosure, and highlight the importance of our member's fiduciary responsibility.

**Why do you want to be the FGFOA Secretary/Treasurer?**

I have spent my twenty-two (22) year finance career as a public servant and believe the fiduciary role our members play in protecting the public interest is invaluable. The educational, networking, and other opportunities (including the CGFO certification) afforded to me as a member of FGFOA have assisted me throughout my career. As a member of the FGFOA Board of Directors for the past six (6) years, I have had the privilege of serving our members and participating in the future of this organization including the mentoring, emerging leaders and Leadership programs. I want to continue that effort now as the Secretary/Treasurer.

On a local level, as president of the Palm Beach County chapter, I coordinated additional low-cost educational sessions for our members, including a full-day session covering audit, health care and other topics and one four-hour Ethics session; worked with the local League of Cities to market our events and begin work on a chapter website; and actively worked to encourage high school and college finance students to pursue a career in public finance. As a member of the Board of Directors, I have been afforded the opportunity to provide the same positive impact, but now on a statewide level, through my involvement in and support of numerous initiatives including: the mentoring, emerging leaders, and Leadership FGFOA programs.

I am very proud of the accomplishments of this board and would sincerely appreciate the opportunity to continue my service in FGFOA leadership as the Secretary/Treasurer. Thank you for your consideration.



## **Directors (4 Candidates & 2 Open Positions)**

**Rip Colvin, Jr. CPA, CGFO, CPM, Executive Director, Justice Administration Commission**

### **FGFOA Activities**

- Certification Committee for 3 years
- Conference Program Committee for 1 year
- Legislative Committee for 3 years
- Member Services / Member Development Committee for 1 year
- Small Government Committee for 2 years
- Webinar Committee for 1 year
- Ad Hoc Leadership Committee for 1 year
- Nominating Committee for 1 year

**How many FGFOA Annual Conference or Schools of Governmental Finance have you attended? 11**

**Have you ever been a speaker at an FGFOA training program?**

- Annual Conference (2007)
- Annual Conference (2009)
- Annual Conference (2010)
- School of Governmental Finance (2015)
- Multiple Local Chapter Meetings

**What significant contribution have you made to the FGFOA?**

I have actively served on the Board for the past three years, as well as several committees over the years, both as Chair and a member, keeping the Board members, and the general membership informed of legislation moving through the process, as well as finishing with the Basic Government Resource Manual. As the Executive Director of the LCIR, I invited past FGFOA Presidents to present their legislative committees in the Senate and House of Representatives. It opened the door to discuss the FGFOA's priorities without lobbying and to the FGFOA to be a valuable resource to legislative staff throughout Session. I have also served on two FGFOA-related task forces related to local government investments and county audit reports.

**Have you prepared material for an FGFOA newsletter or research project?**

Newsletter during time as the Small Government Chair (2010-2012)

**Do you participate in any other professional organization and/or civic/fraternal/public interest activities?**

- Florida Society of Certified Public Managers
- Association of Government Accountants

### **Education/Certifications**

- CPA
- CGFO

**What do you believe should be the objective(s) of the Florida Government Finance Officers Association?**

I believe the objectives of the FGFOA are accurately stated within its mission statement: training, networking, leadership, and Information.

When many of us think of the FGFOA, we think of quality training, pertinent to the needs of our positions in government finance, accounting, and leadership. The FGFOA satisfies this portion of the mission statement by providing high-quality training, at an affordable price, bringing in experts in the field for training at the Annual

Conference and School of Governmental Finance. The training also keeps many of those in the field, including me, up to date with the latest standards. The FGFOA does a great job addressing this objective.

Another portion of the mission statement, networking, is found first by attending Annual Conferences/School of Governmental Finance/Local Chapter meetings and interacting with other finance professionals around the state. It allows you to build a list of colleagues whom you can call regarding bond issues, audit issues, investment issues, budget issues, etc. By relying on colleagues for advice and support, it allows an FGFOA member to work smarter, not harder. The FGFOA does a great job of addressing this objective.

The Leadership portion of the FGFOA mission statement, to me, includes finding ways to support your staff that you depend on to perform very important functions within your organization. Support could be in the form of providing training on how to perform a job better, sharing knowledge on job related tasks, sharing information material to the organization, providing for succession planning by grooming younger staff on how to perform certain tasks critical to the organization, and creating a culture where ideas and suggestions are encouraged to improve the operations of an organization. The FGFOA is working on addressing this objective through its initial Leadership Program and trainers at the Annual Conference, such as David Rabiner in 2014.

Lastly, sharing information is one of the most important things a leader can do to run a successful organization. You can share the information through meetings, newsletters, correspondence, local intranets, social media, questionnaires, and bulletin boards. Communication is key and it is a two-way street. Although the FGFOA is doing a great job of pushing its message out, it could do a lot more to assist with this objective by periodically surveying the membership, as well as focusing on how to improve communications within their own organizations.

#### **Why do you want to be member of the Board of Directors?**

I want to continue serving on the FGFOA Board of Directors to continue giving back to an organization that has given me so much over the past 24 years. I would view this as an opportunity to continue sharing my knowledge, experience, and expertise gained from working for the Florida Legislature for 18 years regarding government accountability issues, and as a manager and leader within two different offices for 14 years. My ability to develop a culture of excellence within an organization that achieves and exceeds established goals, allows and encourages process improvements, provides a safe atmosphere to make mistakes and learn from them, trains staff to become experts in their field, while celebrating our collective success leaves me hopeful that I could continue bringing value to the FGFOA in a leadership role as a member of the Board of Directors.



**Melissa Burns, Chief Financial Officer / IT Administrator, City of St. Augustine Beach**

**FGFOA Activities**

- Legislative Committee for 1 year
- Member Services / Member Development Committee for 1 year
- Small Government Committee for 1 year
- Technical Resources Committee for 5 years

**How many FGFOA Annual Conference or Schools of Governmental Finance have you attended? 17**

**Have you ever been a speaker at an FGFOA training program?**

Basic Government Resource Manual Webinar (2018)

**What significant contribution have you made to the FGFOA?**

While serving as chair for the Technical Resources Committee, I facilitated a response to the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) both years. I created an invitation to comment which led to GASB requesting testimony from our organization's President on the issues outlined in the invitation to comment which was well received by GASB. Also, I facilitated an entire update to the Basic Government Resource Manual to include two new sections and authoring one of those sections.

**Have you prepared material for an FGFOA newsletter or research project?**

- FGFOA Spring Newsletter (Spring 2015)
- Strategic Planning Section of BGRM (June 2018)

**Do you participate in any other professional organization and/or civic/fraternal/public interest activities?**

St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce / South Beaches Council

**What do you believe should be the objective(s) of the Florida Government Finance Officers Association?**

I believe the objectives of the Florida Government Finance Officers Association should be to continue to provide the resources necessary to facilitate learning and growing in the field of government finance. The FGFOA's current mission statement "The FGFOA is dedicated to being your professional resource by providing opportunities through Education, Networking, Leadership and Information" encompasses all that an organization of this type should be. When I first joined the FGFOA in 2003, I was brand new to government finance/accounting and through the education I have received throughout the years attending conferences and the School of Government Finance have assisted me in achieving the current position I hold.

**Why do you want to be a member of the Board of Directors?**

The reasons why I would like to serve on the board of directors of the FGFOA are that I fully embrace and support the mission statement of the FGFOA and would like to be a part of ensuring that the FGFOA remains a strong professional organization. Working with the other members of the board of directors to continue to bring forth dynamic and exceptional educational opportunities; continue to grow members into leadership roles both within their organizations as well as the FGFOA. I also am excited to learn from being on the board of directors to enhance my own personal leadership skills.



**Bryan Cahen, MPA, Director of Budget, City of Weston**

**FGFOA Activities**

- Conference Program Committee for 3 years (Served as Chair for 2 years)
- Legislative Committee for 2 years
- Webinar Committee for 1 year

**How many FGFOA Annual Conference or Schools of Governmental Finance have you attended? 8**

**Have you ever been a speaker at an FGFOA training program?**

School of Governmental Finance (2018)

**What significant contribution have you made to the FGFOA?**

As the Conference Program Chair, we have made changes over the last few years including adding a mix of 50/75/100-minute sessions to the Conference offering a variety of session lengths, new speakers and different sessions for the membership.

**Have you prepared material for an FGFOA newsletter or research project?**

- Local Chapter President Newsletter (2015-2016)
- Conference Program Committee Newsletter (2018-2019)

**Do you participate in any other professional organization and/or civic/fraternal/public interest activities?**

- Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)
- Florida Association of Public Procurement Officials (FAPPO)
- American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) Division Director

**What do you believe should be the objective(s) of the Florida Government Finance Officers Association?**

I believe the objective of the FGFOA is to provide:

- Training opportunities for its members;
- Growth prospects for the public/governmental financial industry;
- Inclusive membership availability for government employees, business members and students;
- Professional camaraderie and networking;
- Provide supplemental continuing educational programs; and
- Mentorship and teaching courses.

**Why do you want to be a member of the Board of Directors?**

My goal is to serve the Florida financial governmental community in a collaborative process amongst the other members of the Board to meet those shared objectives. I also want to continue to personally grow in the financial field and being a member of the Board will allow me that additional growth opportunity.



**Olga Rabel, CGFO, Assistant County Budget Officer, Sumter County Board of County Commissioners**

**FGFOA Activities**

- Certification Committee for 1 year
- Conference Host Committee for 1 year
- Member Services / Member Development Committee for 2 years (Chair for 1 year)
- School of Governmental Finance Committee for 3 years
- Small Government Committee for 1 year

**How many FGFOA Annual Conference or Schools of Governmental Finance have you attended?** 6

**Have you ever been a speaker at an FGFOA training program?**

CGFO Review Class as School of Governmental Finance (2016)

**What significant contribution have you made to the FGFOA?**

Since I joined the FGFOA in 2010, one of the first events I have attended was the School of Government Finance. It was a great experience for me as a new member and it confirmed my desire to be involved with this organization. I joined the School of Government Finance Committee and worked along other great enthusiasts trying to make this event one of the best. I helped to introduce the idea of speakers from the Elected Officials offices like Tax Collectors, Property Appraisers, etc. during the School to ensure that their issues and their successes are heard. During my time as a member and a chair of one of the subcommittees, we took initiative to invite new members who attended the School to join the Committee’s members on breaks and after the classes to make them feel welcome and leave the School with an experience of “belonging” to a great team of financial professionals. This mission led me to my next steps of becoming a graduate of the Inaugural Leadership Class in 2016 and becoming a Chair for the Membership and Leadership Development Committee. As Chair, I continued working with the FGFOA leaders and staff and in 2017, the Committee introduced a new event of speed networking evening for the new and seasoned members to meet. The event became a popular Monday spot on members’ events calendar ever since. Success of the Coaching program and the Leadership Classes III and IV provided me with the reassurance that what we do matters and that I want to be a part of this great team.

**Do you participate in any other professional organization and/or civic/fraternal/public interest activities?**

GFOA (State Representative for GFOA through the Nature Coast Chapter)

**Education/Certifications**

CGFO

**What do you believe should be the objective(s) of the Florida Government Finance Officers Association?**

I fully support the current mission of the FGFOA to provide balanced and cost effective educational programs, encourage and provide opportunities for individual development and networking with peers, recognizing and celebrating members’ achievements, mentoring the next generation of the successful leaders and experts in government financial activities.

**Why do you want to be a member of the Board of Directors?**

I want to be a part of the diverse group of people who believes and follows their dreams. I want to be a part of the team that helps shaping the bright future of the FGFOA as the next generation of successful leaders. I want to help all FGFOA members to recognize the benefits the FGFOA has to offer and feel welcome and invited every time they interact with FGFOA.