

**Real Property Administration Governance Group Meeting
November 20, 2008**

Present: Jeff Bartholomew, Suzette Booy, David Briggs, Cathy Conklin, Sally Cooney (Facilitator), Tom Frey, Cyndy Knox, Gene Monaco
Resource: Phil Hawver, Jim O’Keeffe, Maureen Wetter
Recorder: Joan Wiech
Absent: Shirley Bement, Nelson Bills, John Zukowski, Steve Child
Guest: Carey O’Brien

The minutes from the meeting on August 14, 2008 have been revised and will be posted to the website.

Charter Revisions

The recommendations that were submitted by team members for the new charter have been reviewed by Lee and the charter was revised and sent out to the team members for their review. All of the recommendations were addressed by Lee but not all were accepted.

The team agreed that the Executive Director has the right to appoint additional team members that he feels would benefit the team. County Directors and Assessors agreed strongly that initially it should be each organization’s responsibility to appoint their own representatives and not the Executive Director’s responsibility.

Also, in the charter, as it is written now, there are areas where the use of “the chair” is not consistent and needs to be clarified as to whether it is referring to Chair of the Training Governance Group or Chair of the Board of Trustees. Revisions will be made to clarify those instances.

It was also suggested that at-large membership be discussed at the next meeting.

The next issue discussed was the reason for having a charter. It appears to the team that the Executive Director has final authority and may not allow other members a chance to speak on some issues. The team agreed that the charter is set up to establish rules, goals and conduct so the team can work together successfully. If the Executive Director has the power to make changes without any input from the team, it was questioned whether we need a charter at all.

It was stated that everyone will be given the opportunity to speak at the meetings to express their ideas and recommendations.

Presently we are still existing under the expired charter, which raises the question as to whether passing the new charter requires a unanimous vote of 2/3 of the team members. It was noted that we are not changing the charter we are replacing the charter. A question was asked about the expiration date of the new charter and whether it can be annulled by the Executive Director. These issues will be discussed with the Executive Director.

It was mentioned on the third page of the revised charter the advisory body's role isn't adequately explained. It lacks clear direction on the process the team needs to follow to work through issues and come to a consensus on issues that are to be presented or recommended to the Executive Director.

It was agreed that by inserting, *The group will attempt to reach consensus on all issues. In the event consensus cannot be reached, the group will conduct a vote on the record, with a vote of the majority of those members in attendance being necessary to carry a motion*, it will adequately explain the advisory body's role.

The team had a discussion on potential conflicts of interest and who will lead such discussions. Jim answered that the authority lies with the Chair of the Training Governance Group appointed by the Executive Director. Who makes the ultimate decision on whether it is a conflict of interest was not determined and will need to be discussed with the Executive Director. Personal conflicts of interest and organizational conflicts of interest will also need to be discussed.

It was strongly recommended that the Executive Director be present for further (meetings) discussions about the charter revisions. The team doesn't feel they can accept the charter as it reads today because they believe it is taking a huge step backwards. They feel the charter's limits are having a negative effect on the working relationships that have been established in the past.

Rules

A copy of proposed rule changes for the minimum qualification standards for appointed assessors was handed out to the team. The role of the appointed assessor has changed significantly over the years. The assessor's job requires advanced administrative and computer skills. ORPS feels that the qualifications should be revised so the assessor has these skills before they are appointed.

The team discussed the candidate for assessor program. Presently they are required to complete and pass the same courses in the assessor's basic certification program. It was mentioned that Department of State Appraisers should have a similar program so they can become assessors. Some feel we may be limiting the pool of qualified assessors by placing too many restrictions on the initial requirements. Appraisers and those who once worked in a revaluation company may not have administrative skills, but may still be qualified for the Appointed Assessor position. They could be appointed acting while they get those skills through training courses and on the job training. A "revaluation company" needs to be defined if we want to consider this possibility. There may be qualified Real Property Appraisers that are already certified throughout the state.

An Assessor Traineeship was also discussed. Several municipalities have their own programs where the present assessor mentors the assistant assessor so when the assessor position becomes vacant they are qualified to step into the position. Incorporating this

into the rules may be difficult since titles/positions are not the same throughout local government. (Clerk, assistant assessor, clerk to the assessor , assessor clerk, etc.)

Not addressed in the rules are County Directors becoming assessors. Assessors who return after being out of office can be recertified if they were certified and left office less than four years ago. There was a question as to whether or not the County Director qualifications had been changed. The rules for County Director minimum qualifications were revised recently by changing the classification requirements.

The team also discussed the feasibility of the start date for a change in assessor qualifications. It would not affect assessors presently in office, only those appointed on or after October 1, 2009. Local governments should be advised as soon as possible as to what rule changes ORPS intends to make.

Decision: The team agreed to have discussions through listserv. Jim and Phil will make revisions to the rules. When the revisions are approved by the team and finalized they will be sent to assessors (by Tom) and County Directors (by Suzette).

Training Status News / Miscellaneous Topics

ORPS:

- ORPS is working on the agenda for the Association of Towns conference in February. John Zukowski is scheduled for Monday. On Tuesday Joe Gerberg, Don Card, Tom Bellard and Tim Maher will work on topics.
Update: ORPS will not be participating in the AOT conference due to budgetary restrictions.
- Due to budget constraints ORPS Summer Training Session at SUNY IT has been canceled for 2009. The assessment community will be informed as soon as possible.
- Regional staff will look into scheduling some extra classes to accommodate assessor training requirements due to the cancellation of the 2009 Summer Training Session at SUNY IT .
- ORPS budget has been limited. Not only has training been affected, but all other areas of the agency as well. Purchases in excess of \$500 (this includes travel vouchers, etc.) require multi-level review and approval by the Division of Budget and State Operations. All areas are being explored for potential savings opportunities.
- Educational Services sent out the yearly mailing requesting information from municipalities on assessor appointments and address and personnel changes. It was emphasized that email addresses for local officials are very important so the agency can communicate via e-mail whenever possible. Every effort is being made to reduce the number and size of paper mailings. Suzette will remind County Directors of the importance of providing updated information to ORPS as well as current e-mail addresses, where available.
- The Continuing Education mailing went out but was reduced in size for savings.
- ORPS is working with OSC to see whether there is a way to share information so duplicate mailings may be eliminated.

Directors:

- The County Directors Conference in Albany – Plan on offering Tax Collection and Enforcement Training

Assessors:

- The Fall Conference went well – attendance was very good. All topics held everyone's interest.
- They plan to scheduled additional valuation courses before the end of the year for those who need to fulfill this requirement.
- The 2009 Cornell schedule is being worked on. Tom will send a schedule of the one-day seminars to EDS as soon as it is complete.

Ethics and Cost, Market and Income Approach to Value

The IAO plans on offering several Ethics courses this year for newly elected assessors as well as the remaining assessors who did not attend any of the courses offered in 2008. Hopefully, this will address some of the non-compliance issues related to the Ethics training. Cost, Market and Income Approach to Value training will also be offered in 2009.

ORPS has no plans at this time to schedule any Ethics training in 2009. If this changes, ORPS will coordinate with the IAO to ensure efforts are not duplicated.

Board of Assessment Review

EDS was not able to update the BAR video this year but the format was changed to DVD. The County Directors will be given a copy at the winter conference. This year the BAR training materials are available on the Website through the Training Portal on the Assessment Community for County Directors to access and print. (Anyone other than the County Director who needs access to the materials will need to contact Educational Services)

ORPS plans to set up a team to work on KSA's for the BAR training course. Joe Maciejewski's presentation will be a good starting point. The team will explore how the course should be taught and what revisions need to be made to the video. Current training materials will be reviewed and areas requiring updating identified.

Classroom Materials And Printing

ORPS will no longer provide printed materials to on-line students. Course materials for the On-line Training courses are available within the on-line course in PDF format for the student to print.

As mentioned earlier, the BAR materials are on the Website through the Training Portal on the Assessment Community for County Directors to access.

Classroom training materials are still being printed for the students.

Voucher packets are no longer available at the training classes. They can be printed from our website. The Educational Services website has recently been redesigned.

New York City Update

The rules hearing is scheduled for December 2, 2008 in New York City.

Sixty-five NYC assessors were certified in October. The Assessment Administration requirement was waived for those assessors who have five years experience. More courses are being scheduled in NYC.

As it stands – Finance Dept: 94 certified, 35 not certified

Tax & Law: 2 certified, 14 not certified

ORPS plans to schedule IAAO Course 101 in January 2009 and IAAO Course 312 in March 2009.

Action Items / Next Steps:

Questions for Lee / invite Lee to next meeting to discuss the charter revisions

Charter Revisions (clarify use of “chair”)

Revisions to minimum qualification rules

Agenda Items:

Charter Revisions

NYC Assessor Training Program

At Large Membership

Next Meeting:

March 9, 2009

Albany