

Municipal Analysts BULLETIN

A NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF MUNICIPAL ANALYSTS

FEBRUARY 2024 Vol. 34, No. 1

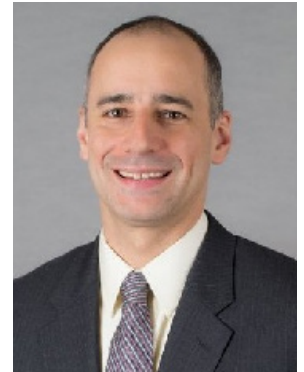


LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear NFMA Members,

It is my great pleasure to introduce myself as the 2024 NFMA Chair. I am honored to serve in this capacity after serving on the board for six years. I am proud to follow in the footsteps of many prior strong and dedicated Chairs.

2023 was a productive year for the NFMA under the leadership of Chair *Mark Capell*. We returned to normalcy following pandemic-related disruptions as our traditional in-person events offered excellent content and were well attended. We continued to work with the GASB, MSRB, SEC, and other groups to advocate for priorities for NFMA's members, notably around the Financial Data Transparency Act (FDTA). We also remained active in publishing best practices, mentoring young members, and continuing the development of our DE&I initiatives. Members should also be pleased that despite the wild ride of the last several years and steep cost inflation, the NFMA's finances remain strong, and we have once again held dues steady this year.



John Ceffalio, NFMA Chair

In 2024, our primary goal remains education and networking. Our mission statement speaks to providing the best educational content possible and an enriching networking environment for our membership. This means that in 2024 we will continue to hold our traditional in-person events and we will also offer educational webinars in the format we honed during the pandemic. We also expect to post more content from our in-person events online for members that were unable to attend. The NFMA will promote diverse backgrounds and perspectives at all of our events.

For this year, our events began with our Advanced Seminar on High Yield Municipals, which was held February 1 - 2 in Salt Lake City. Thanks to *Ellen Cannarsa* and *Richard Akulich*, along with Education Chair *Jason Pollack* and Vice Chair *Neene Jenkins* for their hard work in preparing for this event. The Annual Conference will be held in Philadelphia this year, April 30 – May 3. *Poonam Patidar* and *Adam Kennedy* are co-chairs. This fall we will hold our second Advanced Seminar and our annual Introduction Course for new members. Stay tuned for information on the program, registration, and sponsorship opportunities on these events.

There are several other issues that I want to focus this year:

- Improving best practices in disclosure, including focus on the FDTA. The NFMA advocates for municipal analysts and analysts need timely, accurate, and accessible disclosure to do our jobs. Significant work is needed to implement the FDTA, and to that end the NFMA released a position paper last year and established a FDTA Working Group to monitor developments and to advocate for analysts.
- Support our NFMA Constituent Societies. The pandemic interrupted the rhythm of the traditional events for our societies, and market forces have eroded active membership in some locations. Our constituent societies are key to bringing on new active members and we want to think of ways to support them.

continued

- Continue the development and integration of our DE&I initiatives and research.
- Encourage New Member Advancement committee efforts as we look for the next generation of NFMA leaders.
- Review marketing efforts and encourage sponsorship to ensure sustainability. We thank our many long-time sponsors.

We remain fortunate to have a hard-working team running the NFMA. *Lisa Good's* efforts as Executive Director are invaluable to our organization and her guidance and perspective is much appreciated. Please also welcome our 2024 Executive Committee: *Mark Capell* (Immediate Past Chair), *Neene Jenkins* (Vice Chair), *Angela Kukoda* (Treasurer), *Jason Pollack* (Secretary/Education Chair), *Eric Kim* (At-Large), and *Poonam Patidar* (At-Large). I also acknowledge the full NFMA Board, who are dedicated to our success.

*Respectfully,
John Ceffalio*

INDUSTRY PRACTICES

The Industry Practices Committee is led each year by the NFMA Vice Chair. For 2024, *Neene Jenkins* serves in this role, assisted by co-chair, *Abhishek Lodha*. The committee seeks to promote and communicate NFMA views on key issues affecting the municipal market. During 2023, we continued this effort by keeping NFMA members up-to-date on market trends, legislation, and any other relevant actions by outside parties that impact our industry. The committee worked closely with the NFMA Executive Committee and the Board of Governors to coordinate the NFMA's response. The primary focus in 2023, to be continued in 2024, was the FDTA.

If you have any ideas or issues you would like to bring to the attention of our committee or would like to volunteer for future Industry Practices Committee projects, please feel free to contact *Lisa Good* at lgood@nfma.org.

Neene Jenkins
NFMA Vice Chair & Industry Practices Chair

Abhishek Lodha
Industry Practices Co-Chair.



Neene Jenkins

TREASURER'S REPORT

The NFMA's financial position remains strong. As of February 15, our investment account balance was \$2.47 million, compared to \$2.15 million at the start of 2023. Stocks accounted for 52% of the total, followed by bonds at 43%, and short-term reserves at 5%, compared to targets of 45%, 45%, and 10% respectively. We are currently reviewing our rebalancing options to return to targeted levels. Also as of February 15, the balances in our checking and money market accounts totaled just over \$500,000. We believe our liquid assets, both in the investment account and the checking and money market accounts are sufficient to meet our projected cash flow for the coming year.

Current estimates for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2023, show net income of \$246,000, versus a budgeted deficit of \$84,000. The positive variance is attributable to higher-than-expected unrealized gains on our investments and dividend income, as well as success in controlling expenses.

On January 31, 2024, the Board of Governors approved the budget for the current fiscal year. Based on very conservative assumptions, the budget includes a small operating loss of \$60,000. There is also a \$30,000 contingency—up from \$5,000 in 2023, which we did not need to use. NFMA remains to fulfilling its mission in a fiscally responsible manner. Please feel free to contact me directly for additional information or discussion at akukoda@seixadvisors.com

Angela Kukoda
NFMA Treasurer



Angela Kukoda



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The NFMA Secretary serves as Education Chair. This year's Education Chair is *Jason Pollack*. Jason oversees four subcommittees, including Annual Conference, Advanced Seminar, Introduction to Municipal Bond Credit Analysis and Webinar.

Annual Conference

The 2024 Annual Conference will be held at the Loews Philadelphia Hotel on April 30-May 3. *Poonam Patidar* and *Adam Kennedy* are co-chairs leading a committee of 12 NFMA members who have put together panels over the two and one-half days of educational content. Like 2023, this year's conference will feature two full days of programming, followed by a half day on Friday with a site tour to be arranged by PhAMAS. Early Bird registration ends on March 1. Go to www.nfma.org to download the program and register.

Advanced Seminar

Led by *Richard Akulich*, *Ellen Cannarsa*, co-chairs, and *Matt Whoriskey*, content chair, the Advanced Seminar committee held a well-attended seminar in Salt Lake City in early February. Due to the generosity of twelve sponsors, attendees enjoyed a buy-out of a local restaurant for an evening of cocktails, dinner, and networking. The location and topic of the fall Advanced Seminar are currently being discussed and will be announced in the coming weeks.

Introduction to Municipal Bond Credit Analysis

The NFMA has held the Introduction to Municipal Bond Credit Analysis annually since 1987. This course is designed not only for new analysts, but for sales and support personnel as well as other industry professionals seeking a better understanding of municipal credit. In November 2023, this event was held in Philadelphia. *Eric Kim* and *Mike Grygo* chaired the event, which covered nine discrete topics. A new session introduced in 2023 was the Analysts Roundtable, during which registrants broke up into small group discussions led by one of the presenters. Plans for 2024 would be to return to Chicago at a date and location to be determined.

Webinars

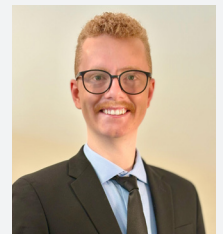
As with societies and other organizations, webinars assumed a greater role at the NFMA during Covid. The NFMA Board continues to place emphasis on webinars now, in recognition of changes in travel policies and an overall demand for virtual content. *Kristina Vaccaro* and *James Lyman* will continue as Webinar co-chairs in 2024. Expect announcements of webinars in late spring – early summer.

Meet the 2023 Fugiel Scholars

The NFMA's Peter Fugiel Scholarship is awarded full-time students in a accredited academic programs in a field that would serve as preparation for a career in municipal finance. Though traditionally awarded to one student, in 2023, the scholarship committee felt strongly that two students merited the award. Scholarship recipients were *Dylan McBridewood*, a student at the University of North Carolina at Asheville and *Maahir Vasi*, from the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago.

The scholarship provides a stipend to cover the registration fees and travel costs associated with attending the NFMA's Introduction to Municipal Bond Credit Analysis. The 2023 Introduction to Municipal Bond Credit Analysis was held at the Sonesta Philadelphia Rittenhouse Square in November.

The scholarship was created in memory of *Peter Fugiel*, a past chair of the NFMA who passed away in 2014. Dr. Fugiel was recipient of both a Meritorious Service Award and Career Achievement Award from the NFMA. Dr. Fugiel developed the very introductory course that this scholarship funds. The NFMA is honored to be able to award this scholarship annually to a student in recognition of Dr. Fugiel's work both as a practitioner of municipal credit analysis and a professor and educator.



Dylan McBridewood



Maahir Vasi

Membership Outreach

The Membership Outreach Committee is a standing committee, and as such is chaired by a Board member. This year, *Adebola Kushimo* is chair of Membership Outreach again. Three subcommittees report to the Membership Outreach chair: Society Outreach, New Member Advancement and Communications.

New Member Advancement

The New Member Advancement Committee is seeking participants for the 2024 Mentorship Program. The Committee reviewed the feedback from the 2023 program and is working to implement changes to improve this year's offering. One change is the option for a peer mentor, to allow participants to be paired with an applicant with a similar experience level. Applications are due March 8, pairs will be announced in late March, and the kick-off will be in early April to apply go to

<https://nma2024profile.paperform.co>

Samantha Henry

NMA Committee Chair

Society Outreach

The Co-Chairs of the Society Outreach Committee are unchanged from last year.

The committee will facilitate two All Society calls for 2024, in February and in September. The agenda for the February call includes membership rosters and lapsed memberships – discuss the challenges and strategies, spring and summer education programs mainly topics, guest speakers and timing, and early submission of events for inclusion to the NFMA calendar. In addition, at the request of *Jason Pollack*, the outgoing DEI Committee Chair, each Society will be asked to appoint or recommend a member to the DEI Committee to improve DE&I engagement and consistency throughout the NFMA.

Maria Sazon & Phil Hooks

Society Outreach Co-Chairs

Communications

Improving the access to information about the National Federation of Municipal Analysts includes the use of social media. NFMA is such an important public finance resource. If members have suggestions to expand communications on social media, please mention at danaschenbach@agvpadvisory.net.

Dan Aschenbach

Communications Committee Chair

BMAF

Boston Municipal Analysts Forum

Since our last report on November 2, 2023:

- > We held our annual Holiday Party on Wednesday, December 13th. As usual, the event was very well attended. Many thanks to *Assured Guaranty* for graciously sponsoring this event.
- > We welcomed *Stephen Murphy* of PFM as our new Treasurer.
- > We held an in-person Statelist Panel on February 6th. This was another very well-attended event, and we thank *Vikram Rai* of Wells Fargo, *Michail Foux* of Barclays, and *Eric Kazatsky* of Bloomberg for sharing their predictions for the upcoming year.

Planning is underway for the following events:

- > A distressed health care panel in April, date TBD.
- > Our annual golf outing in June, date TBD.
- > A social to be co-hosted with the Boston chapter of Women in Public Finance on July 25th.
- > Our annual Boston Harbor cruise in September, date TBD.

Colleen Murphy

BMAF President



MARMOT held our holiday party in December which included a short annual meeting. We had a great turnout, and our three at-large directors were all elected for another one-year term. In early February we had our annual U.S and Rocky Mountain states economic update, with the national view provided by *Satyam Panday*, S&P Global Ratings' chief U.S. economist, and a regional update from *Ben Demko*, director of applied analytics at Key Bank. We want to expand our networking opportunities to more MARMOT states (the chapter covers the seven states in the Rocky Mountain region: Colorado, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana), and are planning a spring training event in Phoenix in March. If you are in the area please reach out to erika.coombs@psc.com or jane.ridley@spglobal.com to join us. Other MARMOT events in the works for 2024 include a social event (possibly curling!) and a Rockies baseball game this summer.

Jane Ridley

President, MARMOT

CMAS

CHICAGO MUNICIPAL ANALYSTS SOCIETY

In December, Fitch and PTAM sponsored the CMAS Holiday Party at which the 2024 board was elected. *Mark Whitaker* will serve as president in 2024, replacing Molly Shellhorn. We thank Molly for her leadership during her six years with the board, and her continued passion for the success of CMAS and its members. Additionally, we welcomed *Stuart Nicol* to the board and express our gratitude to all the applicants willing to serve.

CMAS membership continues to grow. In 2023 we added 27 new members, and 9 additional members in early 2024 for an increase of 28% over year end 2022. We are financially sound with over two years of operating expenses in reserve. We appreciate all our sponsors for allowing us to continue to bring relevant content and social events to our membership.

The 2024 Outlook event hosted by Mesirow marked our return to a full-day format and was very well attended. CMAS appreciates the contributions of *Satyam Panday*, *Mikhail Foux* and *Vikram Rai* for their economic and market commentary, as well as all our local municipal experts for the Illinois and Chicago focused event. Also, special thanks to *Mohammad Murad* and the volunteer scrum content team for a dynamic session. Lastly, we are grateful for the partnership and generosity of Mesirow in sponsoring the event and providing the use of the James Tyree auditorium.

The board held its first planning meeting of 2024 and began to outline this year's programming based on our survey results from active members. A partial list of topics on deck for 2024 are water sector challenges, housing, land deals, and the November elections. We will continue our summer and winter social events, and we are excited for the return of our golf outing after a decade long hiatus.

We continue to encourage members bring ideas to the board, and we are looking forward to another engaging year!

Mike Grygo

On behalf of the CMAS Board



Mike Grygo



SMFS

SOUTHERN MUNICIPAL ANALYSTS SOCIETY

The Southern Municipal Finance Society is kicking off 2024 with a webinar situated for some time before the end of the first quarter where we explore the changing demographics of rural areas and the economic effects on housing, education, healthcare and infrastructure. **Stay tuned for exciting details coming soon!!!** In 2024, we will also be unveiling quarterly webinars throughout the year hosted by a team of three to four board members. You don't want to miss any of it so please stay up to date on our website <https://smfs.memberclicks.net/>. This year, our focus will be on building community through opportunities to get together at conferences even as we continue sporting our SMFS pin. **Let us know if you don't have one and we will send it to you.**

Thank you.

Bola Kushimo
Chair, SMFS



Bola Kushimo



Greetings on behalf of the CSMA! We ended 2023 on a high note, getting together for our annual conference in Napa, with enlightening panels and rich discussions. We kicked off 2024 with happy hours in San Francisco and in Los Angeles. In addition, we're currently planning our educational content for the year. Details on timing and content to come soon. We are also exploring the possibility of doing something different this year for our annual conference; we'll communicate all information to CSMA members as we finalize logistics. As always, please reach out to us with ideas and suggestions regarding programming.

Congratulations to *Eva Bogaty* (Moody's Investors Service), who was awarded the 2023 Amy S. Doppelt Award! The Amy S. Doppelt Award for Meritorious Service is given annually to a CSMA member that represents a strong commitment to our industry, demonstrates strong analytics, and gives back in some way to the community, either within or beyond our industry. Amy S. Doppelt, in whose memory the award was established in 2011, was a Managing Director at Fitch and head of its Western Regional Tax-Supported Group. After a two-year battle with cancer, Amy was taken from us too soon when she passed away in December 2010. Among the ways Amy gave back to the community were the two terms she served as an advisory member of the Government Finance Officers Association standing committee on Economic Development and Capital Planning. She was also a member of the California Debt and Investment Advisory Commission's Technical Advisory Committee for 14 years. Amy's analytic prowess had been recognized by industry participants in that she was named for several years to the Smith's Research and Gratings All-Star Municipal Analysts Team. Just as important, Amy was known to have served as a mentor to many municipal analysts as they made their way in the industry. Amy was also active outside of the world of municipal finance including involvement with the Women's Initiative for Self-Employment.

Sincerely, Marie Autphenne, CSMA Immediate Past Chair and NFMA Board Representative

The 2024 CSMA Board members: *Andrew Porges*, Assured Guaranty (Chair), *Todd Tauzer*, Segal Consulting (Vice-Chair), *David Rodriguez*, Saybrook Fund Advisors (Secretary/Treasurer), *Tim Tung*, Allspring Global Investments (Senior Program Chair), *Helen Cregger*, Moody's Investors Service (Program Chair), *Pascal St. Gerard*, Fitch Ratings (At Large Member), *Marie Autphenne*, Raymond James (Immediate Past Chair)



(CSMA Napa Conference 2023)

MAGNY

Municipal Analysts Group of New York

On January 1st, MAGNY welcomed *Shannon McCue*, Senior Director with Fitch Ratings, as the newest member of the board of directors and the incoming program chair. MAGNY's Directors serve 1-year calendar year terms, rotating through each of the positions. Rotating off of the board at the end of last year was Eden Perry, Head of Public Finance for the Americas at S&P Global Ratings, who completed six years of service on the board of MAGNY.

MAGNY's programming for 2024 started out with a fireside chat between New Jersey Governor *Phil Murphy* and MAGNY member and NFMA Board Member *Neene Jenkins*. This "on the record" event was covered by local media and attracted a full room of attendees along with viewers on the Zoom webcast.

Anne Ross, the former program chair and *Shannon McCue*, the current program chair, and the program committee have done an outstanding job of creating events that have attracted members and non-members alike. Recent events have been a mix of live-only, virtual-only and hybrid, as we seek to learn how to most effectively deliver content that is valued by the municipal analyst community while maintaining MAGNY's longstanding emphasis on providing opportunities for members to spend time with each in order to foster relationships and expand professional networks.

Other topics already planned or being considered for the first half of this year include:

- Understanding How Federal Decisions and Economic Conditions Impact Municipal Bond Markets, March 14. This hybrid (live plus Zoom) event will be available via Zoom to NFMA members nationally as well as non-members.
- Shifting Business Opportunities in the Municipal Bond Market. A discussion of shifts in the broader municipal bond market landscape, how those shifts will affect market participants and the long-term implications for the industry.
- An in-depth high yield credit workshop.

Patrick Luby
Chair, MAGNY

MSMA

Minnesota Society of Municipal Analysts

MSMA kicked off the year with an event at the state capitol, listening to the House Minority Leader give an update on priorities for this year's legislative session and provide perspectives on some of the inner workings of politics in the legislature. Other plans for the year are still in the works but may include an update on geopolitical events and risks, a site visit of a water/sewer plant, and a demographic and economic update. We will try to make more of a concerted effort this year to put our events on the NFMA calendar!

Emily Robare
Outgoing President/NFMA Board Representative, MSMA



PhAMAS

Philadelphia Area Municipal Analysts Society

PhAMAS ended 2023 with a wonderful turnout at our annual holiday gathering on Wednesday, December 20th in Center City. We are in the midst of planning a couple spring events including a regional economic update in March and partnering with the NFMA on tours of various Philly sites in conjunction with the 2024 Annual Conference in May.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to continue working with *Ken Weinstein* (Immediate Past Chair) and *Ted Molin* (vice chair/head of membership) and am very pleased to welcome *Baltazar Juarez* from Vanguard as treasurer and *Akiko Mitsui* of Fitch Ratings as program chair for this upcoming year. We look forward to providing interesting content and networking opportunities to our membership during 2024.

In closing, we'd like to thank *Erin Ortiz* at Janney Montgomery Scott for her many years of service to PhAMAS and congratulate *Ron Mintz*, formerly at Vanguard and a founding member of PhAMAS, on his recent retirement!

Ellen Cannarsa
Chair, PhAMAS



YouTube



Did you know that the NFMA has a YouTube channel? It is still in beginning stages, and the Digital Content Committee is seeking interested members to review potential content to be posted. Sources of content include NFMA webinars and past meetings. You don't have to be a technical wizard to join this committee, just someone who is interested in building a strong NFMA presence on YouTube. There are no required commitments of time – volunteer to watch recorded events and suggest panels or sections of panels to be posted.

Go to YouTube and subscribe even if you aren't able to volunteer for the committee, but if you ARE able to volunteer, contact *Lisa Good* at lgood@nfma.org.

NFMA 2024 Sponsors

DIAMOND PLUS

Assured Guaranty
Build America Mutual
Greenberg Traurig
Mintz
S&P Global Ratings

DIAMOND

ArentFox Schiff
Ballard Spahr
Fitch Ratings
Investortools
KBRA
MuniPro

GOLD

Moody's Investors Service

SILVER

DPC Data



We look forward to adding more sponsors soon. If your firm is not on this list, and you would to consider sponsorship, contact *Lisa Good*, lgood@nfma.org

Upcoming Events

April 30, 2024

NFMA Board of Governors Meeting,
Loews Philadelphia Hotel

April 30-May 3, 2024

NFMA 2024 Annual Conference,
Loews Philadelphia Hotel

May 6 – 9, 2025

NFMA 2025 Annual Conference,
Grand Hyatt San Antonio River Walk

Go to
www.nfma.org
and check Event
Calendar for
society events
and more details!



NATIONAL FEDERATION
of MUNICIPAL ANALYSTS

The Municipal Analysts Bulletin is published by the National Federation of Municipal Analysts.

NFMA
P.O. Box 14893
Pittsburgh, PA 15234

Lisa S. Good, Executive Director
Phone: 412-341-4898
Fax: 412-341-4894
E-mail: lgood@nfma.org