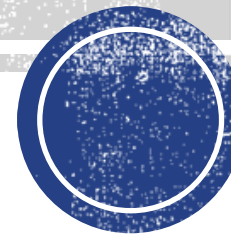
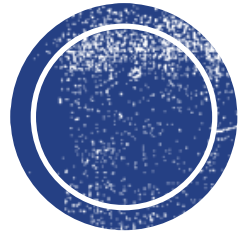


BUILDING A CONSOLIDATED FINANCE DEPARTMENT

NYSAC Finance School, May 2024





ONTARIO COUNTY

Mary Gates, MPA, EDFP

Director of Finance, Ontario County



Ontario County Finance Restructuring

Mary M. Gates
Director of Finance
Ontario County
585-396-4441

Mary.gates@ontariocountyny.gov

Department of Finance

- ▶ Created by Local Law No. 4 - 2003
 - Accounting & Budgeting
 - Payroll
 - Internal Audit
 - Cash Management
 - Grant Coordination
 - Administer Court & Trust, Sales Tax
 - Debt Management
 - Financial Reporting & Forecasting



Original Finance Structure

Five offices:

- Central Finance
- Public Safety Finance
- Health Finance
- Public Works Finance
- Social Services Finance

What can we do better? Where is there need? Where are there efficiencies?

Current Finance Structure

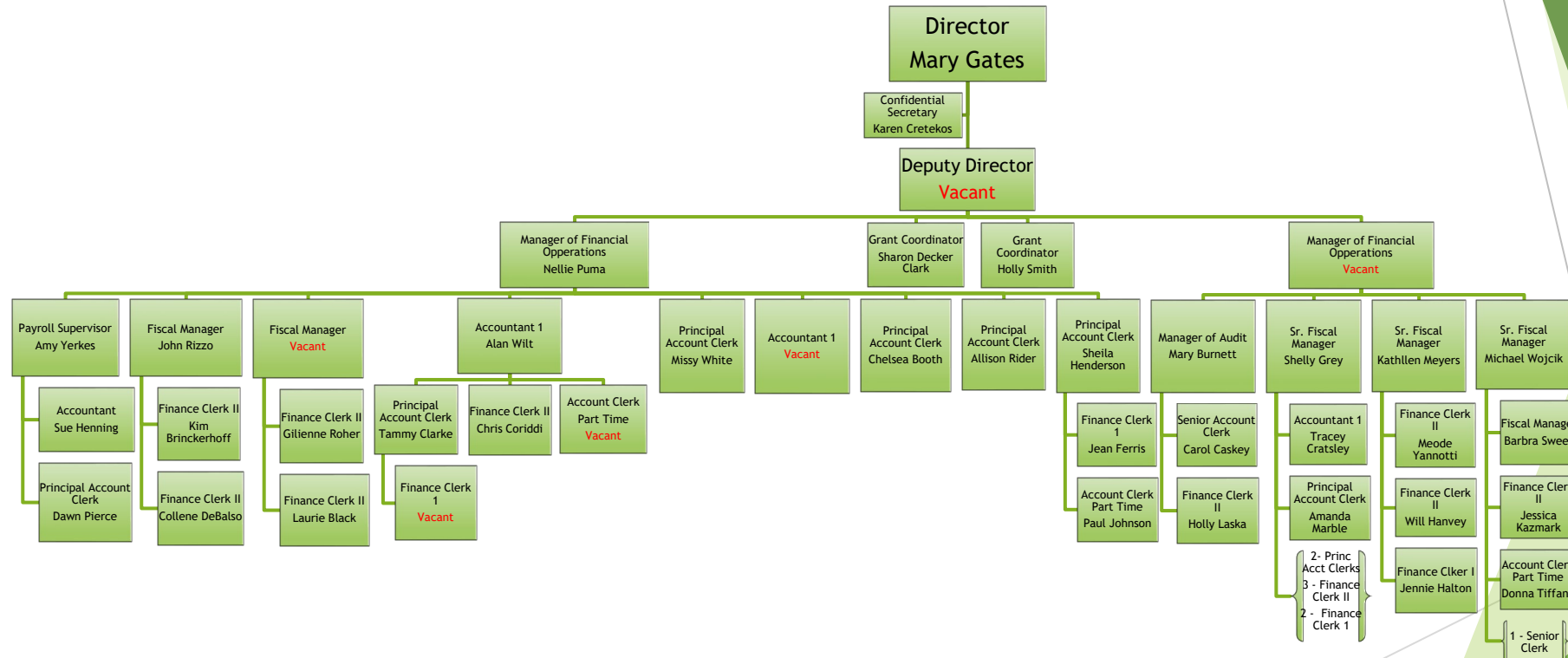
41 Staff in four offices:

- Central Finance - 30 Staff
- Economic Development - 4 Staff
- Public Works - 4 Staff
- Social Services - 3 Staff



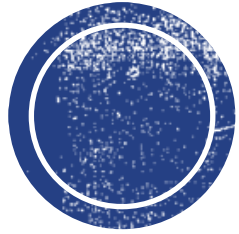
Sr. Fiscal Managers and Fiscal Managers are assigned to departments by Standing Committee for accounting and budgeting support

Org Chart



Lessons Learned

- ▶ Communication is Key!!!
- ▶ Regular meetings regarding happenings in “satellite offices”
- ▶ Be open to changes and new ideas
- ▶ Keep track of impacts to revenue, develop/utilize time tracking to maximize revenue for areas
- ▶ Be deliberate about space - who is located where, to maintain a team dynamic, don't have anyone on their own



MADISON COUNTY

Lou Anne Randall

Director of Finance, Madison County

The background of the slide features a faded image of the Madison County Courthouse, showing its large dome and a clock tower. A large American flag is waving across the right side of the image.

Building a Consolidated Finance Department

Madison County Finance Department

How we got here?

- In 2017, the Madison County Board of Supervisors was looking for more oversight over the County finances in conjunction with the County Administrator who had been in place for four years. The Board hired a third party to conduct a review of the financial management system.
- Based on the review, in early 2018 the Board of Supervisors created a Finance Office reporting to the County Administrator and assigned accounting, payroll, and financial reporting functions to that office.

Madison County Department of Finance



- Department breakdown:
 - Director and Deputy Director
 - 3 payroll employees
 - 8 accounting employees
- Each department at the County has a person who handles billing and purchasing and finances, that person works closely with the Finance Department

Madison County Department of Finance



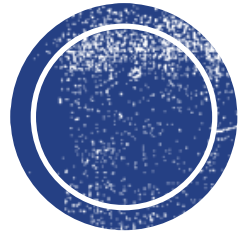
- The Finance Department is responsible for:
 - Payroll
 - Grants
 - P-Card Purchases
 - Coordinating Debt Payments
 - Centralized Billing - allows County to pay bills weekly
 - Accounting
 - State – Aid
 - Investments
 - Claims Auditing
 - Health Insurance
 - Worker’s Compensation

Madison County Department of Finance

- The Finance Department has a great working relationship with not only the Treasurer's Office, but also the Purchasing Department. All three departments are located right next to each other which helps them work as a team.
- There is a system of Checks and Balances in place.
- Use of Technology and software. We have a singular system used by everyone at the County to track our finances, purchases, budgets and billing. This year we integrated the system so it is now on the Cloud. This helps with cybersecurity and also the ability to use in the event of an emergency.

Madison County Department of Finance

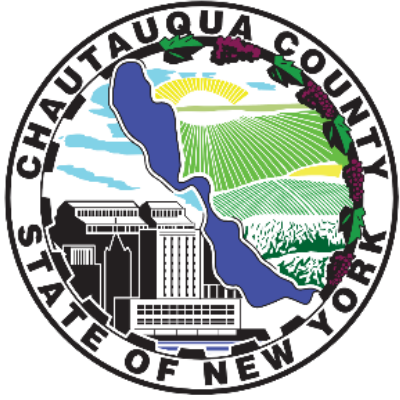
- Need to be Adaptable. Where the Finance Department is today is not how it was just a few years ago. What may work for us, may not work for every County. This year the Finance office also took over the County's Health Insurance. It used to be a function of the Human Resources Department, but it made more sense to go over to the Finance department.
- We also have had to do some trial and error. For example our contracts at the county. At one point the Finance Department did handle those, now the responsibility is in the hands of the County Attorney's Office, which works better for everyone.



CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY

Kitty L Crow

Director of Finance, Chautauqua County



Chautauqua County FISCAL RESTRUCTURING

Kitty L Crow, Director of Finance

WHY RESTRUCTURE?

- Issues
 - Inconsistencies in the performance of fiscal tasks
 - Lack of clear promotional track for fiscal staff / lack of succession planning
 - Job titles utilized differently between departments
 - Disruption to operations when something unexpected occurs and no other fiscal staff are in the department
 - Non-fiscal staff often burdened with fiscal work
 - Supervisor or Department Head lacks fiscal knowledge to guide/train their employees
 - Inability of Finance Department staff to effectively direct fiscal work
 - Errors discovered during year end closing, Finance staff working as clean up crew

OUR PROCESS

- Communication to Department Heads and Fiscal Employees
- Workgroup
 - Considered what works / doesn't work
 - Conducted fiscal staff surveys, who's currently doing what
 - Considered impacts on reimbursements and CAP
 - Identified process changes that would be needed
 - Reviewed information received from Ontario County
 - Defined duties we considered to be fiscal and not fiscal
- Worked with HR titles needed. We were able to agree on existing titles but it took several discussions.
- Ongoing Communications
 - Legislature, Department Heads, Union Leadership, County-wide fiscal staff
 - Communicated goals of the project, how the transfer of function process will work, impact on budget, etc.
- Posted FAQ
- Transfer of Function

Transfer of Function Process, Section 70(2) of NYS Civil Service

- Order by the County Executive – order specified the fiscal functions/duties that will transfer to Finance
- Notification to CSEA 6300 Union President
- Department Heads to identify individuals who are engaged in the functions to be transferred
- Post certified lists of employees and notice of the method for employees to file a protest for inclusion or exclusion in each department
- Each employee provided notice of their rights and an official offer to transfer
- Employees required to respond within 10 days of the notice
- Complete Report of Personnel Changes

Challenges

- Department Head Concerns
 - Will I still have decision making authority over my budget?
 - Location of staff
 - OFA
 - Sheriff
 - Public Defender
- Employees who's duties were 50/50
- Human Resources
 - Create new titles or use existing titles
 - Refilling vacancies while we were mid-process
 - Filling new leadership positions before the transfer were to occur
- Employee Concerns

Employee FAQ

Q: Will I need to move to a different office/location?

Q: Are any positions being eliminated?

Q: Will my hours change?

Q: Can I decline an increase to my hours?

Q: Can I decline the transfer?

Q: Will my duties change?

Q. Will job titles be eliminated?

Q. What happens if an employee's duties are split between fiscal and non-fiscal, will they still transfer, will they still perform non-fiscal duties?

Q. Will seniority be taken into consideration?

Q. How does this affect the budget?

Defining Fiscal Duties

Definition of Fiscal Operations:

- Accounts payable and receivable processing
- Billing and claims preparation and recording
- Assisting Department Heads in the preparation of their annual budget and monitoring such budgets
- Making recommendations to Department Heads on all budget matters
- Preparation of financial analysis and forecasts of expenditures and revenues
- Preparation of financial and budget reports
- Preparation of resolutions pertaining to the budget

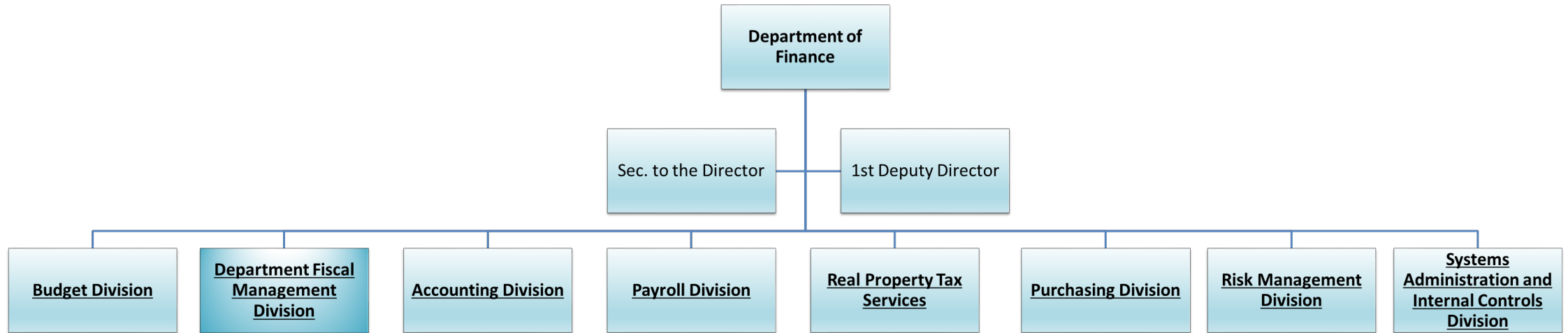
Non-Fiscal Operations/Duties:

- Time and attendance
- Processing purchase requisitions
- Coding travel and purchase card transactions

Budget and Allocations / Chargebacks

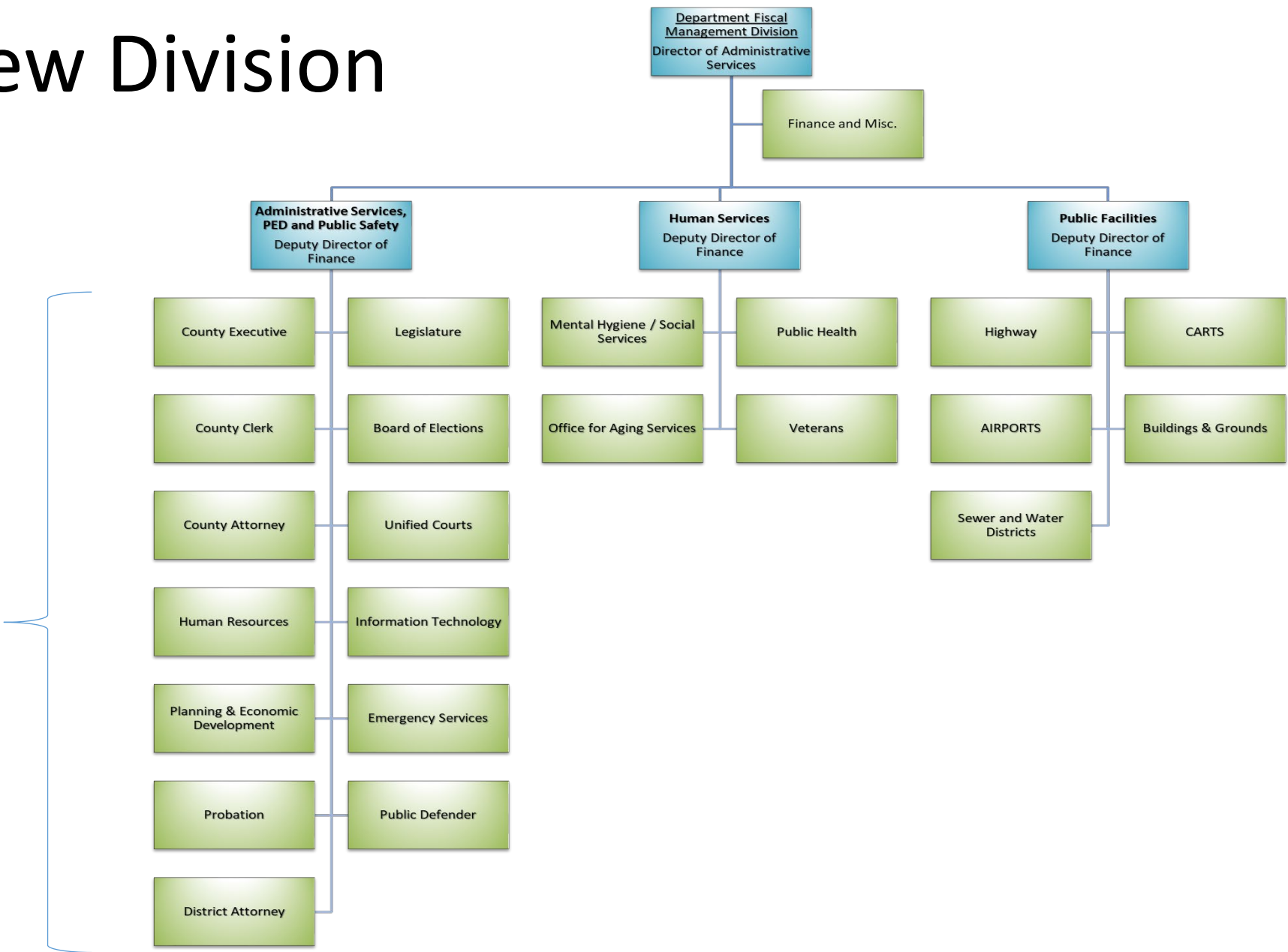
- Budget and FTE Impacts:
 - Plan was to be budget neutral and was not expected to result in a change in FTEs.
 - Where the cost of Finance Department employees is reimbursable the employee's time is charged/allocated back to the department or the cost will be allocated as part of the indirect/cost allocation plan so that the cost can be claimed for reimbursement.
 - Changes in scheduled hours.

New Structure



New Division

DEPARTMENTS SUPPORTED



RESULTS

- Transfer processes went smoothly, no petitions of protest.
- New organization provides more clear lines for promotional opportunities.
- Reduces risk if taking a provisional appointment.
- Greater opportunity for cross training and assigning backups which should reduce disruptions when something unexpected occurs or when someone is out on an extended leave.
- Supervisors have the fiscal knowledge to guide/train their employees.
- Dotted line reporting allows Department Heads to have a point person for their fiscal needs.
- Department Heads will continue to have full decision making authority over their budgets and will be responsible for the performance of their budget.
- Legislative committees have a fiscal point person for the departments that fall under their committee.
- Prior period errors have been uncovered and corrected.
- Finding and correcting errors in real time has results in a more efficient audit of AP invoices.

Post-Transfer Immediate Action Items

- Current and Future Recruitment Efforts
- Evaluation of duties and needs of each subdivision
- Review of job titles and duties – reclassification request
- Review policies and procedures
- Updating Department Approvals for various processes
- Training as needed
- Transitioning non-fiscal duties back to department, ie T&A, some approvals, purchase requisitions
- Fostering new culture, esp with employees in different locations, new email signature, etc.

Further Ahead

- Billing and AR
- Decentralize some of our position budgeting work
- Focus on succession planning, retirement of some senior staff is coming in the next 3-5 years.
- Grant oversight

Summary

- Thanks members of my workgroup.
- Thanks to co-presenters and Dave Lucas for connecting us.
- Is it worth the effort? I'd say YES!





QUESTIONS

