

Municipal Finance is Music to Her Ears

A crucial step in creating VLCT's new Municipal Operations Assistance team was hiring two tried-and-true experts in important and challenging aspects of operating local governments. The first to come on board is Marguerite Ladd, Government Finance Specialist, whose financial acumen, commitment to public service, and bright outlook on life all bode very well for a great fit with VLCT members.*

Why VLCT? What interested you about working for VLCT? Do you have any background in municipal government?

VLCT caught my eye because it aligns so well with my passion for supporting and strengthening local communities. Having been the Town Administrator in Cambridge and the Deputy Manager in Essex, I've seen firsthand how critical sound financial management is for local governments. The chance to support municipalities statewide through VLCT was an opportunity I couldn't pass up.



What are you working on at VLCT? What most excites you about this position?

Right now, I'm focused on helping towns with financial management, whether it's tackling budgeting challenges, navigating grants, or improving financial policies. What excites me most is the chance to be a part of the newly formed Municipal Operations Assistance



team and help municipalities thrive. I love that I can be a resource to so many different communities across the state.

Tell us a little bit about yourself, your interests, a fun fact about you, etc.

When I'm not diving into budgets and spreadsheets, I love getting out and exploring Vermont's beautiful outdoors. A fun fact about me: I have a master's degree in music! Yep, I used to spend my days immersed in staff paper, and now I'm all about t-accounts and municipal finance. It turns out there's a surprising amount of math, rhythm, and structure in both – just don't ask me to play piano at a budget meeting!

What do you want members to know about your work? Are there any common misconceptions or misunderstandings about what you do?

I want members to know that my work is all about supporting them and making sure they have the financial tools they need to succeed. Finance isn't just about numbers: it's about building a strong foundation so communities can grow and adapt to challenges. A lot of people think finance is dry, but to me, it's incredibly rewarding to see how solid financial planning can make a tangible difference in people's lives.

If you had an unlimited budget, what would you most want to focus on in your work?



If I had an unlimited budget, I'd probably start by getting us all some really great coffee and snacks – because let's face it, good ideas flow when there's good food and coffee.

But seriously, I'd love to create a 'Finance Roadshow,' where we take financial training and resources directly to towns across Vermont. I could imagine turning budgeting into a community event – complete with games, prizes, and maybe even a 'Budgeting Battle Royale' where teams would compete to build the most efficient municipal budget. An approach like that could make financial management not just accessible, but actually fun.

How are you committed to justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in your work?

I believe that a community thrives when everyone feels heard and included. In my work, I've led initiatives to ensure that policies and practices are inclusive and serve all members of the community. It's not just about balancing the books – it's about working to ensure that all voices are represented. Whether it's promoting fair financial practices, fostering an inclusive organizational culture, or working to create spaces where everyone feels they belong, I'm committed to creating an environment where every voice matters.

**The other new Municipal Operations Assistance team member will introduce herself in our next issue of VLCT Journal.*

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