



NCLGBA

Promoting the budgeting profession through education, networking and advocacy

Quarter 2 2020-21

Budget Buzz



Attend the Virtual Summer 2021 Conference Planning Meeting!

- Friday, February 19th, 12-4pm, via Zoom
- All local government budget professionals are welcome to attend
- Brainstorm conference session topics, volunteer, and network!
- More info sent out closer to meeting date

Following a highly successful virtual Winter 2020 Conference, several NCLGBA members wrote

recaps of their experiences. This recap comes from [Daisy Mills](#), Budget and Management Analyst with Guilford County. Read more conference recaps on the [NCLGBA website](#).

While it may seem odd to write about mindfulness and presentation skills in the same paragraph, if there is one thing I have learned throughout my 3 NCLGBA conferences, it is that Budgeteers can (and do) operate with a “meta” mentality. We know that people are connected to their work in more ways than just “a means to a financial end.” For many, work is a social outlet and a place for connection, belonging, and service for the greater good. In thinking about the conference, two sessions stood out to me, and I would like to connect these two in a way that (I hope) will inform my work. [Dr. Holly Sullenger](#) of [Dr. Holly Speaks, LLC](#) gave one of the most engaging presentations I have ever seen about (drumroll, please!) choosing visualizations for “winning” presentations for elected officials. However, I think most of her tips are applicable to any and all presentations. I laughed when thinking about how the pictograph (or a “people chart” as they are sometimes called) is a concept most young elementary school children learn for the purposes of counting. Yet, it’s one of the most effective and quickest ways to transmit information to an audience.

However, what often happens is that hundreds of words in small font, bullet points, and crazy colors are thrown on a PowerPoint screen as a presenter reads the screen, and the audience is lost. The audience has lost the ability to connect with the speaker and perhaps lost the attention to even notice their distracted nature. Now, what does this have to do with mindfulness? Well, if you allow me some creative expression, I assert that when we can take time out of our day to sit in peace, to notice our breath, and to relax our bodies, it may help us to be more aware of how we present ourselves (and our information) to others. [Janice Horner](#) opened her session with a mindfulness practice, in which everyone was encouraged to feel and remember each part of their body, head to toe. I don’t remember the last time I thought about my feet resting on the floor or the tips of fingers resting upward. I check my calendar multiple times a day, but I don’t spend time relaxing in the moment and quieting the inner “achiever mentality.” But if we feel disconnected from ourselves, what does that mean for the work that we do daily and all the micro-interactions like body language (and other non-verbal communication)? What do we communicate to others when we are not communicating with ourselves? Could a part of the issue with presentations being too long, too monotonous, and too “word-heavy” be that there is a disconnection of the speaker/presenter to himself? Could taking the time to be mindful be a key to making better presentations? Can knowing ourselves better by taking time to be present help us to engage others?

For some, perhaps this is not the case. But I can’t help but think that the more time I spend in mindfulness practice (which is very difficult and requires more mental energy that I had thought), the more I feel connected to my work and the people that I work with. By knowing myself more and being present with myself, I am better able to see what the needs of the audience are in communicating information. Sometimes, sitting in silence and even looking inward can reframe our perspective.

On a more personal note, I find myself excited to reconnect with my fellow Budgeteers across the state for each conference—so much so that it has led to friendships and meaningful connection with members that I might not have otherwise known. I like to think we are a humorous bunch, and Dr. Holly recommended using humor to engage audiences, so we are already on-point with that suggestion!

Thank you to our [sponsors and partners!](#)



NCLGBA was honored to present the 2020 A. John Jack Vogt Award to Ruffin Hall, City Manager of Raleigh, NC. To further recognize Ruffin Hall's achievements and contributions to public service, we're sharing this article announcing his retirement from August 2020.

Raleigh City Manager Ruffin Hall Announces Retirement

JULIA MILSTEAD, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER | COMMUNICATIONS

AUGUST 5, 2020



City Manager Ruffin Hall has announced his retirement from the City of Raleigh effective December 31, 2020.

Hall served as the City's chief executive since November of 2013. In that time Raleigh acquired and developed the master plan for Dorothea Dix Park, approved and implemented the Wake County Transit Plan, opened Raleigh Union Station, a renovated Moore Square Park, a new Central Communications Center, a central operations facility, and numerous parks and community centers. The City revised its economic development policies to better reflect a growing and robust economy while looking for ways to assist small business, particularly during the COVID pandemic. Additionally, the City implemented programs to assist those in greatest need such as a new affordable housing plan and funding support for Oak City Cares – a facility in partnership with Wake County to better serve our homeless population. Raleigh continues to enjoy a strong reputation and remains on numerous Top 10 lists for best places to live, work, and play.

"Serving as the City Manager of Raleigh has been the most rewarding and proud moment of my entire career. I am so grateful of all that we've accomplished together. After 25 years of local government service and 7 years as City Manager, I've decided it is time for me to retire. I'm ready to explore other opportunities and spend more time with my family," said Ruffin Hall. "I am very appreciative of all the support I've received from the Mayor and Council. While there is never an easy time to leave, it was important for me to make this transition before the next budget process and City Council election."

Under Hall's leadership, the City developed new organizational values and a Strategic Plan, adopted a new compensation system and living wage, instituted the first citizen survey, and implemented a new City brand. Financially, the City has a AAA bond rating from all three credit rating agencies for both the General Fund and Water/Sewer and provided a framework for voter approved bond referenda in 2014 for \$92m for Parks and 2017 for \$207m for Transportation. The last two City budgets recommended by Hall and approved by Council included no property tax rate increases.

Mayor Mary-Ann Baldwin said, "Seven years ago when the City Council hired Ruffin, we set goals for him to make city government more efficient and strategic. We outlined areas that needed attention, such as a dedicated funding stream for affordable housing, a modernized communications program and city brand, and a more robust commitment to public-private partnerships -- the types of partnerships that helped build Oak City Cares and the Southeast Raleigh YMCA," said Mayor Mary-Ann Baldwin. "Under Ruffin's leadership, we have made huge strides in all these areas, expanded and improved our services, and grown a visionary management team. While we will miss him, we also recognize that his positive impact on the City will be felt for years to come."

The Raleigh City Council will be charged with hiring a new City Manager. Hall has agreed to stay through the end of December to assist with the transition.

This story appeared first at [Raleighnc.gov](https://www.raleighnc.gov).