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A Budgeting Guide for Local Government (Municipal Management Series)

Robert L. Bland

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Robert L. Bland : A Budgeting Guide for Local Government (Municipal Management Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Budgeting Guide for Local Government (Municipal Management Series):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Not so good for governmental accountingBy Fred CoulterThis is the second edition of Bland's Budgeting Guide for Local Government. (There's now a third edition available from the ICMA. Unfortunately, being new there are no used copies available. If you can get a friend who's a member of the ICMA order it for you, you'll save some money.)I've been working in the budgeting office of a local government for eight years. (Before that, finance, auditing, and private accounting.) I bought the book as part of my attempt to refocus on budgeting in general rather than how we do things at my job. Additionally, I'm considering entering a Ph.D. program in Public Affairs in the fall,. As such, I'm going throught the Public Budgeting Theory syllabus, part of the Foundations of Public Administration series of readings on the Public Administration Review and American Society of Public Adminstrator's web site.The book does a good job of setting the stage and explaining the budget cycle in english. It's not too dry or pedantic. My issues with the book only come when the author moves away from budgeting and discusses Accounting and Financial Reporting (chapter 5 of 7). In this chapter, he makes a couple of statements that are incorrect. While the fields of budgeting and financial reporting have a lot in common, they are not the same.First, he defines depreciation as the decrease in the value of fixed assets. While this may be true for non-

accountants, there is a technical definition to depreciation which is not the same. Depreciation, to an accountant, has nothing to do with the value of the asset. Depreciation, to an accountant, is an allocation of the cost of an asset across the life of an asset. As an example, when a non-accountant talks about the depreciation of a new car, they're talking about the fact that the value of the diminishes by 25% when you drive it off the lot. Why? Because if you tried to sell it immediately after buying it, then you'd lose a bunch of money. But to an accountant, the issues are (a) how much did you pay for it, (b) how long are you going to use it, and (c) how much will it be worth when you're done using it. (And a lot of accountants just assume \$0 for c; it makes the math easier.) If a car lasts ten years (and you use straight line depreciation), at the end of one year, you've only "used" 10% of the cost of the car. Value has nothing to do with it. The other issue I have is that he states that for governments, accrual accounting does not provide useful information. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), the people who define accounting standards for local governments, would strongly disagree with that statement. The biggest single change in accounting standards for governments over the past several decades is GASB 34, which required accrual accounting based financial statements. If accrual accounting does not provide useful information, then why on Earth would GASB 34 have been issued? Perhaps the author does not feel that GASB 34 was a good idea. If so, then he could say that the use of accrual accounting is controversial. But an absolute statement that accrual accounting does not provide useful information does not belong in a text book. My recommendation is to buy the book, but to skip chapter five. It is too shallow a discussion of governmental accounting and reporting to do the subject justice. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good Book By Kindle Customer This book is good if you are into financing and budgeting. I learned some very thorough information about government funding and budgeting by reading this book. Very detailed and very accurate information. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Valuable Information By Felicia Smith Basically, it provides essential information about local government and budgeting. Easy to read and comprehend. The book is a valuable resource as far as I'm concerned.

This completely revised second edition provides a contemporary and strategic perspective on budgeting as it has evolved from an accounting function to a tool for introducing new management strategies and practices to local government.