



From THE DESK of

AMIE SAKMAR
CITY OF SUWANEE FINANCE DIRECTOR

A STORYTELLER

WHEN PEOPLE ASK ME WHAT I DO, I USUALLY TELL THEM THAT I AM A STORYTELLER.

Often, I get a confused look and the following statement: “But I thought you were the Finance Director?” Just to clarify, yes, I am Suwanee’s Finance Director, and managing the day-to-day and long-term finances of the city is what I do. After serving as city’s Finance Director for more than 20 years, managing the numbers has largely become second nature; what really interests me is **sharing the financial story of the city in a compelling and accessible way.** Finance typically tells a story in one of two genres: history and adventure.

History novels often use a chronicle approach to a specific moment in time, with the goal being to educate and inform the reader. Suwanee’s annual financial report is similar to this type of novel. The annual report reflects on what happen in the prior financial period. It explains what resources were used and where these resources came from. **By reading the annual financial report, the reader can determine if the condition of the city improved, stayed the same, or possibly declined.** The report also informs the reader if proper safeguards were in place and, if required, rules were followed.

Adventure novels keep the reader on the edge of their seats with excitement during the action sequences with plots that take the characters on a personal journey. The budget document serves as our action novel, following the main character (the City of Suwanee) along on its journey. Projections have to made for both revenues and expenditures. Decisions on how resources are to be allocated, what projects will proceed, which projects may be delayed, and at what level are services going to be provided. These decisions are made with an understanding of what the future will bring for the city. Can Suwanee maintain the financial path that it is currently undertaking? What is Suwanee planning to do in the next year, five years, ten years? These are all revealed



to the reader as they follow Suwanee’s financial journey into the future with the budget document.

Both types of stories seek to engage and inform the community. This engagement is done with narratives, charts, graphs, and yes, spreadsheets! But what is a good book without a cool cover, layout, pictures and other graphical elements to entice the reader to start the journey and engage the reader both visually and informatively. If you want to know more about your city, what we have done, and what we are planning to do, try one of our novels.

Amie Sakmar has been with the City of Suwanee for the last 22 years. She has worked on several bond financing activities, service delivery negotiations, financial reporting documents, and oversees day-to-day operations for Business Services, Finance, Human Resources, and Municipal Court.



Scan to take a deeper dive into the city's finances.