



WOMEN IN PUBLIC FINANCE  
VIRGINIA CHAPTER



June 2022

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**Inside this issue:**

Meet our President 2

Board Member Updates 3

DEI 5

Event Recap 7

Founders' Awards 8

VA Movers & Shakers 10

National WPF 11

Sponsors 12

## Virginia Women in Public Finance is Excited to Deliver our Summer 2022 Newsletter!

### Virginia Women in Public Finance is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

The chapter was founded in April 2012 by six amazing public finance professionals: Sarah Frey, Dianne Klaiss, Suzanne Long, Pamela Holton-Byrd, Christine Garczynski, and Lisa Williams. We are grateful to the founders for their initiative and foresight to band women in this field and support women professional advancement, education, networking, and promote public finance as a career choice.

During the past decade, chapter's membership grew to approximately 500 members. The chapter has awarded \$57,000 in scholarships to young women seeking careers in public finance or related fields and the founders have recognized many deserving professionals with Lifetime Achievement and Rising Star awards. And not to mention valuable programming with numerous quality in-person and virtual events for educational and networking opportunities. Much of this success is due to the fact that the chapter has been supported by our generous sponsors over the years. We cannot be more grateful.

Virginia chapter stands as one of the well established WPF chapters in the nation. Our Board and committee members have been all giving, engaged and enthusiastic even through the two pandemic years. Rest assured the chapter is on to another successful decade! We encourage our members to actively get involved, foster relationships, and benefit from this strong network.

### **DON'T MISS OUT ON THE MOST CURRENT NEWS & EVENTS!**

Add our Chapter's Email address [Info@Virginiawfp.com](mailto:Info@Virginiawfp.com)  
to your [Safe Senders List!](#)

## Meet Our New President - Giedre Ball

*Giedre Ball has been serving on the Board of Virginia Women in Public Finance since 2018 and is the seventh president of the chapter after taking the reign from the past president Kathleen Bowe.*

*Giedre has been rooted in the D.C. metro area for over 20 years while attending American University and George Washington University for undergraduate and graduate degrees. She's been residing in Northern Virginia since 2008.*

*Giedre began her public finance career as a consultant to government entities in 2008, and for the past decade she has been with the Office of Finance at the Metropolitan Washington*



*Giving back to her Lithuanian origins and community, she has been serving as a treasurer of K. Donelaitis Lithuanian Washington School since 2015.*

**Christen Faubel caught up with Giedre and asked her a few questions to help us get to know her better.**

**Q: What are you most proud of in your career at MWAA?**

A: I'm proud to contribute to MWAA's successful and conservative financial management and maintain its reputation as a transparent, well-governed and creditworthy issuer through prudent planning and relationship building. Also, from early investor feedback, I've introduced ESG factors to MWAA's management and pressed ESG importance to various departments across the organization over the years. I'm pleased to see that it resulted in an establishment of a cross functional sustainability committee which initiates and leads many ESG efforts and positively changes organizational behavior.

**Q: Have you had mentors in your life and career? Were there instrumental people in helping shape your success?**

A: I did not have official mentors; however, I have been blessed with supportive managers and colleagues, both men and women, throughout my career. I'm very thankful for my predecessor Valerie O'Hara and my current boss Andy Rountree, who have encouraged my professional growth over the years. Linda Abravanel's nomination and the Founders' recognition of me as Rising Star opened doors to many other professional opportunities I had. I admire and value the amazing women I'm currently serving with on the Board and I learn so much from them.

I also attribute my success to my upbringing. I developed my work ethics from my mother, the first and only person in her family to go to college and become a hard-working dentist who supported her extended family. And my ability to easily build relationships, get involved, and not take myself too seriously probably has something to do with my politician and jokester father.

## Meet Our New President (continued)

**Q: As President, what are your goals and initiatives for this year?**

A: I have a few. I hope for the chapter to return to in-person programming to the pre-pandemic level. I intend to continue very important DEI efforts that were initiated under Kathleen's leadership. It is important to increase membership and active participation in our committees. Lastly, I look forward to collaborating with other chapters across the country and local professional organizations to bring valuable educational programming.

**Q: What projects are you looking forward to working on in VWPF?**

A: Given that this year is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the VWPF, in addition to quality programming, I want to build archives of our chapter to record how much this network of women has accomplished, to recognize all those who contributed over the years and to maintain this organization knowledge as a foundation for continued success.

**Q: How do you think we can get more professional women involved in VWPF?**

A: First, raise awareness of our organization as we did at the VGFOA conference by hosting an exhibit booth. Second, reach out to our colleagues, present a value proposition of networking, support, and our programming and ask them to be part of it.

**Q: What advice would you give to a woman new in the field of public finance?**

A: Get involved! There are many who will support you, open new opportunities, and promote your development. Having professional friends makes conferences more fun!

**Q: What do you enjoy doing in your down time?**

A: What down time? I cannot sit still; I'm always up to something, planning the next project or adventure. Down time to me is being outdoors - skiing, jogging with an audio book, geocaching with my children, hosting friends for a bonfire.

## Welcome New Board Member, Markita Heard!

VWPF extends a warm welcome to our newest board member, Markita Heard. Markita is a Government Banking Relationship Executive with JP Morgan. She has joined our board and serving as Chair of the Education & Networking Committee.

Already an active VWPF member, Markita is on the DEI Committee and most recently coordinated the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) private tour exhibit—read more on page 5. We look forward to her leadership in this new role!



## Thank You to our Former Board President Kathleen Bowe!

Back in February, we held a Board Appreciation Dinner at Bellissimo, which provided us an opportunity to extend a huge Thank You to Kathleen Bowe for her service to this organization and its Board of Directors over the years. She led our chapter during the challenging times of COVID-19 by continuing to provide members relevant content and events in a virtual environment. One of Kathleen's notable achievements was the establishment of the DEI Committee. She continues to serve on the Board as Secretary and also now represents our chapter at the National level (see page 11). We must also mention another new title Kathleen has as "Mom." In July 2021, she and her husband welcomed a beautiful baby boy!



## Thank you Jessica Giroux & Tasnim Segal

**Jessica** served on the board from 2019 through 2021 and chaired our Communications Committee. With an active chapter, she coordinated countless communications and invites for our many events. Working with her committee and the board she published our chapter newsletters, providing another means to keep our membership informed.

**Tasnim** was an inaugural member of the DEI Committee. Tas and other committee members were instrumental in the development of the DEI sponsored membership survey in September 2020 and coordinated our resource offerings made available in June 2021 on the chapter website. Tas also spearheaded the DEI committee's Celebrate Diversity webinar in April 2021, where we learned and shared our unique cultures to expand our understanding of one another. Beginning in 2021, she served as Education and Networking Chair.



**Join a Committee!**

**We are seeking members to participate and volunteer their time in supporting the activities of the chapter through various committees.**

**VWPF members have the opportunity to serve on any of our six committees: Education and Networking, Scholarship, Communications, Events, DEI and Sponsorship.**

**If you would like more information or wish to join a committee submit your interest by email at [info@virginiawpf.com](mailto:info@virginiawpf.com) or visit our website [www.virginiawpf.com](http://www.virginiawpf.com).**

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives

The DEI committee continued its core mission of celebrating and promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in the programming, events, and meetings of the committee and chapter. We had the opportunity to expand our reach and influence this past year through our Chair's involvement as an active member of the National Association of Women in Public Finance's DEI committee, where she was able to network, share ideas, and impact programming with National DEI

committee members across the country. This culminated in participating in the development of the DEI panel of speakers at the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Women in Public Finance Conference in September of 2021, and then in December of 2021 cohosting and moderating an interview with Dr. Janice Underwood, formerly the Commonwealth of Virginia's first appointed cabinet appointed Chief Diversity Officer. This interview highlighted the Virginia OnePlan, which is a strategic DEI initiative sponsored by the office of the Governor of Virginia.

On April 14, the DEI committee hosted a private guided tour of Tsherin Sherpa—Spirits [exhibit](#) at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts led by Curator, John Henry Rice. A group of over 20 VWPF members traveled to Richmond to explore the paintings and sculptures of Nepalese-born Tibetan American artist Tsherin Sherpa. The exhibit is described as a thought-provoking, participatory art experience presented in the form of a narrative telling a story of loss, struggle, and re-empowerment. At the conclusion of the tour, attendees enjoyed a reception in the Clairborne Robertson Room where great food and conversation were enjoyed. Many thanks to our sponsors who help to make these events possible. Please click [here](#) to view our Events Gallery page for more photos.

### Speaker: Dr. Janice Underwood, Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/janiceunderwood/>



Dr. Janice Underwood, who strongly believes in servant leadership and culturally relevant reform, was appointed by Governor Ralph Northam as the Commonwealth of Virginia's first cabinet-level Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). This position is also the first of its kind in the nation. As the Commonwealth's CDO, she is committed to addressing racial, ethnic, disability, gender-based, and other cultural inequities in formal and informal policies in Virginia state government. Specifically, Dr. Underwood works tirelessly to build the ONE Virginia mission, the first-ever statewide strategic plan for inclusive excellence across over 100 state agencies and with other public and private sectors. In this historical role that provides a roadmap for building diversity-lead innovation across local, state, and federal government, Dr. Underwood was named one of "20 Agents of Change" in 2020 by the Virginia Museum of History and Culture for the measurable accomplishments, impact, and racial reconciliation she has already had on the Commonwealth. As part of her role, she is also guiding the COVID-19 Equity Task Force, the leadership team that directs the work of the Unified Command Health Equity Working Group. Her goal is to make Virginia an exemplar for the nation, regarding diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence.

Dr. Underwood has more than 25 years of public service, where she championed to make systemic inequity visible in the education sector as an university administrator, teacher educator, researcher, "national board certified teacher," and diversity trainer. During her more than 18 years as a PK-12 science teacher and expert in education equity, she served for two terms on the Virginia Advisory Board for Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL), authored several publications, and presented at national, state, and local conferences. As a national expert in the cultural contexts of public education, change management, and leadership, Dr. Underwood works to make public and private sectors more culturally relevant.



## Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives

### VWPF DEI Committee Welcomes Two New Members

Jami Peoples is the Director of Business and Operations of Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA). CCWA is a noncredit partnership with John Tyler and Reynolds Community College in the Richmond, VA area where she oversees all the finances, billing, purchasing inventory, and operations for CCWA. Her interest for DEI stems from when she started dating her now husband. As an interracial couple, she received many negative comments and glares, and had been refused service in several locations. Jamie notes “The first time it happened, I was in shock, couldn’t believe in 2015 something like this would still be happening. My husband asked me not to say anything, and that didn’t sit well with me. I didn’t say anything, but I told him if we ever experienced it again, I would call it out. Because if I don’t speak out, who will?”



Taylor Medlock is a first year Associate within J.P. Morgan’s Government Banking practice. As an Associate, she is responsible for supporting relationship executives and treasury management officers in finding commercial banking and cash management solutions for government clients in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States.

As a member of the DEI committee for VWPF, Taylor is committed to philanthropy, diversity, equity, and inclusion at every level. Her passion for DEI stems from her involvement as a volunteer for community organizations like the Red Cross and the Urban League; this was her first glance into how diversity and equity can benefit the full community. Bringing together people from all walks of life and their ideas to further uplift and educate others was an important lesson that she was able to learn early on in her volunteerism. She believes that access, dedicated resources, and knowledge are important to achieve diversity, equity and inclusion in any setting. Taylor is excited to bring a new perspective on what DEI can mean to VWPF and hopes to find ways to bring our community together for others.

The DEI Committee invites new members to join the committee. Meetings are held virtually on the third Thursday of every month. For more information, please contact Committee Chair Lisa Haley at [LHaley@LeesburgVA.gov](mailto:LHaley@LeesburgVA.gov) .

For additional DEI Resources, please visit our website [www.virginiawpf.com](http://www.virginiawpf.com).

## 2021/2022 Event Recap

Thanks to the efforts of our Education and Events Committees along with the continued support of our Sponsors, our chapter was able to offer our members a variety of educational and networking events.

### **November 16: The Value of Talking to Strangers**

Joe Keohane, author of the acclaimed book *The Power of Strangers: The Benefits of Connecting in a Suspicious World*, explored the many benefits of these seemingly simple interactions, discussing what keeps us from having them, and providing practical tips on mastering the art of talking to strangers.

### **December 16: Wine & Chocolate Virtual Holiday Celebration**

Our members welcomed the holiday season and bid farewell to 2021 with wine and chocolate. Led by Carol Kaufmann with Scout and Cellar, an evening of wine and the best chocolates from Richmond-based For the Love of Chocolate.

### **February 24: Joint event with APFP & MD WPF, Webinar “Will 2022 be 2021 All Over Again,” courtesy of McGuireWoods LLP**

Dr. Anirban Basu, Chairman and CEO of Sage Policy Group, Inc., an economic and policy consulting firm in Baltimore, provided an in-depth analysis of the economy’s shifts during the pandemic, including supply industry- and household-level detail along with a forecast for the year to come.

### **March 23: Why We have Too Few Women Leaders**

VWPF hosted a Lunch & Learn based on TED Talk *Why We Have Too Few Women Leaders*, by Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook’s COO.

### **May 11-13: VGFOA Spring Conference**

In addition to the Founders’ Awards Reception, our chapter sponsored an exhibit booth. Members networked with conference attendees to promote and educate on our chapter and its activities over the past ten years. We gained some new members/email subscribers. Thank you to all who helped make our first exhibit booth a success!

## Stay Tuned for Future Events

**July 14:** Mary Abbajay, author of *Managing Up*

**August 18:** DEI Lunch & Learn - *Climate Change & Equity*

**September 15:** Signature Event - John Marshall Ballroom, Richmond, VA

**October 26:** Networking Reception at Fall VGFOA, Richmond

## Mary Blackwell Barnes Memorial Scholarship 2022

VWPF hopes to bring awareness about careers in public finance, whether through work in government, nonprofits, public law, or finance itself. This scholarship will provide the recipient with an opportunity to network with women established in the public finance arena, as well as recognize the recipient for her scholastic and leadership achievements. The award recipients will be announced at the Signature Event on September 15.

## 2022 Founders' Awards Recipients

On May 11, 2022, following the opening events of the Spring VGFOA Conference, our chapter held our annual Founders' Award Reception at Waterman's Surfside Grille in Virginia Beach. With more than fifty members in attendance, we celebrated, honored, and awarded the Lifetime Achievement and Rising Star Awards.



**Lifetime Achievement**  
**Ann Shawver**

With more than 30 years of experience in public accounting, Ann is proud to own and operate a small and woman-owned consulting practice where she offers a variety of public finance services to local governments and affiliated entities. Ann is a Certified Public Account and a Certified Public Finance Officer.

Since 2018, Ann has been appointed by Virginia's Governor to serve as a member of the Virginia Public Building Authority. She serves on the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Education Advisory Council and on the Advisory Council for Radford University's Davis College of Business and Economics. Ann is currently Vice President of the Virginia Women in Public Finance. She has been a Board member since 2018 spearheading Event Planning and Sponsorship efforts as committee chair.



**Rising Star**  
**Anne Curtis Saunders**

Anne joined McGuire Woods in 2017 and since that time has focused her practice on the area of public finance, primarily serving as bond counsel, borrower's counsel, or underwriter's counsel on tax-exempt bond financings.

In all matters, Anne views her purpose as assisting in structuring transactions in an efficient and tax-advantage way. Prior to joining McGuire Woods, she served as law clerk to the Honorable Steven C. McCallum of the Chesterfield Circuit Court.

Anne holds a Bachelor's Degree from Virginia Tech. She graduated, Magna Cum Laude, from the University of Richmond School of Law. While in law school, she served as Manuscripts Editor for the Richmond Journal of Law and Technology. Upon graduation, Anne was inducted into the Order of the Coif.



## 2022 Founders' Awards Reception Virginia Beach



## Virginia Movers and Shakers

**Kailyn Campbell** accepted a position with Chesterfield County Public Schools.

**Katrina Flowers** was appointed as the Accountant for the City of Virginia Beach Development Authority.

**Leslie Beauregard** was promoted to Interim City Manager of the City of Staunton.

**Markita Heard** was promoted to Executive Director, Relationship Executive at J.P. Morgan.

**Sheila Minor** accepted a position with Henrico County.

**Stephanie Hamlett** is now Special Counsel for the Virginia Office of the Attorney General.

**Svetlana Olchevski** is the Principal Fiscal Analyst for Prince William County and was recognized by The Bond Buyer as a Rising Star, honoring standout Municipal Finance Professionals Under the Age of 40.

**Tasnim Segal** accepted a position as Area Manager for Business Banking at JPMorgan Chase.

Trish Davidson was promoted to Assistant County Administrator for Finance and Operations at Rockingham County

### Retiring:

**Manju Ganeriwala** - State Treasurer, Commonwealth of VA

**Mary Ann Penney** - City of Salem, VA

**Sandi McNinch** - Virginia Economic Development Partnership

## Find us on LinkedIn



Did you know the Virginia Women in Public Finance has a group profile on LinkedIn? Expand your network and reflect your affiliation with one of the strongest chapters.

If you are already part of the group, don't forget to set your notifications to "get notified of all new posts" so you can stay up to date on all our activities.

Find us on LinkedIn [here](#). Also, visit us at [www.virginiawpf.com](http://www.virginiawpf.com)

## National Chapter of Women In Public Finance Update

### Members of our Virginia chapter are also serving as leaders of the National Women in Public Finance organization

**Lisa Haley** serves on the National DEI Committee (NDEI). As a committee member she helps develop programming under the direction of the Chair. She coordinated speakers and content, and helped facilitate a live Q&A at the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Chicago. Her efforts include co-hosting/co-moderating the December 2021 virtual event on the ONEVirginia Plan. Her active participation on the NDEI Committee helps to advance our educational goals.

**Pamela Holton-Byrd** serves as the Assistant Treasurer of the National Board.

**Kathleen Bowe** is the Chair of the Education and DEI Committee. These committees host multiple educational webinars throughout the year, with the most recent event on the topic of Cybersecurity and how issuers can protect themselves.

To view this event replay or join future webinars, [become a national member](#).

### Thank you to these women who so wonderfully represent the Virginia Chapter!

The National Women in Public Finance Annual Conference is coming up and registration is now open.



For more information, click [here](#) to visit the Conference site.

## Thank You to Our Sponsors!

### Join our LinkedIn!

Have you joined our group on LinkedIn? It's easy as ever to find us. Click [here](#) to join.

Once you are connected, you'll be able to share information & learn about upcoming events - we can't wait for you to join!

### Subscribing to VWPF News

Do you have a colleague who would like to be added to our e-mail listing?

It's easy to self-enroll via the VWPF website. Click [here](#) and complete the requested information.

E-mail communications from VWPF are sent using Microsoft Outlook — some entities do not accept communications. In such cases, use of a personal e-mail address is beneficial. Please also check your spam folder.

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