

# 2018 Speaker Bios

## **Deborah Beams**

Deborah has more than twelve years of accounting and auditing experience, working primarily in the not-for-profit and government industries. She now serves as a technical resource for the Dallas office of BKD. Deborah spent three years as a practice fellow at the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. During that time, she worked on projects leading to the issuance of GASB Statements on nonexchange financial guarantees, fair value, and external investments pools. She also originated and led the GASB project on leases, which involved collaborations with the staff of the FASB and FASAB. Deborah is a member of the American Institute of CPAs and Texas Society of CPAs. She is a graduate of the University of North Texas.

## **Peter J. Braster**

In late 2015, Peter Braster was named the City of Plano's Director of Special Projects. Located in the Office of the City Manager, the Special Projects position was created to bridge economic development and real estate development in Plano. Currently, Mr. Braster oversees the ongoing redevelopment of Downtown Plano; is the ombudsman for the \$3 billion Legacy West development; and will lead the City's retail redevelopment program.

Before joining the City of Plano, Mr. Braster was the City of Carrollton's Senior Development Manager. Hired in 2006 as the city's first Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Manager, Mr. Braster negotiated and managed Carrollton's first public/ private partnership and promoted TOD and economic development in Carrollton's three transit centers. In 2012, Carrollton expanded his role to include leading development projects such as Carrollton's 80-acre Project Raiford; the City's multi-family redevelopment project at Crosby road; and several other special projects.

Mr. Braster has over 30 years of public and private experience. He began his career in civil engineering by working on large transportation projects including several highway, airport, and light rail systems in New York and California. Peter is a member of the Urban Land Institute, the North Texas Urban Land Institute TOD Product Council, and the International Economic Development Council.

**Rhonda H. Covarrubias** TMRS – Director of Finance P.O. Box 149153  
Austin, TX 78714-9153 (512) 225-3706

Rhonda has over 20 years of experience in the pension industry with the Texas Municipal Retirement System. She began her pension career in 1994 as the organization's Investment Accountant, was later promoted to Controller, and currently serves as the Director of Finance. Rhonda currently serves as a board member of the Public Pension Financial Forum (P2F2).

**Cheryl Dowden**

Cheryl Dowden is the Director of Finance/Assistant City Manager for the City of Nederland and a member of GFOAT for the past 33 years.



Mark Evans  
Team Lead, Statewide Outreach  
Texas Water Development Board  
Austin, TX

Mark Evans is the Lead of the Statewide Outreach Team that markets Texas Water Development Board financial assistance programs to political subdivisions, water supply corporations, and others interested in the financing of water-related infrastructure projects. Mark and his team travel the state educating Texans on the benefits of TWDB funding. Previously over the last 7 ½ years, Mark was Project Lead and Program Coordinator in the Clean Water State Revolving Fund program. Mark received his Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance from the University of Texas at Austin and has been a public servant with the State of Texas for over 14 years.

## JULIA GANNAWAY

Julia is a partner in the law firm of Lynn Ross & Gannaway, LLP. Her practice is dedicated largely to employment law in the public sector. The firm represents only employers. The firm's office is located in Fort Worth but their clients are all around the State.



Julia worked as an Assistant City Attorney in Odessa and Bryan before coming to work at the firm.

She advises clients on matters relating to investigations and disciplinary actions in Chapter 143 settings and non-Chapter 143 cities; matters relating to the Fair Labor Standards Act and Texas law regarding pay issues. Her practice involves representing clients before Federal and State courts, administrative hearings for civil service and TCOLE, and in EEOC/DOL investigations. She also moonlights as the author of numerous Public Information Act requests for rulings.

Julia is a 1991 graduate of Texas A&M in economics and obtained her JD from the University of Houston in 1994. She is also a member of the State Bar College.

**JULIA GANNAWAY**  
**DIRECT: 817.332.8512**  
**[GANNAWAY@LABORCOUNSEL.NET](mailto:GANNAWAY@LABORCOUNSEL.NET)**

**Matthew Garrett, Executive Consultant**

Matthew joined NewGen Strategies & Solutions in October 2013, and has completed a variety of cost of service and rate design studies for engagements with water, wastewater, natural gas, stormwater and transportation utilities. Matthew has also assisted in the completion of process improvement, impact fee, valuation, litigation support, and feasibility engagements. Prior to joining NewGen, he served as the Finance Director for Prosper, Texas for over five years. Before his time in municipal government, he was employed by Collin County for five years holding the titles of Senior Financial Analyst, HR Supervisor and HRIS Analyst. Matthew's diverse experience enhances each project with a depth of pragmatic management perspectives.

Matthew earned his undergraduate in Management from Texas A&M University and holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Texas at Dallas. He earned his Certified Government Finance Officer designation in 2010 and completed the Certified Public Manager program in 2014 from Texas State University. He and his lovely wife have three great children, and he likes to spend his time coaching youth sports and biking with the family.

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Matthew B. Garrett MBA, CGFO, CPM | NewGen Strategies & Solutions Executive Consultant

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**Jon E. Hockenyos**

President

Following stints as an aide to a member of the British Parliament and work on a Senatorial campaign in his home state of Illinois, Mr. Hockenyos founded TXP while attending the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin in 1987. Since then, TXP has successfully completed hundreds of projects for a wide variety of clients, with a strong record of on-time, on-budget delivery.

In his role as President of the firm, Mr. Hockenyos is involved in managing the day-to-day operations of the organization, performing technical analysis, and developing strategies for clients. In addition, he makes numerous public presentations and speeches.

Mr. Hockenyos has served as a resource witness on a variety of issues in front of city councils, state legislatures, and the U.S. Congress.

Mr. Hockenyos' private sector background extends beyond TXP. He is currently a board member of Seton Healthcare and American Bank of Commerce. He also served on the Board of Directors for Capital Metro (the Austin area transit authority), the Board of the ARC of the Capital Area, and the Travis County Citizen's Advisory Council. Mr. Hockenyos' personal business interests also include restaurants, real estate, and infrastructure/water development.

Mr. Hockenyos received a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from the University of Illinois and Masters of Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs, where he has taught as an Adjunct Professor.

## **Pamela Hodges**

Pamela Hodges serves as the Controller for the City overseeing the areas of Accounting, Utility Customer Service, Tax and Revenue Collection, Purchasing and Budget and Management Analysis.

Pamela came to the City in March 1995 as the Chief Accountant managing the Accounting Division of Finance. In 1997, her title was changed to Controller and the annual budget process added to her responsibilities. In 2000, her duties were further expanded to include managing Utility Customer Service, Tax and Revenue Collection and Purchasing. She served as acting Finance Director for five months during 2001.

Prior to coming to the City, Pamela worked in public accounting with KPMG Peat Marwick for six years serving several governmental clients in the Dallas area, including City of Dallas, City of Plano and Collin County. Pamela holds a bachelor's degree from Southwest Texas State University. She is a Certified Public Accountant and is active in the Government Financial Officers Association at the state and national level.

**Scott Houston**

Scott Houston is the Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel for the Texas Municipal League and the General Counsel for the Texas City Attorneys Association. He has served as an adjunct professor of political science at Texas State University's M.P.A. program, on the faculty of the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center, and his work on open meetings law and municipal annexation has been published in the Texas Tech Administrative Law Journal. He has received the Texas Bar Government Lawyers Section "Outstanding Government Lawyer of the Year Award." Scott graduated from Texas A&M University and received his law degree from St. Mary's University School of Law.



**Jason Hughes**  
Managing Director

1201 Elm Street, Suite 3500  
Dallas, Texas 75270

Telephone: 214.953.8707  
jason.hughes@hilltopsecurities.com

### **Areas of Expertise**

Specializes in public finance

### **Profile**

- Works with cities, school districts, counties, economic development corporations, development districts and water authorities
- Has extensive experience with both short-term and long-term debt, including general obligation bonds, certificates of obligation, tax notes, revenue bonds, lease/purchases, variable rate demand notes, commercial paper, advance refunding, debt restructurings and synthetic debt products
- Provides financial advisory services for Texas, New Mexico and Missouri

### **Education**

- Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance and Economics, Texas Tech University

### **Current Affiliations**

- TML
- TCMA
- GFOAT

### **Licenses Held**

- Registered Representative of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA)
  - General Securities Representative, Series 7
  - Uniform Securities Agent, Series 63
  - Investment Bank Representative, Series 79



**CITY OF LANCASTER**  
SHINING STAR OF TEXAS

**Dori Lee,**  
**Director of Human Resources/Civil Service**



Dori Lee is a native Texan, born in Dallas. Mrs. Lee has twenty-three (23) years of human resources management experience with the last fourteen (14) years at the City of Lancaster. She obtained her Bachelors of Applied Arts and Sciences and a teaching certificate for secondary business education (grades 6-12) at the University of North Texas.

Mrs. Lee is a certified Senior Professional in Human Resources Management (SPHR), SHRM-SCP Society of Human Resources Management – Senior Certified Professional, IPMA-SCP International Public Management Association – Senior Certified Professional & SPHR Senior Professional in Human Resources.



**Bill Longley**

Legislative Counsel at the Texas Municipal League

Bill Longley graduated from the University of Richmond in 2004 with a degree in political science and sociology. In 2007, he received his law degree from the University of Texas School of Law. Bill worked as a law clerk at TML while in law school. Prior to joining the TML Legal Department, Bill served as an Assistant Attorney General in the Open Records Division of the Office of Attorney General.

In his seven years at TML, Bill has worked on a variety of legal and legislative issues as they relate to Texas cities. He co-authored the TML Revenue Manual and TML Economic Development Handbook, and has spoken on numerous topics, with a focus on economic development, municipal revenue, open government, and elections.

**Craig Morgan,**  
Round Rock Mayor

Craig Morgan was elected to serve as Mayor of Round Rock in May 2017. Prior to being elected to his current seat, he served as Councilmember to Place 1 from May 2011 through May 2017, and was selected as Mayor Pro-Tem in June 2016.

Morgan, a Round Rock attorney, has been an active member in the Round Rock community. He currently serves on the St. David's Round Rock Medical Center Board of Trustees, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board (CAMPO) and the Round Rock Campus Advisory Committee for ACC. He is also a current member of the Rotary Club of Round Rock. He attends the Fellowship at Forest Creek in Round Rock.

He is a Leadership Round Rock graduate and has previously served on the Round Rock Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the Chasco Family YMCA board of directors and the Leadership Round Rock Planning Board. Additionally, Morgan served as a Commissioner on the Round Rock Planning and Zoning Commission, is a former member of the Ridgeview Middle School PTA, and served as a member of the Round Rock Charter Review Commission in 2007.

Morgan received his undergraduate degree from Texas Tech University, an MBA from Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University), and his law degree from the University of Tulsa College of Law. He is married to Amanda Morgan and they have one son, Garret.

**Chris Morrill**

Executive Director/CEO, GFOA

Chris Morrill serves as the Executive Director/CEO of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the US & Canada. He served from 2010 to 2017 as city manager of the City of Roanoke, VA. Previously Chris served as the Assistant City Manager and Budget Director for the City of Savannah, GA and as a budget analyst for Catawba County, NC.

From 1999 through 2001, Chris served as Senior Municipal Finance Advisor to the South African National Treasury under a United States Agency for International Development project. In this position, he assisted the South African government with developing local government finance legislation, municipal budget reforms, and capacity building programs. He served from 1992 through 1994 as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer in the former Soviet Union, where he advised the City of Lviv, Ukraine on finance and management issues.

Morrill co-authored *The Savannah Story: The Road to Equity and Sustainable Community Development in Economic Development in American Cities: the Pursuit of an Equity Agenda*. He completed a three-year fellowship in the Kellogg National Leadership Program, exploring conflict resolution and community building in Peru, China, Northern Ireland, and South Africa.

**Location:**

Chicago Office

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Chicago, IL 60601

United States

See map: [Google Maps](#)

Phone: (312) 977-9700

Fax: (312) 977-4806

## **Michael E. Morrison**

Michael Morrison is a graduate of the University of Florida with a degree in Economic Geography/Industrial Location and holds a Master's of Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Mr. Morrison began his career in municipal government with the City of Fort Worth, where he was responsible for aspects of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and the city's efforts to finance the rehabilitation of rental property in distressed neighborhoods.

Mr. Morrison served as the City of Abilene's first director of economic development from 1988 to 1996 and then as assistant city manager until 2006. During his tenure, the City's economic development efforts created over 3000 jobs. Notable successes included Abilene becoming the home of the primary maintenance facility for American Eagle's regional jet fleet, attracting the country's third largest ski boat manufacturer, and establishing branch campuses for Texas Tech University. The City's success in downtown redevelopment was recognized by Abilene receiving numerous state awards and the National League of Cities' Urban Enrichment Award.

While assistant city manager, Mr. Morrison was appointed to the Brazos's River regional planning group, as part of the first ever state wide water planning effort. Mr. Morrison served as vice-chair and chair of the regional planning group.

Mr. Morrison served New Braunfels as city manager for over seven years during the community's greatest period of growth. He led successful efforts to create a 480 acre Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone, a 2400 acre, \$1.5 billion mixed use development and major expansion of the City's airport. The City's efforts to protect the Guadalupe River Systems was recognized by the TCEQ in 2013. During his tenure, the city's emergency management efforts were reorganized and enhanced to better respond to the regular flood events common in the hill country.

Many of the City's efforts have been recognized as the best in the state. Mr. Morrison's commitment to staff development was recognized by the Texas City Management Association when he received the 2012 Mentoring Award in Memory of Gary Gwyn. Since December 2013, Mr. Morrison has served as Deputy City Manager for the City of Irving. During that period, Mr. Morrison has managed the development of the Irving Music Factory, a \$160 Million city owned entertainment complex. Mr. Morrison was lead negotiator for the City's \$110 Million convention center headquarter hotel, scheduled to open in late 2018. Mr. Morrison also has responsibility for the Irving's effort to redevelop the former Texas Stadium site and for redevelopment efforts for Irving's downtown area.

He is a past board member of the Council for Urban Economic Development (now the International Economic Development Council) and is a member of TCMA and ICMA.

Mr. Morrison is a native of Orlando, Florida, but is a Texan by marriage. He is married to Ruby Perez, also a graduate of the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Ms. Perez is the former development director for Communities in Schools of South Central Texas and the past Executive Director of the Abilene Preservation League. Mike and Ruby have been married for 40 years. Their son is a graduate of TCU and their daughter is a graduate of the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

**Diane Palmer-Boeck**

Diane Palmer-Boeck, CPPO, CPPB, has 21 years municipal procurement experience and 26 years experience in public procurement, beginning with the US Army in West Germany, Redstone Arsenal, AL and Ft Hood, TX .

Diane is currently the Chief Procurement Officer at the City of Plano overseeing the activities of the Procurement, Inventory Control and Project Management Divisions.

Diane served on the Board of Directors for the National Purchasing Institute from 1998 - 2006 and is a Past President. She has served on the education and certification committees for the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing and is currently on the Board of Examiners for Universal Public Procurement Certification Council.

The City of Plano has received the Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award each year since its inception in 1995.

**Shari A. Ramirez-MacKay**

Ms. Ramirez-MacKay is the State Coordinator for the Regional Disaster Finance Program with the Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM). She began her career TDEM on March 7, 2011, and has overseen several of TDEM's financial programs. As part of her new role within the Division, she is concentrating on ensuring that local governments can financially recover from a disaster. Shari is constantly working on educating the local governments, the Division, the Department, and other State Agencies on the importance of reimbursing the local jurisdictions. Shari has held a Certified Emergency Manager designation since 2015. She came to DPS with over 25 years of diversified experience. After graduating from St. Mary's University – San Antonio, Texas in 1986, with a Bachelor's degree in business (BBA) with a concentration in accounting, she began working in the financial sector. Before her arrival in March 2011, she was the Department Fiscal Planning Manager for the San Antonio Office of Emergency Management (SAOEM) overseeing more than \$40M Homeland Security Grant Budget and a multi-million dollar general fund budget. Shari is credentialed as a Finance/Administration Section Chief and filled that role for the Alamo Type III IMT as well as the Alamo Regional Command Center. Shari brought a critical set of skills to TDEM combining knowledge of management, accounting systems, and emergency operations.

## **Miykael Reeve**

Ms. Miykael Reeve is the County Auditor for Ellis County. A long-term resident of Ellis County, she received her Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) from Northwood University and earned her Certified Government Finance Officer (CGFO) certificate in January 2013. She began her career working as an Auditor for Shaw, Witherspoon and Company, P.C. She soon after joined Government Finance Officer Associates of Texas (GFOAT) as an active member. On September 1, 2017, she was sworn in as the Ellis County Auditor. Prior to that, Ms. Reeve was hired in 2008 as the Finance Director for the City of Red Oak. During her tenure, the City of Red Oak successfully upgraded their bond rating from A- to AA with Fitch. She submitted and earned the Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting for the Comprehensive Financial Report for September 30, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and submitted for 2016. She submitted and earned the Distinguished Budget Award her Comprehensive Budget for September 30, 2015, 2016 and 2017. She implemented policies and procedures that enabled the City of Red Oak to grow. Ms. Reeve was also nominated by GFOAT for the Co-chair of the Ethics committee in 2012, where she currently serves. In 2015, she was also nominated to serve on the GFOAT Board of Directors where she served until April of 2017 as North Texas Rep. She currently resides in Ennis, Texas with her two children.

**Bennett Sandlin**

Since October 1 of 2010, Bennett Sandlin is Executive Director of the Texas Municipal League. Prior to that, he was General Counsel of the League, where he helped cities primarily in the fields of tax, economic development, budget, and finance issues, including the municipal hotel occupancy tax and the economic development sales tax. Bennett authored the Revenue Manual for Texas Cities, and was an instructor in Public Funds Investment Training. Bennett is a 1993 graduate of the University of Texas School of Law and has previously worked at the Municipal Affairs Division of the Texas Attorney General's Office.

**Robert B. (Bob) Scott**

C.P.A., Assistant City Manager/CFO, City of Carrollton

Bob has responsibility for all aspects of the City of Carrollton's financial operations. He has a master's degree in accounting and a Bachelor of Science degree in political science from Texas Tech University. Mr. Scott began his career in public accounting, ultimately serving as an audit manager with responsibility for a large number of governmental clients. Mr. Scott has extensive experience in accounting and financial reporting issues, having served on various GASB review committees and task forces. He has been a reviewer for the last three editions of GFOA's Governmental Accounting, Auditing, and Financial Reporting (known as the "Blue Book") and various other GFOA publications. He is a past chair of GFOA's Committee for Accounting, Auditing and Financial Reporting (CAAFR), and he currently serves on the GFOA's Executive Board. While in public accounting, he served as a Practice Fellow for the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and later as representative to the Governmental Accounting Standards Advisory Committee. In 2008, the AICPA named him the outstanding C.P.A. in local government.

**Corrine Steeger**

Assistant Director/Treasury Manager, City Controller's Office, City of Dallas

Corrine Steeger is Assistant Director/Treasury Manager in the City Controller's Office, City of Dallas. Her responsibilities include supervision of the City's treasury operations, including banking, investments, and deferred compensation plan administration. Corrine has also served as Treasury Manager for the City of Arlington, City Treasurer of Austin, and Associate Director for the Center for Public Management, a division of the Department of Public Administration at the University of North Texas. The Center for Public Management provides professional development programs for public sector officials and administrative services for organizations serving the public sector.

Since 1986, Ms. Steeger has actively promoted the passage of legislation to improve public funds management in Texas, often testifying before the State Legislature on these issues. She frequently speaks and writes on public funds management and has provided the investment training required by the Public Funds Investment Act for the Government Finance Officers Association of Texas, the Government Treasurers' Organization of Texas, the Texas Water Conservation Association, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Corrine received B.A. and M.A. degrees in Government from the University of Texas at Austin and an M.B.A. in Finance from Columbia University. Corrine is an honorary lifetime member of the Government Treasurers' Organization of Texas and a Past-President of GFOAT.