



# *Newsletter*

## *MARCH*

*Austin*



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Austin Chapter,

2021 has been off to a wild start! As we recover from the historic winter storm that gripped Texas in February, I hope everyone has stayed safe and repaired any home damage they may have experienced (as well as enjoyed some of the recent warmer spring temperatures!)

In December, we were delighted to have Jeffrey Travillion, Travis County Commissioner, Precinct 1, speak at our last webinar of the year. Jeffrey presented on the topic of Civil Rights and Politics; he specifically detailed how prevailing trends in these areas can affect policy, economics, and more. With over 30 years of providing management solutions in his field, we were grateful to hear his insightful presentation. Thanks again, Jeffrey!

In keeping with our 2020 trend, we have continued to host FREE CPE Webinars in 2021! Our first event in the new year focused on external fraud targeting the government. We listened to Jason Zirkle, Training Director for the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE), discuss famous multi-million dollar fraud investigations that occurred in 2017, as well as how

the perpetrator was ultimately caught. In February, we hosted Tracy Walker of RSM as she discussed diversity in the workplace, and how cultivating an inclusive culture can strengthen your organization. The Austin AGA thanks both Jason and Tracy for helping us kick the year off right!

March is CGFM Month at AGA, where we highlight the benefits of obtaining the Certified Government Financial Manager Certification. Earning your CGFM credential signifies that you possess competency in governmental accounting, auditing, financial reporting, internal controls, and budgeting. And, with the CGFM's comprehensive approach, you will master these skills at the federal, state and local levels! With all of these features to help you enhance your career, I encourage everyone to pursue this certification. Please click [here](#) for more information.

From all of us here at the AGA Austin Chapter, cheers to new beginnings in 2021!

Best Regards,

Aria Negahban, PMP

President, AGA Austin Chapter

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# MEMBERSHIP NEWS



Become a Member Today!

**AGA IS THE ASSOCIATION FOR ALL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT RELATED PROFESSIONALS SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT.**

The Chapter reported 110 members as of February 2021, including 4 members who joined between October and February. The Chapter welcomes the following new members:

- Dr. Christopher Johnson
- Mr. Colin Rice
- Mrs. Sherrelle Vaughn
- Mr. Hector Ordonez

The following members also celebrated their anniversaries during the months of October through March:

1 year

- Ms. Susan Low
- Mr. Wayne Lopez
- Mr. Richard Kukucka
- Mr. Eulogio Garcia
- Mrs. Josslyn Ideghe

5 year

- Mr. Asad Khan
- Ms. Amy Leonard
- Mrs. Vallerie Robinson
- Mrs. Crystal St. Clair
- Mr. Kevin Thomas
- Mrs. Belia Herrera
- Ms. Elba Morales
- Mrs. Elizabeth Negron
- Captain Babatunde Sobanjo

25 year

- Ms. Sharita Jefferson
- Mrs. Rim Schreiber

30 year

- Mr. Steven Adrian
- Mr. David Spencer
- Ms. Cathey Lesli



AGA is the only association that supports professionals working in federal, state and local governments as well as the private, nonprofit and academic centers. As an AGA member, you gain access to a host of benefits designed to support your career growth and success.

## EVENT CALENDAR

**THROUGH TRAINING AND EVENTS, PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION, PUBLICATIONS AND ONGOING EDUCATION, AGA HELPS MEMBERS BUILD THEIR SKILLS AND ADVANCE THEIR SKILLS.**

March 17, 2021 8:00AM - 5:00 PM PT	Ethics and Fraud Webinar Webinar   8 CPEs
March 17, 2021 2:00 - 3:15 PM ET	Annual AGA Women's Council Webinar Webinar   1.5 CPE
March 18, 2021 9:00AM - 12:00 PM ET	AGA Atlanta March 2021 - Virtual Training Webinar   3 CPEs
March 24-25, 2021 1:00 - 5:00 PM CT/ 12:00 - 4:00PM CT	Virtual March 2021 PDT Webinar   Up to 8 CPEs
March 24, 2021 2:00 - 3:50 PM ET	Cybersecurity/ ERM Webinar   2 CPEs
April 7, 2021 2:00 - 3:50 PM ET	Ethics Webinar   2 CPEs



 **PAST EVENTS**

# THE 2020 COMPLIANCE SUPPLEMENT AND CARES ACT

Former AGA Austin Chapter President and Audit Principal at CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, Bhakti Patel, discussed changes in the 2020 Compliance Supplement and CARES Act funding. She provided insight into the Compliance Supplement Addendum released in November and an overview of the CARES Act, its challenges, and resources available to help navigate compliance.



## NOVEMBER

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## DECEMBER

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# THEN AND NOW - A DISCUSSION ON CIVIL RIGHT POLITICS

Jeffrey Travillion, Travis County Commissioner of Precinct 1, took attendees on a historical journey discussing the role of government in American society and the evolution of pre and post-antebellum administrations. A timeline account included pivotal moments in history touching on the civil rights era under President Johnson's leadership moving on the effects of laws passed during the George W. Bush and the Obama administrations. The presentation covered the popular and unpopular views throughout the course of history that invariably shaped communities, the judicial system and the pursuit of social justice in America.



## TEXAS ERS FRAUD SCHEME

In 2017, Texas Rangers began working a potential cyber-intrusion event at the Employees Retirement System of Texas. What began with this isolated event grew into a multi-million dollar fraud investigation, with the perpetrators involved in numerous schemes, including identity theft, tax refund fraud, business email compromise, romance scams, account takeovers, etc. Mr. Zirkle presented the case study that gave insight into the mechanics of the investigation, including:

- The internal control weaknesses that led to the initial cyber-intrusion & fraud
- How they followed the money, and identified & obtained evidence
- How they eventually identified the main perpetrator



## JANUARY

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## FEBRUARY

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## SECRET SAUCE - DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Ms. Tracey Walker, RSM's Sr. Director Govt. Affairs & Member of AGA's Women's Council, delivered a presentation on diversity and inclusion. Tracey shared her version of the secret sauce needed for inclusive leadership to harness inclusive culture benefits for talent and mission success.

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



## *Jamyen Robinson-Hall*

AGA Austin Chapter Community Services Chair



Meet Jamyen Robinson-Hall, AGA Austin Chapter's new Community Service Chair. Jamyen has worked for the State of Texas for nine years, and has six years of state government audit experience. She currently works at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as a Compliance Auditor (since January 2017). Prior to joining the Board, she was an Internal Auditor for the Texas Juvenile Justice Department for two years. Her work experience includes conducting financial, operational, and performance management audits. She has also worked at Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, where she reviewed and managed budgets, financial status reports, and provided oversight to local initiative projects of eligible counties towards the improvement of air quality.

Jamyen graduated from Prairie View A&M University with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Management, and later earned a master's degree in Public Administration with a focus on Legal and Judicial Administration from Texas State University, San Marcos.

March is  
**CGFM<sup>®</sup>**  
Month

**\$21**  
application fee



# TREASURER'S REPORT

For the period ending 02/28/2021

Beginning Bank Balance	9/1/2020		\$3,375.96
Funds Received:			
10/1/2020	Check 2191		\$116.00
10/22/2020	ACH Square		\$147.94
11/17/2020	ACH – Invoice 102		\$35.51
1/21/2021	ACH Square		\$17.08
10/1/2020 – 2/1/2021	Dividends through 2/1/2021		\$1.30
	Total Funds Received:		\$317.83
Funds Available:			\$3,693.79
Funds Expended:			\$0.00
	<b>Date</b>	<b>Check #/Credit Card</b>	<b>Description</b>
	10/13/2020	2192	Reimbursement to Eddie Chan for P.O. Box
	10/19/2020	2193	Reimbursement to David Vasuez for expense incurred for AGA
	10/28/2020	2191	TSBPA
Ending Bank Balance	2/28/2021		\$2,902.60
Outstanding Checks:			\$0.00
Outstanding Deposits:			\$0.00
Adjusted Ending Bank Balance – 2/28/2021:			\$2,902.60
Total Chapter Funds Available Per Check Register – 2/28/2021:			\$2,902.60
Cash on Hand:			
	CU Min Savings Balance		\$5.00
	Luncheon Bank		\$40.00

# BOARD MINUTES

November 19, 2020 | 12PM



1. Roll call
  - a. Amber Capps, Aria Negahban, Sharita Jefferson, Priscilla Suggs, Jamyen Robinson-Hall, Richard Kukucka, David Vasquez, Bhakti Patel
  - b. Absent Eddie Chan
  - c. Introductions
2. Commencement of CEC Meeting
3. Welcome to Jamyen, our new Community Service Chair!
4. Power of 7 Request
  - a. National AGA President Request
  - b. The Board would like to delegate this to a board member
  - c. Initiative is a follow up on the luncheon with Wendy from October. The idea is to accomplish on of the items on Wendy's list.
    - i. Power of 7 request
    - ii. Virtual event with our members
5. Richard suggested a Netflix Watch Party -- Virtual December Event Idea
  - a. Holiday-themed movie
  - b. Specific date not picked yet. Not sure if it's realistic due to timing. This is a fundraising event. We could charge \$20 for the link.
  - c. The Board discussed a potential larger fundraising event, however with Covid they believed it would be hard for attendees to commit.
  - d. In order to fulfill Wendy's request, the Board discussed possibly having 7 organizations that participants can select to donate to for the Netflix Watch Party. As Jamyen is the new community service chair, both Amber and Jamyen could identify 7 different organizations / 7 nonprofits that are available to donate to. They would create a flyer and identify the power of 7 initiative.
  - e. The Board also discussed whether the movie would it be a week night. Richard will be doing a test run. The Board discussed what logistics around the matter such as how to register, having a link set up to watch the movie, etc.
6. Review of November Webinar
  - a. The Board discussed good areas and areas for improvement for next month
    - i. Move from IO to Teams for a smaller group. If we ever have larger numbers we can switch back to IO.
    - ii. The Board discussed sending an email to National providing feedback on IO.



# BOARD MINUTES, CONT'D

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November 19, 2020 | 12PM

- iii. The Chapter will be using Teams for December we will be using Teams
  - b. There were 38 participants at the November luncheon
- 7. Update on Future Speakers
  - a. Jeffrey Travillion, the December speaker, believes the December 10 date will work. We still need his presentation topic and bio. Priscilla will confirm. The Board discussed having a backup plan in the event Jeffrey cancels.
  - b. We still need a speaker for January
- 8. Current speaker lineup:
  - a. December 2020 - Priscilla to confirm with Jeffrey Travillion
  - b. January 2021 - Open
  - c. February 2021 - Tracey Armstrong, RSM Exec on Diversity and Inclusion - confirmed
  - d. March: Open
  - e. April 2021 - Tamara Lily, Assistant Inspector General, OIG at HHS, topic cybersecurity audits or soft skills - confirmed
  - f. May 2020 - Open
- 9. Committee Reports
  - a. Past President (Priscilla)
  - b. Treasurer (David)
  - c. Secretary (Amber)
  - d. Education Committee Chair (Patti)
  - e. Membership (Richard)
  - f. Communications Chair (Bhakti)
  - g. Webmaster (Eddie)
  - h. Community Service Chair (Jamyen)
  - i. Research Committee Chair (Debi)
  - j. Chapter Historian (Sharita) - Updated email address
- 10. Action Items
  - a. Vote on December Items: December Webinar

# BOARD MINUTES

December 17, 2020 | 12PM



Meeting began at 12:05pm

1. Roll call: CEC present via Microsoft Teams: Aria Negahban, Bhakti Patel, Eddie Chan, Jamyen Robinson-Hall, Priscilla Suggs, and Sharita Jefferson
2. Commencement of CEC Meeting
3. Power of 7 Request
  - a. The Board expressed that they were extremely happy with the flyer that Amber and Jaymen created. The flyer needs to be share via:
    - i. Mass Email (AGA Communications)
    - ii. LinkedIn Post (as soon as possible)
    - iii. Aria will post and have Amber do an email blast
4. Newsletter
  - a. The Board discussed whether to combine November and December as "Holidays 2020 Edition." All agreed
  - b. The Board asked all officers to submit sections to Bhakti if you have not already
  - c. Bhakti is still missing the minutes, treasurer's report, President's message and industry article fornd upcoming speaker bio November Newsletter.
  - d. Bhakti mentioned that she changed the time formatting of the newsletters to send out after the month end
5. Chapter Recognition format has changed this year and is now more general. Bhakti will send Chapter Recognition email she received to Aria
6. The Board discussed the Netflix Watch Party - Virtual December event. The event may have to postponed since this year is almost over. The Board discussed possibly postponing until April or May as it may be difficult to convince attendance as attendance for the webinars are low as well.
7. Review of December webinar
  - a. December had 17 attendees plus the Speaker. Overall it was a good webinar and the information was great, however, we need more attendees
  - b. Our goal for the next 2-3 months is to get more people to attend the webinars
  - c. We will be doing more in-person training in 2021
8. Current speaker lineup:
  - A. January 2021 - Priscilla touched base with the speaker, former Texas Ranger Jason Zirkle, and confirmed him for January. He currently works for the ACFE and does training for a

# BOARD MINUTES, CONT'D

December 17, 2020 | 12PM

living with them now. Priscilla will ask him for other speakers Mr. Zirkle is going to speak about a Nigerian fraud; they hacked into ERS retiree accounts. As the matter happened several years ago and is closed, Jason is able to present on the matter. He did not allude to payment, however, Priscilla will confirm with him in writing. Jason asked what topics should he speak on. Priscilla suggested current topics for him including paycheck protection fraud cases. Jason will share his bio and Priscilla will forward it once she receives it

B. February 2021 - Tracey Armstrong, RSM Exec on Diversity and Inclusion - confirmed

C. March: Open

D. April 2021 - Tamara Lily, Assistant Inspector General, OIG at HHS, topic cybersecurity audits or soft skills - confirmed

E. May 2020: Open

F. The Board to confirm next month that February and April speakers are still committed

## 9. Committee Reports

a. Aria got the President's gavel from Kieran before he moved. Aria will touch base with Elba about the recorder

No additional committee reports

A. Past President (Priscilla)

B. Treasurer (David)

C. Secretary (Amber)

D. Education Committee Chair (Patti)

E. Membership (Richard)

F. Communications Chair (Bhakti)

G. Webmaster (Eddie)

H. Community Service Chair (Jamyen)

I. Research Committee Chair (Debi)

J. Chapter Historian (Sharita)

Action Items:

Meeting adjourned at 12:33pm

# BOARD MINUTES

January 21, 2021 | 12PM



1. Roll call
2. Commencement of CEC Meeting
3. Email blasts for monthly webinars
  - A. The Board discussed updating the email addresses and consolidating emails into two separate groups (Members vs Nonmembers).
  - B. Eddie said he would run the registration list for each event and send the lists of members to Amber.
4. Winter Newsletter -- Bhakti will be releasing this week. Bhakti received each section from each officer and will be releasing the Winter newsletter this week.
5. Review of January Webinar
  - A. The January Webinar had close to 50 people participating.
  - B. Patti will be sending out the CPE certificates.
6. Current speaker lineup:
  - A. February - Tracey Armstrong, RSM Exec on Diversity and Inclusion has been confirmed. Priscilla will follow up with Tracey Armstrong to confirm one more time. Eddie will update the registration link with Tracey Armstrong's information.
  - B. March - The Board is still looking for a speaker for March's webinar.
  - C. April - Tamara Lily, Assistant Inspector General, OIG at HHS has been confirmed.
  - D. The Board has not confirmed a speaker yet for May 2021.
7. Committee Reports
  - A. Past President (Priscilla)
  - B. Treasurer (David)
  - C. Secretary (Amber)
  - D. Education Committee Chair (Patti)
  - E. Membership (Richard)
  - F. Communications Chair (Bhakti)
  - G. Webmaster (Eddie)
  - H. Community Service Chair (Jamyen)
  - I. Research Committee Chair (Debi)
  - J. Chapter Historian (Sharita)

Action Items: None

*The February 2021 Chapter Executive Committee Meeting was cancelled due to the winter storm.*

## AN ACCOUNTING OF DENVER'S \$127 MILLION IN FEDERAL COVID RELIEF FUNDING — AND THE CHALLENGES OF KEEPING IT STRAIGHT

The majority of CARES Act money went to economic recovery and city operations; public health spending bolstered by Denver's own coffers

By Conrad Swanson | [cswanson@denverpost.com](mailto:cswanson@denverpost.com) | The Denver Post  
March 8, 2021

In the COVID-19 pandemic, the very definition of a public health crisis, Denver spent less than 5% of federal stimulus money on public health itself.

But city officials say there's a good reason for that: In part, the spending guidelines for Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding were unclear, so the city felt it best to put the money toward more general expenses. Millions more for Denver's public health response came from other sources like the city's special revenue funds and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The CARES Act became a household phrase nearly a year ago, as the federal government injected \$150 billion to combat something few had seen into states' and cities' arsenal — including \$127 million in Denver. But auditors and accountability experts say uncertain guidelines and tight spending deadlines attached to that money raise concerns. And while there are oversight mechanisms in place to ensure the money is spent properly across the country, they're different from government to government — and much of it won't be reviewed for months.

"I don't believe the reporting requirements back to the federal government are very strident," Denver Auditor Tim O'Brien said. "They're more focused on getting the money out than the accountability."

The vast majority of Denver's CARES Act funding has gone or will go to economic recovery efforts, emergency shelters and citywide operations, financial data shows, while less than 18% combined has been spent on public health, aid for housing, food insecurity and other efforts.

Almost \$109 million of Denver's \$127 million in federal money is out the door or "tagged for a very specific purpose," according to Kiki Turner, deputy director of communications and public affairs for the city's Department of Finance. The rest must be spent by the end of the year or returned to the federal government.



# INDUSTRY NEWS, CONT'D

Because there's more than just federal money available for Denver's pandemic relief and recovery, Turner said the city put CARES Act funding toward seven categories: citywide operations, economic recovery, food assistance, public health, emergency sheltering, housing support and support to individuals impacted by COVID-19.

Those priorities fit well within the broader classifications seen across the rest of the country, Brookings Institute Metropolitan Fellow Joe Parilla said. But he noted that analyzing spending while it's still happening can be difficult, because each government must tailor expenses to their unique needs.

Such a heavy focus on economic recovery from CARES Act funding — \$18.83 million — makes sense and is comparable to Chicago's approach, said Allison Flanagan, director of policy analysis for the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability

"When people are employed, people spend money and when people spend money, the economy grows," Flanagan said.

And the bulk of Denver's larger public health response wasn't from CARES Act, but other sources like special revenue funds and expenses that will be reimbursed by FEMA, Turner said. A February report shows some of that money has gone toward \$13.7 million for testing and supplies, \$5.2 million for workplace safety, cleaning and janitorial supplies and \$4.7 million for medical equipment and supplies.

## Accountability challenges

Still, Flanagan pointed to several questionable expenses with CARES Act money, including \$800,000 for a prefabricated public restroom on the 16th Street Mall, which is expected to open this spring, and \$105,000 to replace all hand-operated toilet, urinal and faucet fixtures in each of Denver Public Library's 26 branches.

"That has very little return on investment," Flanagan said. "If you were to take the \$800,000 and the other bathrooms and put that toward (personal protective equipment), toward getting people back to work, you're getting people to spend money, you're helping your economy."

But Turner said the bathroom on the 16th Street Mall could help people experiencing homelessness and will be useful as the city reopens further. The improvements at the library branches, she said, also help keep the homeless and other patrons safe. All of the city's library branches closed last March, though nine are scheduled to reopen with limited hours this week.

Flanagan also noted that some cities like Chicago spent millions from CARES Act allotments on police departments, though Turner said none of the city's CARES Act money went toward the Denver Police Department.



# INDUSTRY NEWS, CONT'D

Large spending packages like the CARES Act do lead to issues when it comes to tracking where the money goes and ensuring it is spent in ways connected to the pandemic, O'Brien said.

His office is tracking the city's spending as it happens, but declined to discuss specifics because it's still underway. He noted that an outside firm will also audit Denver's CARES Act spending and prepare a report that should be available by late summer.

It'll be submitted to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse, said Beryl Davis, a director in the federal Government Accountability Office's Financial Management and Assurance team. She didn't know which agency in the federal government would examine those reports once they're submitted.

"COVID just dumped a lot more money into the states and local governments," Davis said. "Certainly it's a challenge for them to account for all of this and ensure it's properly spent."

O'Brien noted that tracking the money could be complicated further as Congress works on another stimulus bill worth \$1.9 trillion. Turner and other city officials said Denver could see an equal amount from that bill as it got from CARES Act funding.

## The breakdown

The city unveiled a website late last month to track CARES Act funding, which updates daily. Here are some of Denver's largest expenditures outlined by a Feb. 21 Department of Finance report given to the City Council.

**Citywide Operations:** \$37.21 million spent or committed. Large expenditures include:

- \$20.59 million on citywide payroll.
- \$11.17 million for shelter operations, personal protective equipment and "Emergency Operations Center needs."
- \$3.36 million to buy laptops, software licenses, cybersecurity tools and more so city staff can work remotely.
- \$987,951 for safety "enhancements," touchless restroom improvements, air sterilization and disinfection systems for Denver's "cultural venues."

**Economic Recovery:** \$18.83 million spent or committed. Large expenditures include:

- \$11.58 million in grants of up to \$7,500 each for more than 2,000 small businesses.
- \$3.37 million split into more than 300 grants of up to \$15,000 each for local nonprofits.

**Food Assistance:** \$2.99 million spent or committed in grants to expand food, grocery and meal programs.

**Public Health:** \$5.29 million spent or committed. Large expenditures include:

- \$2.24 million to give out about 6,800 kits of PPE to small businesses and nonprofits.
- \$1.05 million to create learning spaces where students can complete schoolwork in a "safe and structured environment."



# INDUSTRY NEWS, CONT'D

**Emergency Sheltering:**\$33.99 million spent or committed. Large expenditures include:

- \$20.95 million for emergency homeless shelters.
- \$13.04 million to expand and improve existing group homeless shelters, increase capacity and services for guests.

**Housing Support:**\$8.2 million spent or committed. Large expenditures include:

- \$7 million for the city's Temporary Rental & Utility Assistance program.
- \$1 million in rent assistance and housing vouchers for people experiencing homelessness.

**Support to Individuals Impacted by COVID-19:**\$2.24 million spent or committed. Large expenditures include:

- \$1 million for the Left Behind Workers Fund for those who lost their jobs because of the pandemic.
- \$396,650 to provide computer access to those seeking jobs.
- \$300,000 to support artists and gig workers in need of food, housing and medication.
- \$300,000 to buy five new electric cars and charging stations for residents of low-income and under-resourced neighborhoods.

*Article obtained from the Denver Post at [www.denverpost.com](http://www.denverpost.com).*

## Conrad Swanson | Denver City Hall Reporter

Conrad Swanson covers Denver politics on The Denver Post's political team. An Iowa native, he joined the paper in November 2019 after stints at the Colorado Springs Gazette, Lawrence Journal-World (Kansas) and Sioux City Journal (Iowa). He graduated from the University of Iowa with a bachelor's degree in journalism and a focus in economics. He is a member of the Investigative Reporters and Editors organization and was awarded a 2019 fellowship for the National Press Foundation's Spotlight on Statehouse and Local Reporting Program. He also won awards for sustained coverage in Colorado and political and investigative coverage in Kansas.

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# AGA AUSTIN 2020-2021

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