



Dec. 7-8, 2022 ♦ Monterey, CA

# Municipal Finance INSTITUTE



## Peer Advice Panel Speaker Bios

### **Julia Cooper, Finance Director, San Jose**

Julia Harper Cooper, Director of Finance, City of San Jose, has over three decades of local government experience. She is responsible for the day-to-day management oversight of four divisions within the Finance Department encompassing 133 direct and indirect reports in the Accounting, Debt & Treasury Management, Revenue Management and Purchasing & Risk Management Divisions. As Director responsible for the day-to-day management includes debt management, investments/cash management, payment processing, billing, accounts receivable, delinquent tax/revenue collections, payroll, accounts payable, financial reporting, procurement services and risk management. Ms. Cooper has been intimately involved in the management of the City's debt program since 1990 involving the issuance of over \$15 billion in municipal securities providing strategic oversight for \$4.7 billion in outstanding debt and a \$2.5 billion investment portfolio. She has serviced as a Board Member of the City of San Jose's Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee since 2007 and chair since 2012; Committee responsible for fiduciary oversight of \$1.2 billion in employee/retiree 457 Plan contributions. Served on the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Debt Committee as member (2003-2010) and ex-officio member (2010-2013) while serving on the GFOA Executive Board. Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board member from 2016 – 2021, serving a one-year term as the Vice-Chair of the Board (2020-2021)

### **Brigitte Elke, Finance Director, San Luis Obispo**

Brigitte began her public service career in the San Luis Obispo Finance Department in 2001 and after five years, ultimately leading the Revenue Division, joined the City Manager's office as the Principal Administrative Analyst. After seven years of budget responsibilities, community partnerships, policy implementation, and the creation of the tourism business improvement district, it was time to move on. She joined the Utilities Department as the Business Manager, taking a deep dive into the needs of infrastructure-heavy enterprise funds. She re-joined the Finance Team in May 2018 as the Finance Director and City Treasurer. She is a member of CSMFO, CMTA, and GFOA for which she rates Enterprise Fund budgets. For CSMFO, she currently serves as the Chair of the Central Coast Chapter. Prior to joining the City of San Luis Obispo, she

worked in traditional advertising and media buying, before getting her feet wet in the Internet marketing and technology industry where she last held the position of Managing Director for Real Media's San Francisco and Los Angeles offices. Brigitte is a native of Switzerland where she earned a bachelor's degree in Business Economics and a Master's degree in Advertising.

**George Harris, Director of Finance/IT, Lancaster**

George Harris is the Finance Director for the City of Lancaster, CA. Mr. Harris has served as Finance Director for four local government agencies since 2008, to include the Cities of Adelanto, Rialto, Victorville and Lancaster. Prior to that he served for 5 years as a Finance Analyst at the City of Rialto and with Willdan Financial Services (formally known as Munifinancial). And prior to that he held Series 7 & 66 securities licenses during his term as a financial advisor with Ameriprise Financial Advisors (formally known as American Express Financial Advisors). George served as a member and director for the Personnel and Employee Relations department for Cal Cities. As director he served on the Cal Cities Board of Directors for two terms (four years). Additionally, he served two years on the Board finance subcommittee. He has also been an active member of the Governance, Transparency and Labor Relations Policy Committee for 6 years, one of which he served as co-chair. Mr. Harris was recently appointed by Cal Cities to serve on the Board of Directors for the California CLASS investment pool JPA. Mr. Harris holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of California, Riverside and a master's degree in Public Administration from California Baptist University.

**Dennis Kauffman, Past President, Cal Cities Fiscal Officers Department and ACM/CFO, Roseville**

Dennis is the Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer for the City of Roseville, California, and a CPA with 27 years of experience in government accounting and financial management. Prior to his position with the City of Roseville, Dennis served the City of Sacramento's Finance Department for over 16 years as Finance Operations Manager and Accounting Manager. Prior to joining the City of Sacramento, Dennis worked for a local CPA firm for five years specializing in audits of school districts and other local governments. Dennis holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, with concentrations in Accounting and Finance, and a Master's degree in Public Policy and Administration from California State University, Sacramento. In addition to his CPA license, Dennis has earned recognition from GFOA as a Certified Public Finance Officer and from the Association of Government Accountants as a Certified Government Finance Manager. Dennis is active on committees for the GFOA, the California Society of Municipal Finance Officers, the California Society of Certified Public Accountants, and the League of California Cities.