

# Management Communication

## City of Northfield

Northfield, Minnesota

For the Year Ended  
December 31, 2020

Management, Honorable Mayor and City Council  
City of Northfield, Minnesota

We have audited the financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund and the aggregate remaining fund information of the City of Northfield (the City) for the year ended December 31, 2020. We did not audit the financial statements of the Northfield Municipal Hospital discretely presented component unit. Those financial statements were audited by other auditors, whose report has been furnished to us, and our opinion insofar as it relates to the amounts included for the Northfield Municipal Hospital, is based solely on the report of the other auditors. Professional standards require that we provide you with the following information about our responsibilities under generally accepted auditing standards, *Governmental Auditing Standards*, as well as certain information related to the planned scope and timing of our audit. We have communicated such information in our letter to you dated December 7, 2020. Professional standards also require that we communicate to you the following information related to our audit.

### **Significant Audit Findings**

In planning and performing our audit, we considered the City's internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the City's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the City's internal control over financial reporting.

Our consideration of internal control over financial reporting was for the limited purpose described in the preceding paragraph and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting that might be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses and therefore, there can be no assurance that all deficiencies, significant deficiencies, or material weaknesses have been identified. However, as described below, we identified certain deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting that we consider to be material weaknesses and other deficiencies that we consider to be significant deficiencies.

A *deficiency in internal control* exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct misstatements on a timely basis. A *material weakness* is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the City's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected on a timely basis. We considered the deficiency described below as finding 2020-001 to be a material weakness.

<i>Condition:</i>	During our audit, an adjustment was needed to adjust tax revenues and allocate to the appropriate funds.
<i>Criteria:</i>	The financial statements are the responsibility of the City's management.
<i>Cause:</i>	City staff has not prepared a year-end trial balance reflecting all necessary accounting entries.
<i>Effect:</i>	This indicates that it would be likely that a misstatement may occur and not be detected by the City's system of internal control. The audit firm cannot serve as a compensating control over this deficiency.
<i>Recommendation:</i>	We recommend that management review each journal entry, obtain an understanding of why the entry was necessary and modify current procedures to ensure that future corrections are not needed.

*Management Response:*

Management has made improvements in recording year-end adjustments. Management will review and gain an understanding of the audit adjustments in order to reduce the number of entries necessary for future audits.

A *significant deficiency* is a deficiency or a combination of deficiencies in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance. We consider the deficiency described below as finding 2020-002 to be a significant deficiency.

## **2020-002                      Preparation of Financial Statements**

- Condition:* As in prior years, we were requested to draft the audited financial statements and related footnote disclosures as part of our regular audit services. Recent auditing standards require auditors to communicate this situation to the Council as an internal control deficiency. Ultimately, it is management's responsibility to provide for the preparation of your statements and footnotes, and the responsibility of the auditor to determine the fairness of presentation of those statements. However, based on recent auditing standards, it is our responsibility to inform you that this deficiency could result in a material misstatement to the financial statements that could have been prevented or detected by your management. Essentially, the auditors cannot be part of your internal control process.
- Criteria:* Internal controls should be in place to ensure adequate internal control over safeguarding of assets and the reliability of financial records and reporting.
- Cause:* From a practical standpoint, we prepare the statements and determine the fairness of the presentation at the same time in connection with our audit. This is not unusual for us to do with organizations of your size.
- Effect:* The effectiveness of the internal control system relies on enforcement by management. The effect of deficiencies in internal controls can result in undetected errors. As in prior years, we have instructed management to review a draft of the auditor prepared financials in detail for accuracy; we have answered any questions that management might have, and have encouraged research of any accounting guidance in connection with the adequacy and appropriateness of classification of disclosures in your statements. We are satisfied that the appropriate steps have been taken to provide you with the completed financial statements.
- Recommendation:* Under these circumstances, the most effective controls lie in management's knowledge of the City's financial operations. It is the responsibility of management and those charged with governance to make the decision whether to accept the degree of risk associated with this condition because of cost and other considerations. Regarding the specific situation listed above, we would offer the following specific recommendation: 1) Utilize a disclosure checklist to ensure all required disclosures are present and agree to work papers, and 2) Agree your accounting software financial information to the amount reported in the financial statements.

### *Management Response:*

For now, the City's management accepts the degree of risk associated with this condition and thoroughly reviews a draft of the financial statements.

## **Compliance and Other Matters**

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the City's financial statements are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, grant agreements, and other matters noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit. Also in accordance with the Uniform Guidance, we examined, on a test basis, evidence about the City's compliance with the types of compliance requirements described in the "U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Compliance Supplement" applicable to each of its major federal programs for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the City's compliance with those requirements. While our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion, it does not provide a legal determination on the City's compliance with those requirements. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported in accordance with Government Auditing Standards, the Uniform Guidance or Minnesota statutes.

## **Qualitative Aspects of Accounting Practices**

Management is responsible for the selection and use of appropriate accounting policies. The significant accounting policies used by the City are described in Note 1 to the financial statements. The Municipal Hospital adopted GASB 87, Leases, during the year ended December 31, 2020. We noted no transactions entered into by the governmental unit during the year for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus. All significant transactions have been recognized in the financial statements in the proper period except as described in note 10.

Accounting estimates are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management's knowledge and experience about past and current events and assumptions about future events. Certain accounting estimates are particularly sensitive because of their significance to the financial statements and because of the possibility that future events affecting them may differ significantly from those expected. The most sensitive estimates affecting the City were capital asset basis, depreciation, compensated absences, other postemployment benefits and the liability for the City's pension.

- Management's estimate of capital asset basis is based on estimated historical cost of the capital assets and depreciation is based on the estimated useful lives of capital assets.
- Compensated absences are based on vacation and sick hours accrued at year end.
- Other postemployment benefits are based on an actuarial calculation. We evaluated the key factors and assumptions used to develop these accounting estimates in determining that it is reasonable in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole.
- Management's estimate of its pension liability is based on several factors including, but not limited to, anticipated investment return rate, retirement age for active employees, life expectancy, salary increases and form of annuity payment upon retirement.

The disclosures in the financial statements are neutral, consistent, and clear. Certain financial statement disclosures are particularly sensitive because of their significance to financial statement users.

## **Difficulties Encountered in Performing the Audit**

We encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management in performing and completing our audit.

## **Corrected and Uncorrected Misstatements**

Professional standards require us to accumulate all known and likely misstatements identified during the audit, other than those that are trivial, and communicate them to the appropriate level of management. Management has corrected all such misstatements. We proposed four material journal entries that we consider to be audit entries or corrections of management decisions. They related to tax revenues and to correct the recording of contributions made and rent payments received from the joint venture.

We also assisted in preparing a number of year-end accounting entries. These were necessary to adjust the City's records at year end to correct ending balances. The City should establish more detailed processes and procedures to reduce the total number of entries needed. The City will receive better, more timely information if the preparation of year-end entries is completed internally.

## **Disagreements with Management**

For purposes of this letter professional standards define a disagreement with management as a financial accounting, reporting, or auditing matter, whether or not resolved to our satisfaction, that could be significant to the financial statements or the auditor's report. We are pleased to report that no such disagreements arose during the course of our audit.

## **Management Representations**

We have requested certain representations from management that are included in the management representation letter dated June 3, 2021.

## **Management Consultations with Other Independent Accountants**

In some cases, management may decide to consult with other accountants about auditing and accounting matters, similar to obtaining a “second opinion” on certain situations. If a consultation involves application of an accounting principle to the City’s financial statements or a determination of the type of auditor’s opinion that may be expressed on those statements, our professional standards require the consulting accountant to check with us to determine that the consultant has all the relevant facts. To our knowledge, there were no such consultations with other accountants.

## **Other Matters**

We applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information (RSI) (Management’s Discussion and Analysis, the Schedules of Employer’s Share of the Net Pension Liability, and the Schedule of changes in the City’s OPEB Liability and related ratios, which is information that supplements the basic financial statements. Our procedures consisted of inquiries of management regarding the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management’s responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We did not audit the RSI and do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the RSI.

We were engaged to report on the supplementary information (combining and individual fund financial statements), which accompany the financial statements but are not RSI. With respect to this supplementary information, we made certain inquiries of management and evaluated the form, content, and methods of preparing the information to determine that the information complies with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the method of preparing it has not changed from the prior period, and the information is appropriate and complete in relation to our audit of the financial statements. We compared and reconciled the supplementary information to the underlying accounting records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves.

We were not engaged to report on the introductory or statistical sections, which accompany the financial statements but are not RSI. We did not audit or perform other procedures on this other information and we do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on them.

## **Other Audit Findings or Issues**

We generally discuss a variety of matters, including the application of accounting principles and auditing standards, with management each year prior to retention as the governmental unit’s auditors. However, these discussions occurred in the normal course of our professional relationship and our responses were not a condition to our retention.

## **Future Accounting Standard Changes**

The following Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statements have been issued and may have an impact on future City financial statements: <sup>(1)</sup>

### **GASB Statement No. 87 - Leases**

#### **Summary**

The objective of this Statement is to better meet the information needs of financial statement users by improving accounting and financial reporting for leases by governments. This Statement increases the usefulness of governments' financial statements by requiring recognition of certain lease assets and liabilities for leases that previously were classified as operating leases and recognized as inflows of resources or outflows of resources based on the payment provisions of the contract. It establishes a single model for lease accounting based on the foundational principle that leases are financings of the right to use an underlying asset. Under this Statement, a lessee is required to recognize a lease liability and an intangible right-to-use lease asset, and a lessor is required to recognize a lease receivable and a deferred inflow of resources, thereby enhancing the relevance and consistency of information about governments' leasing activities.

#### **Effective Date and Transition**

The requirements of this Statement are effective for fiscal years beginning after June 15, 2021, and all reporting periods thereafter.

Leases should be recognized and measured using the facts and circumstances that exist at the beginning of the period of implementation (or, if applied to earlier periods, the beginning of the earliest period restated). However, lessors should not restate the assets underlying their existing sales-type or direct financing leases. Any residual assets for those leases become the carrying values of the underlying assets.

#### **How the Changes in This Statement Will Improve Accounting and Financial Reporting**

This Statement will increase the usefulness of governments' financial statements by requiring reporting of certain lease liabilities that currently are not reported. It will enhance comparability of financial statements among governments by requiring lessees and lessors to report leases under a single model. This Statement also will enhance the decision-usefulness of the information provided to financial statement users by requiring notes to financial statements related to the timing, significance, and purpose of a government's leasing arrangements.

### **GASB Statement No. 89 - Accounting for Interest Cost Incurred before the End of a Construction Period**

#### **Summary**

The objectives of this Statement are (1) to enhance the relevance and comparability of information about capital assets and the cost of borrowing for a reporting period and (2) to simplify accounting for interest cost incurred before the end of a construction period.

This Statement establishes accounting requirements for interest cost incurred before the end of a construction period. Such interest cost includes all interest that previously was accounted for in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs 5–22 of Statement No. 62, Codification of Accounting and Financial Reporting Guidance Contained in Pre-November 30, 1989 FASB and AICPA Pronouncements, which are superseded by this Statement. This Statement requires that interest cost incurred before the end of a construction period be recognized as an expense in the period in which the cost is incurred for financial statements prepared using the economic resources measurement focus. As a result, interest cost incurred before the end of a construction period will not be included in the historical cost of a capital asset reported in a business-type activity or enterprise fund.

This Statement also reiterates that in financial statements prepared using the current financial resources measurement focus, interest cost incurred before the end of a construction period should be recognized as an expenditure on a basis consistent with governmental fund accounting principles.



## **Future Accounting Standard Changes (Continued)**

### **Effective Date and Transition**

The requirements of this Statement are effective for reporting periods beginning after December 15, 2020. Earlier application is encouraged.

### **How the Changes in This Statement Will Improve Accounting and Financial Reporting**

The requirements of this Statement will improve financial reporting by providing users of financial statements with more relevant information about capital assets and the cost of borrowing for a reporting period. The resulting information also will enhance the comparability of information about capital assets and the cost of borrowing for a reporting period for both governmental activities and business-type activities.

### **GASB Statement No. 91 - *Conduit Debt Obligations***

#### **Summary**

The primary objectives of this Statement are to provide a single method of reporting conduit debt obligations by issuers and eliminate diversity in practice associated with (1) commitments extended by issuers, (2) arrangements associated with conduit debt obligations, and (3) related note disclosures. This Statement achieves those objectives by clarifying the existing definition of a conduit debt obligation; establishing that a conduit debt obligation is not a liability of the issuer; establishing standards for accounting and financial reporting of additional commitments and voluntary commitments extended by issuers and arrangements associated with conduit debt obligations; and improving required note disclosures.

All conduit debt obligations involve the issuer making a limited commitment. Some issuers extend additional commitments or voluntary commitments to support debt service in the event the third party is, or will be, unable to do so.

An issuer should not recognize a conduit debt obligation as a liability. However, an issuer should recognize a liability associated with an additional commitment or a voluntary commitment to support debt service if certain recognition criteria are met. As long as a conduit debt obligation is outstanding, an issuer that has made an additional commitment should evaluate at least annually whether those criteria are met. An issuer that has made only a limited commitment should evaluate whether those criteria are met when an event occurs that causes the issuer to reevaluate its willingness or ability to support the obligor's debt service through a voluntary commitment.

This Statement also addresses arrangements - often characterized as leases - that are associated with conduit debt obligations. In those arrangements, capital assets are constructed or acquired with the proceeds of a conduit debt obligation and used by third-party obligors in the course of their activities. Payments from third-party obligors are intended to cover and coincide with debt service payments. During those arrangements, issuers retain the titles to the capital assets. Those titles may or may not pass to the obligors at the end of the arrangements.

This Statement requires issuers to disclose general information about their conduit debt obligations, organized by type of commitment, including the aggregate outstanding principal amount of the issuers' conduit debt obligations and a description of each type of commitment. Issuers that recognize liabilities related to supporting the debt service of conduit debt obligations also should disclose information about the amount recognized and how the liabilities changed during the reporting period.

### **Effective Date and Transition**

The requirements of this Statement are effective for reporting periods beginning after December 15, 2021. Earlier application is encouraged.



## **Future Accounting Standard Changes (Continued)**

### **How the Changes in This Statement Will Improve Accounting and Financial Reporting**

The requirements of this Statement will improve financial reporting by eliminating the existing option for issuers to report conduit debt obligations as their own liabilities, thereby ending significant diversity in practice. The clarified definition will resolve stakeholders' uncertainty as to whether a given financing is, in fact, a conduit debt obligation. Requiring issuers to recognize liabilities associated with additional commitments extended by issuers and to recognize assets and deferred inflows of resources related to certain arrangements associated with conduit debt obligations also will eliminate diversity, thereby improving comparability in reporting by issuers. Revised disclosure requirements will provide financial statement users with better information regarding the commitments issuers extend and the likelihood that they will fulfill those commitments. That information will inform users of the potential impact of such commitments on the financial resources of issuers and help users assess issuers' roles in conduit debt obligations.

### **GASB Statement No. 92 - Omnibus 2020**

#### **Summary**

The objectives of this Statement are to enhance comparability in accounting and financial reporting and to improve the consistency of authoritative literature by addressing practice issues that have been identified during implementation and application of certain GASB Statements. This Statement addresses a variety of topics and includes specific provisions about the following:

- The effective date of Statement No. 87, Leases, and Implementation Guide No. 2019-3, Leases, for interim financial reports
- Reporting of intra-entity transfers of assets between a primary government employer and a component unit defined benefit pension plan or defined benefit other postemployment benefit (OPEB) plan
- The applicability of Statements No. 73, Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions and Related Assets That Are Not within the Scope of GASB Statement 68, and Amendments to Certain Provisions of GASB Statements 67 and 68, as amended, and No. 74, Financial Reporting for Postemployment Benefit Plans Other Than Pension Plans, as amended, to reporting assets accumulated for postemployment benefits
- The applicability of certain requirements of Statement No. 84, Fiduciary Activities, to postemployment benefit arrangements
- Measurement of liabilities (and assets, if any) related to asset retirement obligations (AROs) in a government acquisition
- Reporting by public entity risk pools for amounts that are recoverable from reinsurers or excess insurers
- Reference to nonrecurring fair value measurements of assets or liabilities in authoritative literature
- Terminology used to refer to derivative instruments.

## **Future Accounting Standard Changes (Continued)**

### **Effective Date and Transition**

The requirements of this Statement are effective as follows:

- The requirements related to the effective date of Statement 87 and Implementation Guide 2019-3, reinsurance recoveries, and terminology used to refer to derivative instruments are effective upon issuance.
- The requirements related to intra-entity transfers of assets and those related to the applicability of Statements 73 and 74 are effective for fiscal years beginning after June 15, 2020.
- The requirements related to application of Statement 84 to postemployment benefit arrangements and those related to nonrecurring fair value measurements of assets or liabilities are effective for reporting periods beginning after June 15, 2020.
- The requirements related to the measurement of liabilities (and assets, if any) associated with AROs in a government acquisition are effective for government acquisitions occurring in reporting periods beginning after June 15, 2020.

Earlier application is encouraged and is permitted by topic.

### **How the Changes in This Statement Will Improve Accounting and Financial Reporting**

The requirements of this Statement will enhance comparability in the application of accounting and financial reporting requirements and will improve the consistency of authoritative literature. More comparable reporting will improve the usefulness of information for users of state and local government financial statements.

### **GASB Statement No. 93 - *Replacement of Interbank Offered Rates***

#### **Summary**

The objective of this Statement is to address those and other accounting and financial reporting implications that result from the replacement of an IBOR. This Statement achieves that objective by:

- Providing exceptions for certain hedging derivative instruments to the hedge accounting termination provisions when an IBOR is replaced as the reference rate of the hedging derivative instrument's variable payment
- Clarifying the hedge accounting termination provisions when a hedged item is amended to replace the reference rate
- Clarifying that the uncertainty related to the continued availability of IBORs does not, by itself, affect the assessment of whether the occurrence of a hedged expected transaction is probable
- Removing LIBOR as an appropriate benchmark interest rate for the qualitative evaluation of the effectiveness of an interest rate swap
- Identifying a Secured Overnight Financing Rate and the Effective Federal Funds Rate as appropriate benchmark interest rates for the qualitative evaluation of the effectiveness of an interest rate swap
- Clarifying the definition of reference rate, as it is used in Statement 53, as amended
- Providing an exception to the lease modifications guidance in Statement 87, as amended, for certain lease contracts that are amended solely to replace an IBOR as the rate upon which variable payments depend

## **Future Accounting Standard Changes (Continued)**

### **Effective Date and Transition**

The removal of LIBOR as an appropriate benchmark interest rate is effective for reporting periods ending after December 31, 2021. All other requirements of this Statement are effective for reporting periods beginning after June 15, 2020. Earlier application is encouraged. The exceptions to the existing provisions for hedge accounting termination and lease modifications in this Statement will reduce the cost of the accounting and financial reporting ramifications of replacing IBORs with other reference rates. The reliability and relevance of reported information will be maintained by requiring that agreements that effectively maintain an existing hedging arrangement continue to be accounted for in the same manner as before the replacement of a reference rate. As a result, this Statement will preserve the consistency and comparability of reporting hedging derivative instruments and leases after governments amend or replace agreements to replace an IBOR.

### **How the Changes in This Statement Will Improve Accounting and Financial Reporting**

The requirements of this Statement will enhance comparability in the application of accounting and financial reporting requirements and will improve the consistency of authoritative literature. More comparable reporting will improve the usefulness of information for users of state and local government financial statements.

## **GASB Statement No. 94 - *Public-Private and Public-Public Partnerships and Availability Payment Arrangements***

### **Summary**

The primary objective of this Statement is to improve financial reporting by addressing issues related to public-private and public-public partnership arrangements (PPPs). As used in this Statement, a PPP is an arrangement in which a government (the transferor) contracts with an operator (a governmental or nongovernmental entity) to provide public services by conveying control of the right to operate or use a nonfinancial asset, such as infrastructure or other capital asset (the underlying PPP asset), for a period of time in an exchange or exchange-like transaction. Some PPPs meet the definition of a service concession arrangement (SCA), which the Board defines in this Statement as a PPP in which (1) the operator collects and is compensated by fees from third parties; (2) the transferor determines or has the ability to modify or approve which services the operator is required to provide, to whom the operator is required to provide the services, and the prices or rates that can be charged for the services; and (3) the transferor is entitled to significant residual interest in the service utility of the underlying PPP asset at the end of the arrangement.

This Statement also provides guidance for accounting and financial reporting for availability payment arrangements (APAs). As defined in this Statement, an APA is an arrangement in which a government compensates an operator for services that may include designing, constructing, financing, maintaining, or operating an underlying nonfinancial asset for a period of time in an exchange or exchange-like transaction.

### **Effective Date and Transition**

The requirements of this Statement are effective for fiscal years beginning after June 15, 2022, and all reporting periods thereafter. Earlier application is encouraged.

PPPs should be recognized and measured using the facts and circumstances that exist at the beginning of the period of implementation (or if applicable to earlier periods, the beginning of the earliest period restated).

### **How the Changes in This Statement Will Improve Accounting and Financial Reporting**

The requirements of this Statement will improve financial reporting by establishing the definitions of PPPs and APAs and providing uniform guidance on accounting and financial reporting for transactions that meet those definitions. That uniform guidance will provide more relevant and reliable information for financial statement users and create greater consistency in practice. This Statement will enhance the decision usefulness of a government's financial statements by requiring governments to report assets and liabilities related to PPPs consistently and disclose important information about PPP transactions. The required disclosures will allow users to understand the scale and important aspects of a government's PPPs and evaluate a government's future obligations and assets resulting from PPPs.

## **Future Accounting Standard Changes (Continued)**

### **GASB Statement No. 95 - *Postponement of the Effective Dates of Certain Authoritative Guidance***

#### **Summary**

The primary objective of this Statement is to provide temporary relief to governments and other stakeholders in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. That objective is accomplished by postponing the effective dates of certain provisions in Statements and Implementation Guides that first became effective or are scheduled to become effective for periods beginning after June 15, 2018, and later.

The effective dates of certain provisions contained in the following pronouncements are postponed by one year:

- Statement No. 83, Certain Asset Retirement Obligations
- Statement No. 84, Fiduciary Activities
- Statement No. 88, Certain Disclosures Related to Debt, including Direct Borrowings and Direct Placements
- Statement No. 89, Accounting for Interest Cost Incurred before the End of a Construction Period
- Statement No. 90, Majority Equity Interests
- Statement No. 91, Conduit Debt Obligations
- Statement No. 92, Omnibus 2020
- Statement No. 93, Replacement of Interbank Offered Rates
- Implementation Guide No. 2017-3, Accounting and Financial Reporting for Postemployment Benefits Other Than Pensions (and Certain Issues Related to OPEB Plan Reporting)
- Implementation Guide No. 2018-1, Implementation Guidance Update - 2018
- Implementation Guide No. 2019-1, Implementation Guidance Update - 2019
- Implementation Guide No. 2019-2, Fiduciary Activities.

The effective dates of the following pronouncements are postponed by 18 months:

- Statement No. 87, Leases
- Implementation Guide No. 2019-3, Leases.

#### **Effective Date and Transition**

The requirements of this Statement are effective immediately.

#### **How the Changes in This Statement Will Improve Accounting and Financial Reporting**

Providing governments with sufficient time to apply the authoritative guidance addressed in this Statement will help to safeguard the reliability of their financial statements, which in turn will benefit the users of those financial statements.

## **Future Accounting Standard Changes (Continued)**

### **GASB Statement No. 96 - *Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements***

#### **Summary**

This Statement provides guidance on the accounting and financial reporting for subscription-based information technology arrangements (SBITAs) for government end users (governments). This Statement (1) defines a SBITA; (2) establishes that a SBITA results in a right-to-use subscription asset - an intangible asset - and a corresponding subscription liability; (3) provides the capitalization criteria for outlays other than subscription payments, including implementation costs of a SBITA; and (4) requires note disclosures regarding a SBITA. To the extent relevant, the standards for SBITAs are based on the standards established in Statement No. 87, Leases, as amended.

Under this Statement, a government generally should recognize a right-to-use subscription asset - an intangible asset - and a corresponding subscription liability. A government should recognize the subscription liability at the commencement of the subscription term, - which is when the subscription asset is placed into service. The subscription liability should be initially measured at the present value of subscription payments expected to be made during the subscription term. Future subscription payments should be discounted using the interest rate the SBITA vendor charges the government, which may be implicit, or the government's incremental borrowing rate if the interest rate is not readily determinable. A government should recognize amortization of the discount on the subscription liability as an outflow of resources (for example, interest expense) in subsequent financial reporting periods.

This Statement provides an exception for short-term SBITAs. Short-term SBITAs have a maximum possible term under the SBITA contract of 12 months (or less), including any options to extend, regardless of their probability of being exercised. Subscription payments for short-term SBITAs should be recognized as outflows of resources.

This Statement requires a government to disclose descriptive information about its SBITAs other than short-term SBITAs, such as the amount of the subscription asset, accumulated amortization, other payments not included in the measurement of a subscription liability, principal and interest requirements for the subscription liability, and other essential information.

#### **Effective Date and Transition**

The requirements of this Statement are effective for fiscal years beginning after June 15, 2022, and all reporting periods thereafter. Earlier application is encouraged. Assets and liabilities resulting from SBITAs should be recognized and measured using the facts and circumstances that existed at the beginning of the fiscal year in which this Statement is implemented. Governments are permitted, but are not required, to include in the measurement of the subscription asset capitalizable outlays associated with the initial implementation stage and the operation and additional implementation stage incurred prior to the implementation of this Statement.

#### **How the Changes in This Statement Will Improve Accounting and Financial Reporting**

The requirements of this Statement will improve financial reporting by establishing a definition for SBITAs and providing uniform guidance for accounting and financial reporting for transactions that meet that definition. That definition and uniform guidance will result in greater consistency in practice. Establishing the capitalization criteria for implementation costs also will reduce diversity and improve comparability in financial reporting by governments. This Statement also will enhance the relevance and reliability of a government's financial statements by requiring a government to report a subscription asset and subscription liability for a SBITA and to disclose essential information about the arrangement. The disclosures will allow users to understand the scale and important aspects of a government's SBITA activities and evaluate a government's obligations and assets resulting from SBITAs.

## **Future Accounting Standard Changes (Continued)**

**GASB Statement No. 97** - *Certain Component Unit Criteria, and Accounting and Financial Reporting for Internal Revenue Code Section 457 Deferred Compensation Plans - an amendment of GASB Statements No. 14 and No. 84, and a supersession of GASB Statement No. 32*

### **Summary**

The primary objectives of this Statement are to (1) increase consistency and comparability related to the reporting of fiduciary component units in circumstances in which a potential component unit does not have a governing board and the primary government performs the duties that a governing board typically would perform; (2) mitigate costs associated with the reporting of certain defined contribution pension plans, defined contribution other postemployment benefit (OPEB) plans, and employee benefit plans other than pension plans or OPEB plans (other employee benefit plans) as fiduciary component units in fiduciary fund financial statements; and (3) enhance the relevance, consistency, and comparability of the accounting and financial reporting for Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 457 deferred compensation plans (Section 457 plans) that meet the definition of a pension plan and for benefits provided through those plans.

This Statement requires that for purposes of determining whether a primary government is financially accountable for a potential component unit, except for a potential component unit that is a defined contribution pension plan, a defined contribution OPEB plan, or another employee benefit plan (for example, certain Section 457 plans), the absence of a governing board should be treated the same as the appointment of a voting majority of a governing board if the primary government performs the duties that a governing board typically would perform.

This Statement also requires that the financial burden criterion in paragraph 7 of Statement No. 84, Fiduciary Activities, be applicable to only defined benefit pension plans and defined benefit OPEB plans that are administered through trusts that meet the criteria in paragraph 3 of Statement No. 67, Financial Reporting for Pension Plans, or paragraph 3 of Statement No. 74, Financial Reporting for Postemployment Benefit Plans Other Than Pension Plans, respectively.

This Statement (1) requires that a Section 457 plan be classified as either a pension plan or another employee benefit plan depending on whether the plan meets the definition of a pension plan and (2) clarifies that Statement 84, as amended, should be applied to all arrangements organized under IRC Section 457 to determine whether those arrangements should be reported as fiduciary activities.

This Statement supersedes the remaining provisions of Statement No. 32, Accounting and Financial Reporting for Internal Revenue Code Section 457 Deferred Compensation Plans, as amended, regarding investment valuation requirements for Section 457 plans. As a result, investments of all Section 457 plans should be measured as of the end of the plan's reporting period in all circumstances.

### **Effective Date and Transition**

The requirements of this Statement that (1) exempt primary governments that perform the duties that a governing board typically performs from treating the absence of a governing board the same as the appointment of a voting majority of a governing board in determining whether they are financially accountable for defined contribution pension plans, defined contribution OPEB plans, or other employee benefit plans and (2) limit the applicability of the financial burden criterion in paragraph 7 of Statement 84 to defined benefit pension plans and defined benefit OPEB plans that are administered through trusts that meet the criteria in paragraph 3 of Statement 67 or paragraph 3 of Statement 74, respectively, are effective immediately.

The requirements of this Statement that are related to the accounting and financial reporting for Section 457 plans are effective for fiscal years beginning after June 15, 2021. For purposes of determining whether a primary government is financially accountable for a potential component unit, the requirements of this Statement that provide that for all other arrangements, the absence of a governing board be treated the same as the appointment of a voting majority of a governing board if the primary government performs the duties that a governing board typically would perform, are effective for reporting periods beginning after June 15, 2021. Earlier application of those requirements is encouraged and permitted by requirement as specified within this Statement.

The Board considered the effective dates for the requirements of this Statement in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and in concert with Statement No. 95, Postponement of the Effective Dates of Certain Authoritative Guidance.

## Future Accounting Standard Changes (Continued)

### How the Changes in This Statement Will Improve Accounting and Financial Reporting

The requirements of this Statement will result in more consistent financial reporting of defined contribution pension plans, defined contribution OPEB plans, and other employee benefit plans, while mitigating the costs associated with reporting those plans. The requirements also will enhance the relevance, consistency, and comparability of (1) the information related to Section 457 plans that meet the definition of a pension plan and the benefits provided through those plans and (2) investment information for all Section 457 plans.

<sup>(1)</sup> *Note.* From GASB Pronouncements Summaries. Copyright 2020 by the Financial Accounting Foundation, 401 Merritt 7, Norwalk, CT 06856, USA, and is reproduced with permission.

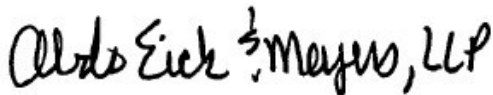
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### Restriction on Use

This communication is intended solely for the information and use of the members of the City Council, management, and others within the administration of the City and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than those specified parties.

The comments and recommendation in this report are purely constructive in nature, and should be read in this context. Our audit would not necessarily disclose all weaknesses in the system because it was based on selected tests of the accounting records and related data.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss any of the items contained in this letter, please feel free to contact us at your convenience. We wish to thank you for the continued opportunity to be of service, and for the courtesy and cooperation extended to us by your staff.



ABDO, EICK & MEYERS, LLP  
Mankato, Minnesota  
June 3, 2021