

# ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTANTS CHICAGO CHAPTER

BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR MAY 20, 2014

## Present

Elaine Igelman, President  
Deborah Kinsey, President-Elect  
Matthew Matczynski, Past President  
Cynthia "CJ" Carter, Program Director  
Alexandria Hayden, Newsletter Editor  
Olga Gesell, Website Director & Historian  
Frank Moy, Education Director  
Rick Urbanowski, Chapter Recognition  
Eddie Jones, Community Service Director

## Absent

Thomas DiLisio, Treasurer  
Raul Nieto, CGFM  
Steve Whitecotton, Job Referral

## 2014-2015 CEC Members In Attendance (Non-Voting Meeting Participants)

Hugh Smith  
Andrew Masiewicz

## SUMMARY OF MEETING

### Quorum

Matt took a roll call and announced that a quorum had been reached. There were 9 2013-2014 chapter year CEC members in attendance, including non-voting CEC member Elaine Igelman. Matt mentioned that Deborah Kinsey is the chapter's president-elect, as she volunteered to take on the president role for the 2014-2015 chapter year, and the chapter needed to designate her as the chapter's current president-elect, so that she could attend the Sectional Leadership Meeting.

### New CEC Members For Chapter Year 2014-2015

Matt mentioned that several new individuals volunteered to be on the chapter's executive committee (CEC) for the next chapter year. Currently, Hugh Smith, who was a speaker at a monthly seminar last year, Janet Kasper of the EPA-OIG, and Andrew Masiewicz of Becker Professional Education volunteered to be on the executive committee. Matt also mentioned that Tom DiLisio recruited three Department of Labor staff to join the executive committee as well. Matt mentioned that with Deborah Kinsey with the SSA-OIG joining the executive committee too, the chapter will have an executive committee comprised of members representing a more diverse group of employers, which Matt said was a good thing. Matt also thanked CJ for all her efforts in recruiting new CEC members. Hugh Smith and Andrew Masiewicz mentioned that they were in attendance for the meeting, with Hugh attending in person and Andrew attending via telephone. Matt welcomed Hugh and Andrew to next year's executive committee.

Matt mentioned that he has heard from all the current year CEC members regarding whether they planned to continue on the CEC for chapter year 2014-2015 except for Steve. Alex mentioned that she was unsure whether Steve made a decision regarding next year, and said she would follow-up with him.

### PDT Refund Issue

Matt mentioned that a few weeks back, he sent out an email to all CEC members regarding whether they had spoken with anyone regarding the chapter providing refunds. Matt thanked those CEC members who responded. Matt mentioned that the chapter needed to determine whether refunds would be issued to those participants who paid but did not attend.

CJ asked why the chapter would be issuing refunds, and mentioned that the chapter put on its registration form for its Professional Development Training (PDT) a refund/cancellation policy. CJ mentioned that the policy was that no refunds would be given for any cancellations made after April 16<sup>th</sup>. CJ mentioned that the reason for the policy is that the chapter starts incurring costs for each attendee after this date, such as food costs, whether the attendee attends or not.

Matt mentioned that the chapter had people and employers contact him seeking refunds. Matt mentioned that in speaking to them, and in following up with the CEC members via email, he learned that at least two CEC members had verbally mentioned to others that refunds would be given, which conflicts with the policy listed on the registration form. Matt mentioned that he is not trying to blame anyone, but the chapter now has an issue that needs to be resolved.

## SUMMARY OF MEETING-Continued

### PDT Refund Issue (Continued)

- Matt mentioned that he believes the chapter is in a no-win situation. Matt mentioned that the chapter could honor what our CEC members said in the name of good customer service, despite it conflicting with the written policy on the registration form. Matt mentioned that the problem is that he knows of at least two employers who made last minute substitutions in attendees the day of the PDT under the belief that no refunds would be given due to the policy on the registration form. Matt questioned if such employers would have sought a refund instead had they been given a refund option. Matt mentioned that if such employers found out that we didn't follow our written policy and refunds were given to certain people/employers without giving them the same refund option, they may not be happy.
- Matt also pointed out that on the other hand, for the individual and employers who paid the registration fee and then did not attend may have instead attended or found someone to substitute with had they not been told by our CEC members that refunds would be given in their situation (thus believed that no refunds would be given). Matt gave the example of one of the refund requesters being a private employer (believed to be a consulting firm) who registered two employees. One employee attended and the other didn't. The employee who attended was told by a CEC member at the lunch break on the first day that the company would get a refund for the employee who didn't attend. Matt mentioned that this may have impacted the other employee's decision to not attend the second day and/or the employer's decision to not substitute another staff member for the second day. Matt also mentioned that for a different refund request, our chapter president Elaine told someone that they could get a refund.
- A CEC member asked if the people requesting refunds were individuals or employers. Matt responded by saying that the chapter had both individuals and employers seeking refunds.
- A CEC member asked how many people refunds are being sought for. Matt responded by saying that Tom DiLisio would have the exact number, but he believes that the answer is that refunds are being sought for four paid participants.
- A CEC member asked if those seeking refunds provided reasons for not attending. Matt mentioned that to the best of his knowledge, a reason was given by each individual/employer seeking a refund.
- A CEC member questioned if it was a good idea to deny a refund to an employer who sends multiple participants year after year, especially if the employer was told by a CEC member that the employer would be able to get a refund. The CEC member mentioned that given the small number of refunds being requested, that the chapter should grant refunds.
- Elaine mentioned that she believed that a full refund should be given in the case of a death in the family, which was a reason given for why one paid participant did not attend.
- Matt mentioned that if the chapter decided to provide refunds, it is his opinion that everyone seeking a refund be given a refund. Matt said he is not in favor of the chapter giving different refund amounts or give refunds to some and not others depending on whether it is an individual or employer seeking a refund, the reason for not attending/seeking refund, etc. Matt said it should be all or none.
- A non-CEC member mentioned that the chapter could resolve the issue by telling those seeking refunds that the CEC members in question misspoke regarding the ability to get refunds, and refer to the written policy on the registration form.
- A CEC member proposed that a good compromise be that instead of a cash refund, the person/employer seeking the refund be given free admission for one person to next year's chapter PDT.
- Matt mentioned that if a cash refund is given, that the chapter could always deduct a certain amount of money as a processing fee, such as \$50. Matt mentioned that he believes such a processing fee is warranted, since for those who paid via credit card, the chapter has yet to determine how to reverse charges, so a paper check would need to be issued and mailed, incurring a cost to the chapter. The chapter would still be on the hook for the credit card processing fee for the attendee seeking the refund, which is a percentage of the registration amount, and mentioned that as CJ previously said, the chapter incurred costs such as food, materials, etc. for the attendees who cancelled after the cancellation deadline or simply did not show.
- Additional discussion was held. A motion was made and seconded to grant refunds to those individuals/employers seeking a refund in the form of a free admission to the 2014-2015 chapter PDT (thus no cash being refunded). A vote was taken by the 2013-2014 chapter year CEC members only (all those casting votes were requested to state their name to ensure that no 2014-2015 CEC members voted). All those who voted cast votes in favor of the motion, with no votes cast against. Thus, the motion to grant refunds in the form of a free admission to the 2014-2015 chapter PDT passed.
- CJ and Matt mentioned that the CEC needs to try to do better to avoid getting into a similar situation in the future. Matt mentioned that for issues that involve chapter money such as issuing refunds, we cannot have each CEC member making up their own policies.

## SUMMARY OF MEETING-Continued

### **PDT Refund Issue (Continued)**

CJ mentioned that if a CEC member was in doubt if the chapter had a refund policy or what the refund policy was, the CEC member should have asked first. CJ pointed out that the chapter already had a policy listed on the chapter PDT registration form regarding refunds, that if followed would have avoided this situation.

### **New CGFM Study Guides**

Matt mentioned that the issue of the chapter purchasing new CGFM study guides was discussed at a previous CEC meeting, and it appeared that there was interest among the CEC members in purchasing the new study guides.

Matt mentioned that the current study guides that the chapter has are outdated as the CGFM exam has changed, and new study guides are now available from the AGA. Matt mentioned that at the last CEC meeting in which this topic was discussed, there was no information available regarding the new CGFM study guides, so no official decision to purchase the study guides was made by the CEC. Matt mentioned that the new study guides were supposed to be available a few months ago, and that he just got notice a few days ago that the new CGFM study guides are now available.

Matt mentioned that per the AGA website, the new study guides cost \$85.00 each, and that the chapter would need to purchase each of the three study guides to have a complete set.

A CEC member asked how many members used the current study guides. Matt responded by saying that currently each of the three study guides are checked out to a different chapter member, and there is one additional chapter member on a wait list for the next available study guide.

A CEC member proposed that since there is a waiting list, the chapter purchase more than one copy of the study guides.

Another CEC member proposed that the chapter only purchase one copy of the study guides, saying that he believed that one copy was enough.

Matt mentioned that the CGFM is a three part exam, and the AGA national office sells a study guide for each of the three sections, which is why the chapter would be looking to purchase a minimum of three study guides. Matt mentioned that the study guide for each of the three sections is priced the same, at \$85. Matt also mentioned that he would be in favor of purchasing one copy of each of the three study guides, saying that there has been times in which none of the study guides were checked out, and demand seems to ebb and flow. Matt also proposed that if demand for the study guides increases where the chapter has a long wait list, the chapter could always revisit the idea of purchasing additional copies of the study guides.

Matt mentioned that he sees the study guides as a great member benefit, as once purchased it is an easy benefit to offer our members as the study guide program requires little manpower on the chapter's part, and it is a benefit that can be used by all chapter members, no matter where they are located. Matt mentioned that the chapter currently has one study guide checked out to someone who is employed with Kane County, and due to where this member lives and works is unable to attend our chapter events. Matt mentioned that other chapters provide this benefit to their members.

A motion was made and seconded to purchase one copy of each of the three AGA study guides for the CGFM certification. A vote was taken and all those who cast votes voted in favor of the motion, with no one voting casting a vote against. Thus, the motion to purchase the study guides passed.

### **Chapter Trinkets / Promotional Items**

Matt mentioned that this item is on the agenda because the chapter is out of coffee mugs. Matt mentioned that at the chapter PDT, the chapter gave the remaining coffee mugs it had to the speakers as speaker gifts, and said that the coffee mugs have been a success as to his knowledge no speaker has returned the coffee mugs to the chapter. Matt mentioned that prior to giving coffee mugs as speaker gifts, the chapter gave Starbucks gift cards, and had speakers either reject receiving the Starbucks gift cards or have speakers accept the gift cards and then later send them back after talking to their ethics offices. Matt mentioned that there was one speaker the chapter had a year or two ago who told them that he could not even accept reimbursement for the cab/bus/CTA train fare to come speak to the chapter.

Matt mentioned that the coffee mugs given as speaker gifts were excess coffee mugs from an order placed two years ago. The coffee mugs were ordered and given away as trinkets to our PDT attendees two years ago. Matt also mentioned that last year, no trinkets were given out at the chapter's PDT, as the CEC last year decided against giving out trinkets to the PDT participants. Matt mentioned that the only items that the chapter had remaining to give out to speakers was the extra copies the chapter has of James Holzrichter's book.

## SUMMARY OF MEETING-Continued

### Chapter Trinkets / Promotional Items (Continued)

Matt mentioned that James Holzrichter's book was given out to our attendees at this year's PDT as a trinket. Matt mentioned that the chapter agreed to purchase James Holzrichter's book for each of the PDT participants as part of Mr. Holzrichter's speaking fee and more importantly to get around the solicitation on federal property issue that arose last year, as Mr. Holzrichter had requested the ability to sell his book to our PDT attendees as part of his agreement to speak to the chapter.

Discussion was held. A CEC member mentioned that the chapter could purchase AGA items from the AGA national office website for speakers. Another CEC member proposed purchasing items custom made mentioning the Chicago chapter.

Matt mentioned that if we have items custom made for the Chicago chapter, we might have to purchase a minimum quantity. Matt mentioned that with the coffee mugs, per his recollection, the minimum purchase was 70 mugs, with incremental purchases of 70 mugs, which is how the chapter ended up purchasing 140 mugs and having mugs left over after the PDT.

CJ mentioned that she believed it was important to provide our speakers with a small gift / token of our appreciation. A CEC member proposed that the chapter obtain small, inexpensive trinket items such as pens for the chapter to give away when participating in activities such as job fairs and university visits.

A CEC member asked what type of trinkets Matt had in mind. Matt responded by saying that he didn't have anything in mind at this time, but instead wanted to bring to everyone's attention that the chapter has run out of coffee mugs to provide as speaker gifts.

A CEC member proposed not deciding anything at this time, and instead called for research to be performed.

CJ volunteered to research trinket items and mentioned that she believed that Tom had also wanted to research trinket items.

This item was tabled until a future meeting.

### Chapter Awards

Matt mentioned that the chapter had issued chapter awards for the 2013-2014 chapter year, and that the award winners can be found in the chapter newsletter.

Matt mentioned that the chapter still has not resolved what, if anything, to provide the chapter award winners. Matt said that the chapter had previously set budgets for the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 award winners; however, as this year's awards director had resigned, nothing has been ordered and no money has been spent.

Matt mentioned that Tom had volunteered to research options, such as plaques, to provide the award winners. Matt mentioned that as Tom is not participating in today's meeting, he is not able to provide a status update. Matt asked if anyone would like to assist Tom in researching options. No one offered to volunteer.

### Community Service Activity Update

Matt mentioned that Eddie had requested some time at today's meeting to address the CEC.

Eddie gave a brief talk about the chapter's community service activities. Eddie said that he has some great ideas for future community service activities, and has developed some contacts that are useful for such community service activities. Eddie mentioned that a reason he has not done more this past year for community service was that he was unsure of the CEC's level of commitment toward supporting and participating in chapter community service activities.

CJ mentioned that she believed the CEC and the chapter's members would support the chapter's community service activities, and mentioned that the chapter just needed to plan an activity and then do it. The college visit by chapter representatives was mentioned as an example of something that was unknown if it would be successful / have chapter support, and the chapter just planned and did it. CJ and Eddie then spoke of the college visit being successful, and it was mentioned that the college wanted chapter representatives to return.

It was proposed that the chapter could try to do a community service activity this summer. Matt mentioned that the chapter could try this, but mentioned that typically the chapter takes a break in activity during the summer months. Matt also mentioned that he believes that depending on the type of community service activity, the chapter's members might support the community service activity, citing the numerous food drives the chapter has held as examples.

### Platinum Status

Matt mentioned that the chapter has earned enough chapter recognition points to earn Platinum status for the 2013-2014 chapter year.

## **SUMMARY OF MEETING-Continued**

### **Platinum Status (Continued)**

Various CEC members mentioned congratulations and thanked the other CEC members for their hard work. Matt mentioned that Elaine, as chapter president, will have the honor of accepting the chapter Platinum status plaque at the national PDT in Orlando, FL. Elaine thanked the CEC members for their work during the chapter year.

### **Posting RFQs, Job Openings, Etc. On Chapter Website**

Matt mentioned that Olga has received a request to post a RFQ from a land bank on the chapter's website. Elaine mentioned that she was strongly opposed to the chapter posting RFQs, citing potential liability that the chapter could incur. Elaine also mentioned that the chapter would need to vet the RFQ, and questioned if the chapter had the resources and expertise to do this. Discussion was held regarding this topic by the CEC members. No consensus was reached. Concern was raised regarding laws that govern RFQs / job postings, the duties and responsibilities the chapter would have, and liability the chapter could incur. A CEC member proposed that someone contact the AGA national office to obtain information and guidance. It was decided to table further discussion of this topic to a future meeting. In the meantime, it was agreed that a CEC member would contact the AGA national office to obtain information and guidance regarding the issue.

### **CEC "Benefits" For Current Chapter Year**

Matt mentioned that certain CEC members had recently contacted him wanting to know if there would be any CEC member benefits provided this chapter year. Matt mentioned that earlier in the chapter year, the chapter voted to end all CEC member benefits, thus as of present no benefits will be provided to the CEC members for chapter year 2013-2014. Matt mentioned that despite voting to eliminate CEC member benefits, throughout the year it had occasionally been discussed the idea of providing CEC members with something such as an AGA logo shirt or a gift card at the end of the chapter year, depending on how well the chapter did financially. Matt mentioned that however, no CEC member has come forward with a motion to provide such a benefit, and that unless the CEC voted to provide such a benefit to the CEC members, there would be no CEC member benefits provided for the 2013-2014 chapter year. The floor was open for discussion on the CEC member benefit topic, and no CEC members wished to discuss this topic further or make a motion.

### **Sectional Leadership Meeting (SLM) Update**

Matt mentioned that Raul and Deborah recently attended the SLM in Baltimore, MD, and asked if the SLM participants could provide some comments regarding the SLM, such as any news the CEC should know, new initiatives, etc. It was pointed out that Raul was not in attendance for this meeting. Deborah mentioned that the SLM went well, and a lot of good discussion occurred. Deborah proposed that since Raul was not in attendance, instead of her and Raul giving a talk regarding the SLM, that she would instead provide meeting minutes on the SLM to the CEC members.

### **2015 Chapter Professional Development Training (PDT) Dates**

CJ mentioned that she requested this item be placed on the agenda, as she would like to select the date of the 2015 chapter PDT. She mentioned that space is available at the GSA Conference Center the week of April 20-24 and the week of May 11-15. Discussion was held, and the majority of the CEC members who spoke were in favor of the May date. A CEC member asked if the chapter needed to take a vote on selecting the PDT date. It was decided that it was not necessary to hold a vote to select the PDT date, so no vote was held.

### **New CEC Positions**

CJ mentioned that she requested this item be placed on the agenda. CJ mentioned that she would like a Social Media Director, Education Chairperson, and Board Counsel positions created, as well as have assistant director roles. CJ mentioned that she has recruited new CEC members who are interested in taking on these new positions. CJ cited "Dr. Fraud" who spoke at this year's chapter PDT as an example of a new CEC member who she recruited.

## SUMMARY OF MEETING-Continued

### New CEC Positions (Continued)

A CEC member questioned if the chapter needed to add new CEC positions, given that the CEC currently has many vacancies with its existing positions. CJ responded by saying that she has recruited a large number of new CEC members, so the chapter will not have many vacancies next chapter year. Furthermore, she mentioned that the chapter has needs for these new positions. CJ said that social media is the wave of the future and is how the new generation/students/early career members communicate and receive information. CJ mentioned that she has spread information on chapter events via social media sites, and believes we should have a full-time position for this. CJ also mentioned that as the discussion regarding the RFQs shows, the chapter should have a board counsel member.

Matt mentioned that he was in favor of having someone focus on social media, and said that the national office has promoted chapters to use social media at previous Sectional Leadership Meetings (SLMs). Matt mentioned that his concerns are that once the chapter starts doing this, the chapter will need to continuously maintain sites such as Facebook otherwise they get outdated, he was not sure if the chapter received additional chapter recognition points for social media work, and that some employers block access to social media sites, thus limiting the impact of using social media.

A CEC member asked if the chapter could add new CEC positions, and if so if there was a process involved in doing it.

A CEC member asked what the chapter bylaws said about adding new CEC positions. No one could recall.

Another CEC member mentioned that the chapter bylaws are outdated and need to be updated.

No additional discussion was held on this topic, and discussion turned to the chapter bylaws, which was not on the meeting agenda.

### Chapter Bylaw Update

A CEC member asked if the chapter was still in the process of updating the chapter bylaws, and if so what the status was.

Matt mentioned that updating the bylaws was something the chapter was in the process of doing, but needed volunteers for.

Rick volunteered to assist in updating the chapter bylaws.

Matt mentioned that since the meeting was running long in terms of time, that the CEC move on to CJ's other agenda items, and return to the bylaws topic if time permits.

### North Central Region Networking Event

CJ mentioned that she wants the Chicago chapter to hold a networking event for the North Central region.

Deborah mentioned that the Indianapolis chapters had expressed interest at the SLM in holding a joint event with the Chicago chapter.

Matt mentioned that in the past, attempts were made to hold a joint event for the North Central region. Matt mentioned that in the past the Madison chapter appeared more willing and motivated to hold an event with the Chicago chapter than the Indianapolis chapters. Matt also mentioned that given Chicago's central location between Madison and Indianapolis, past discussion with the Madison and Indianapolis chapters had focused on the joint event being held in Chicago.

CEC members who spoke on the topic of a networking / joint-event with other North Central region chapters spoke in favor of holding such an event.

Matt mentioned that as he is the incoming Regional Vice President-elect (RVP-elect) and will be having contact with the RVP (who is Sherri from the Madison chapter), that he would volunteer to assist in coordinating a networking joint event with the other North Central region chapters.

### CEC Leadership Retreat

CJ mentioned that she proposes that the Chicago chapter hold a CEC leadership retreat. CJ mentioned that the chapter tried holding such a retreat this chapter year, but due to people's availabilities it did not occur. CJ mentioned that she proposes that the retreat last one full day, occur something this summer, and that the chapter invite Bobby Derrick, and possibly other AGA representatives, to attend and make presentations to the CEC members. CJ mentioned that she would like the retreat to also include a networking/social event, and mentioned such an event could be held in the evening. CJ mentioned that the chapter will have a lot of new CEC members next year, thus it would be beneficial to hold such an event. CJ also mentioned that the retreat would give an opportunity for all CEC members to learn their CEC duties as well as be together in one room and get to meet and know each other better, which does not happen during the chapter year.

Discussion was held and those CEC members who spoke were in favor of holding the CEC leadership retreat.