



**ARIZONA MUNICIPAL CLERKS' ASSOCIATION  
MEMBERSHIP/MENTORING AND REGION  
LEADERS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, January 12, 2022  
8:30 a.m.**

Committee Members: Kara DeArrastia, Chair and Region 5 Leader; Fatima Fernandez, Co-Chair and Region 1 Leader; Annie Meredith, Region 2 Leader; Michelle Stanley, Region 3 Leader; Sherry Aguilar, Region 4 Leader; Vanessa Bueras, Region 6 Leader; Cherry Lawson, Region 7 Leader; Crystal Hadfield, Regions 8 and 9 Leader; and Carla Reece, Board Liaison

**1. CALL TO ORDER – Roll Call with Introduction of Attendees**

Meeting was called to order by Chair Kara DeArrastia at 8:33 a.m.

Present via Microsoft Teams or Teleconference: Fatima Fernandez, Co-Chair and Region 1 Leader; Annie Meredith, Region 2 Leader; Michelle Stanley, Region 3 Leader; Sherry Aguilar, Region 4 Leader; Kara DeArrastia, Chair and Region 5 Leader; Crystal Hadfield, Regions 8 and 9 Leader; and Carla Reece, Board Liaison.

Absent: Vanessa Bueras, Region 6 Leader, and Cherry Lawson, Region 7 Leader.

**2. MINUTES**

Chair Kara DeArrastia noted that the December 8, 2021 Membership/Mentoring Committee and Region Leaders Meeting Minutes will be scheduled for discussion and approval at the March 22, 2022 meeting.

**3. REPORTS/ACTIVITIES FROM EACH REGION LEADER/REPRESENTATIVE**

Region 1

On behalf of Region 1 Leader Fatima Fernandez who was present but having connection issues, Chair Kara DeArrastia reported that Region 1 is having a “Table-Talk” with the Yavapai County Elections Office to go over any questions they may have before the election. Fatima noted it was nice of the Yavapai County Elections Office to have offered this meeting. The meeting will happen towards the end of January as the details are still being worked out. The next Region 1 quarterly meeting will happen sometime in March in Camp Verde at a winery, and they will discuss liquor licensing.

Region 2

Region 2 Leader Annie Meredith reported that her region met on December 1, 2021 via Zoom. They discussed the Fall Best Practices, noting that they enjoyed returning to in-person training.

She said other topics discussed were the updates to the records retention schedule and the upcoming election cycle. Each of the cities reported that they have either already started handing out candidate packets or that they will be soon, as well as who is utilizing the Equal system. Annie shared that they are trying to schedule an in-person, one-day retreat for their region possibly in the spring. The next Region 2 quarterly meeting will be in March.

### Region 3

Region 3 Leader Michelle Stanley reported that her region met in December and they plan to meet again on January 26th. She said they will be discussing all things elections. Michelle noted that they have a lot of new clerks in their region, and they have been reaching out to their Region Mentor. Kara said she is glad that the new clerks are reaching out to the mentors and noted that she is working on sharing more information about that program.

### Region 4

Region 4 Leader Sherry Aguilar reported that her region held their regional meeting yesterday via Zoom, hosted by Avondale. She stated that they discussed the upcoming elections and shared their thoughts on the Equal program and re-districting for the cities affected by that process. Sherry said some communities have already begun the re-districting update process. She noted that several cities are going through City Manager recruiting and hiring due to retirements. They also discussed the process for appointing Council vacancies. Sherry said in Surprise, they had to shut down their passport services for a two-week period due to staffing issues related to COVID. Kara said she has seen in the news how this wave of COVID is causing staffing issues and companies are seeing a lot of resignations. Sherry said Surprise is being heavily affected by the current wave of COVID. Kara said in Tempe, they are starting to see meetings and events go from in-person or hybrid back to all-virtual and shared some of the issues related to that change.

### Region 5

Kara reported that the City of Scottsdale and Clerk Ben Lane will host the next Region 5 quarterly meeting, which will be held virtually on Wednesday, March 9th. She said they initially wanted to meet in a hybrid in-person/virtual format but are likely going to meet virtually to be safe. Kara said they try to rotate the meetings through the different municipalities in their region so that everyone has an opportunity to host. She said it is nice to have an in-person meeting so they can participate in tours and have lunch or breakfast together.

### Region 6

On behalf of Region 6 Leader Vanessa Bueras who was absent from the meeting, Kara reported that Region 6 has a meeting scheduled this month via Zoom and they are hoping to hold an in-person meeting in Florence in the future. Vanessa had shared that the Florence Town Clerk's Office was busy with a Trump Rally permitting process so they could not meet in person this month.

### Region 7

On behalf of Region 7 Leader Cherry Lawson who was absent from the meeting, Kara reported that Region 7 did not have an update.

### Regions 8 and 9

Regions 8 and 9 Leader Crystal Hadfield reported that her regions met last month for their first meeting. She said there was not as much participation as she had hoped for, but they were able to discuss merging the regions into one. Crystal said they decided to see how the joint Region 8 and 9 meetings are going forward before deciding whether to combine their regions on the Region Map. She said they also discussed having an in-person meeting but that it would be difficult due to everyone's busy schedule so they will be meeting via Zoom instead. She said they have reached out to the Arizona Department of Liquor to provide training via Zoom at a future region meeting. Kara shared that she was able to attend the Region 8 and 9 meeting, and it was neat to see how those regions were working together. She said the meeting attendees like the idea of continuing a combined region meeting via Zoom for now. Kara said it is nice that they are bringing in liquor training for their regions and not just waiting for it to be offered at an AMCA Best Practices session.

Crystal said the Scholarship Committee will be starting their fundraising efforts in the next couple of months for the upcoming AMCA Annual Conference. She noted that the same online fundraising platform, Rally Up, would be used again this year.

### Executive Board

Board Liaison Carla Reece reported that the AMCA Executive Board did not have any action items in December, so they cancelled the meeting. She said they are waiting to see what everyone wants to do for the Annual Conference.

Carla reported that in Tempe, they are in full election mode for their March election. She shared that they also had candidates using Equal. Carla explained her Equal experience in Tempe and shared some feedback from candidates and voters about using the Equal system.

Carla said the Executive Board will be meeting next week on January 20th. Sherry said nominations will be open soon to fill next year's Board Secretary position. Kara said at the last Communications Committee meeting, she heard that there should be a member survey coming out soon about the Secretary Election process. Michelle noted the need to look for more ways to encourage participation on the Board. Kara said if she sees anything about that she will share it with the group. Sherry said serving on the Board is a big commitment and there has been discussion about having a shorter stint for some Board positions, noting that the total service could span five to six years. It was noted that members who were getting close to retirement would likely not apply to serve on the Board since they could not do so as a Retired Member. Carla shared some additional changes under consideration by the Board, such as eliminating the Treasurer role since the AMCA budgets and financials are handled by the League of Arizona

Cities and Towns. She also mentioned that Rhonda Geriminsky [AMCA Past President] was retiring.

#### **4. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Discuss input received regarding the AMCA region boundaries and participation in regional meetings and consider the next steps.

Chair Kara DeArrastia shared the results of the survey that went out to the regions, as provided in the agenda packet. She asked that everyone share this as an agenda topic at their next region meetings to obtain feedback from their membership on any changes they would like to see.

##### Region 1

Kara asked if Region 1 wants to maintain their boundary or split the northern part from the southern part to create a new region. Region 1 Leader Fatima Fernandez shared that the suggestion was made, but that they are happy with the current boundaries. She said they were trying to figure out a way to get the cities that are located far away more involved. Fatima said Prescott Valley budgets for travel expenses so if someone wants to meet in person, they are willing to travel to do that. She said the region members are willing to do whatever they need to make it easier for everyone and to help with meeting participation.

Kara said she is trying to get some consensus from each region regarding their Map boundaries. She said regions can invite cities from other regions to join their meetings. Kara asked if there is any value for Region 1 to do a horizontal split and if it will isolate those cities. Fatima asked if it is okay for Region 1 to invite clerks from the Valley and other cities to their meetings. Board Liaison Carla Reece said she has attended meetings in the West Valley and Tucson region as well. She said the cross collaboration is good. Fatima said she appreciated the information. Kara said maybe it should be more of an educational piece to let people know that region meetings are open to other members outside that region who want to attend. She gave an example of the committee meetings that she attends as a member and as a liaison. Kara said the regions are not entirely set up like the committee structure where a quorum is required to hold a meeting. Fatima said there were questions on who can vote in region meetings and how/what constitutes a quorum. Carla said the AMCA did not have regional bylaws. She shared that when she attends other region meetings, she does not consider herself a voting member. Region 4 Leader Sherry Aguilar said they have always had a big turnout for the Region 4 meetings, so the quorum issue has never been raised, but that it is a good question. Kara said she would never be able to have a Region 5 meeting if that is the case because they have 40-50 members and maybe get 20 in attendance. She said it is different for a committee. Carla said when they had quorum issues for her other associations, they would send the topic for an electronic vote if they did not have a quorum in the meeting. Sherry said she does not remember that being an issue with Region 4. Fatima said the Region 1 meetings have an agenda and minutes. She asked if there is no quorum requirement, do they have to take minutes? Carla recommended taking notes to provide an update to members.

Sherry said someone trying to get their CMC [Certified Municipal Clerk] designation can use the region meeting attendance for their points. She explained if they have a four-hour region meeting, attendees can earn one Experience Point with the submission of meeting minutes with their CMC application. Kara said when regions bring in trainings to their meetings it could be a good way to increase participation, if they knew there was an opportunity for CMC or MMC [Master Municipal Clerk] points. Kara shared her experience with attending virtual Athenian Dialogues hosted by other states and earning points that way. Fatima confirmed that Region 1 is at a consensus point that their boundaries do not need to change on the Region Map, but that they will continue to invite members from other areas. Kara noted a recurring theme where members appreciate having the region meetings over Zoom instead of just over the phone. She said it is always nice to be able to hold one or two meetings in-person, if possible.

### Region 2

Kara said there was discussion about possibly dividing Region 2 horizontally as well. Region 2 Leader Annie Meredith shared that Region 2 is very spread out and that has made it hard to meet in person but splitting it would not help get those cities to a closer region. She said they are fine keeping the Region 2 boundaries currently drawn. Annie said since she has been the Region 2 Leader, they have conducted their meetings via Zoom, so they are still able to get the face-to-face interaction. She said they are currently working on trying to lock in a date that they can meet in person in Parker for a one-day retreat with a tour or activity. Annie noted that adding an educational or training component with something fun is the plan. She said she also informed Region 1 that Region 2 is happy to join one of their meetings and they appreciated the invitation.

### Region 3

Kara shared that the feedback from Region 3 was that they are fine with keeping the boundaries as is. She said they like to hold their meetings at different locations, and they like to have specifically requested agenda items, rather than a variety. Kara asked Region 3 Leader Michelle Stanley if she had anything additional to share from Region 3. Michelle said before COVID they met in person with mixed participation and noted that their participation is also mixed over Zoom. She said she unsure what lies ahead in the future for Region 3, but they will continue to offer the hybrid in-person/virtual meeting approach. Michelle noted her region's interest in meeting in person although that has not been realized yet.

### Region 4

Kara shared the input provided by Sherry for Region 4, as outlined in the agenda packet. Sherry said the feedback she received was that the current Region 4 boundaries work well. She said she was trying to figure out how the AMCA region divisions were created. She said if multiple regions are meeting then that will encourage participation. Sherry said Region 4 will continue to meet virtually due to everyone being affected by COVID. She said they will just have to handle the meetings on a case-by-case basis. Sherry said when she was researching the AMCA Executive Board meeting minutes, it was difficult to tell when the region division decisions were

made and how the 2017 version of the Region Map came to be. Sherry noted that she was unable to find a lot of information on the Region Map. She said she is unsure how else Region 4 could be split and noted that they will continue the current meeting format.

#### Region 5

Kara shared the feedback from Region 5. She said she received some feedback from her region to split it into two regions due to the number of municipalities. She shared an example that someone gave of a split option. Kara said she would not want to divide Region 5 further because it is already a small but dense area. She said Region 5 has a lot of members and they have good participation. Kara noted the difficulty in finding a meeting day and time that works for everyone. She said before she was the Region 5 Leader, she did not think the region was too active, so she focused on revamping the region meetings to encourage member engagement. She said she will bring it up at their March meeting and noted that they will also continue to offer the virtual component as well as meeting in person after the COVID cases start to decrease. She said with the current COVID surge, people are hesitant to meet in person. She suggested that giving more flexibility and opportunities for members to participate, especially those in smaller offices, would help increase participation. Kara suggested offering fun in-person activities and tours to help entice people to travel to the meeting location.

#### Region 6

Kara shared the feedback from Region 6. She noted that Jennifer Pena, Apache Junction City Clerk, had expressed interest in attending the Region 6 meetings since they are in the same county [Pinal County]. Kara said she will explore whether the Region Map should be adjusted to include Apache Junction in Region 6 or if Region 6 can just continue to invite Apache Junction to their meetings as a guest.

#### Region 7

Kara noted that she did not see any feedback from Region 7, so she would follow up with Region 7 Leader Cherry Lawson.

#### Regions 8 and 9

Kara stated that Regions 8 and 9 Leader Crystal Hadfield covered the feedback from the regions in her update. Crystal noted that she did not have any additional feedback to share at this time.

Kara said this is just an information-gathering process to get feedback from the region members to make sure the AMCA is keeping up with the needs of the membership. She said there is no real decision deadline for this topic as it is an ongoing discussion. Kara conveyed the need to keep all AMCA members happy and engaged. Kara shared some other helpful tips she received to increase participation in regional meetings. She said she liked what Prescott Valley does with setting a small amount of funds aside for travel to regional quarterly meetings. Kara asked the Committee members if there were any additional suggestions that seem to be working well with their regions that they would like to add to the list. There were no additional comments

received. Kara informed Carla that she probably would not have anything to present to the Executive Board at their meeting next week as far as the Region Map is concerned.

- b. Discuss and consider approval of forwarding a request to the Executive Board to include photos of regional meetings/activities in the presentation at this year's AMCA Annual Meeting.

Chair Kara DeArrastia said she received feedback from some Committee members that photos highlighting the regional meetings and activities would be good to include on a slide or two in the presentation for the AMCA Annual Meeting. She noted that the Annual Meeting presentation includes information on members who have earned their CMC [Certified Municipal Clerk] and MMC [Master Municipal Clerk], served on a committee, or received a service award. She said Michelle Stanley, as the Communications Committee Chair, compiles the annual presentation. Kara asked the group if they are interested in sharing photos for the presentation. Annie Meredith said she thinks it is a great way to show that the clerk's offices were able to continue operations during the ongoing COVID pandemic. Kara said she thinks it would be good to showcase all of the regions and how much fun they are having. Kara noted that she will create and submit the Committee request coversheet to the Board for consideration at their next meeting. She noted that she has been gathering photos and will inform the Committee of the Board's decision.

## **5. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Review a draft list of Clerk office topics to form the basis of a statewide Municipal Clerk's Manual or Handbook to assist clerks and deputies in their roles. Once finalized, the list can be sent to the Executive Board so they can decide how to divvy up the subjects among the different committees (as a multi-year project).

Chair Kara DeArrastia said an Arizona municipal clerk's handbook has been expressed as a need and noted that it is meant to be a quick go-to guide for new clerks or deputies. She explained that the handbook would provide a brief overview of the duties and responsibilities of the municipal clerk's office and individual offices could use it to also add job functions specific to their own municipality. Kara shared her screen and reviewed the different chapters and sections of the handbook in the form of a draft table of contents. She said she will email the document to the group for additional feedback. She noted that she utilized an old handbook and the clerk areas of expertise spreadsheet to give a good framework of what it means to be a municipal clerk. She shared that the chapter on records management would reference the Records Management Committee's manual that they keep updated on the AMCA website, and the chapter on elections would reference the manual published and updated by the League of Arizona Cities and Towns. She asked if the group thought there should be additional chapters on financial management and human resources (HR) management. She said there are clerks in some municipalities who perform portions of those roles and noted that it might be helpful to provide an overview of those functions. Kara asked the group for their thoughts. Carla Reece said she liked the overview but noted that the portion on appointment and removal would need

to be general due to the differences in municipalities based on charters and specific jurisdiction requirements. Kara said she is planning to include such a disclaimer in the handbook and to also note that it is not intended to provide legal advice and that clerks should consult with their city/town attorney. Carla suggested including best practices on performance reviews as a useful component for the HR chapter. Kara said she was considering a basic budget overview for the financial management chapter. Carla added that it would be good to include information on a clerk's obligations as someone who is in charge of public funds.

Fatima Fernandez shared that she has a manual for the deputy clerk position in her office and gave a review of its contents. Kara said there are so many places to get additional information, so maybe at the end of the handbook she could list additional resources. She noted that the Welcome Packet for new AMCA members included a resource checklist and shared it on her screen for the group to see. She asked if there were any additional thoughts. Annie Meredith said she thinks it is a great tool and thanked Kara for her work. Kara noted that she will email the document to everyone to get feedback and shared the next steps. She said it should help with all of the retirements and new clerks coming on board. Sherry Aguilar noted that an informational flyer included in the Welcome Packet provides a good overview of the role of the clerk [What is a Municipal Clerk?]. Kara replied that she had referenced it for the core responsibilities. Sherry said she likes the draft table of contents and thanked Kara. Kara shared the concerns received with the upkeep and maintaining the handbook. She said she would not want the handbook to be too detailed on laws and noted that its content would be a high-level overview. She noted that if additional roles were added to the clerk's office in the future, they could be included in the handbook.

## 6. REMINDERS

- a. Please ask your regional members for suggested topics or questions for the AMCA Facebook discussion posts.

Chair Kara DeArrastia said the Communications Committee is always looking for new questions or ideas for the AMCA Facebook discussion posts, and asked that Region Leaders bring this up at their next regional meeting or via email to their region members.

- b. [AMCA Clerk Areas of Expertise](#) – Please click [here](#) to access the questionnaire and submit your areas of expertise. Please email any procedures and/or samples related to your selected topics to [amcainfo@azleague.org](mailto:amcainfo@azleague.org) and indicate “Resources spreadsheet” in the subject line.

Kara encouraged Region Leaders to share this information about the Clerks Areas of Expertise spreadsheet and Resources listing on the AMCA website with their region members if they have not already.



- c. Submissions for the Spring issue of *The Clerk's Insider* newsletter are due by Tuesday, March 1st.

Kara encouraged Region Leaders to solicit article ideas from their region members and to also write up a recap of their regional meetings, including a group photo or screenshot, for inclusion in the newsletter.

- d. Please notify the Committee Chair of new clerk arrivals, clerk departures/retirements, or promotions.

Kara reminded everyone to please let her know of any new clerks in their regions, any members who are leaving or retiring, or any members who are being promoted, so she can make sure those announcements are highlighted in the AMCA newsletter and Facebook group.

Fatima Fernandez noted the recent addition of several new clerks in Region 1.

Kara said the winter newsletter was fantastic and had a lot of great information. She gave an overview of the articles that she submitted on the IIMC [International Institute of Municipal Clerks] Region 8 Conference and AMCA Fall Best Practices. She noted that she agreed with Annie Meredith about how informative the City of Chandler's records management presentation was at the Fall Best Practices.

Fatima asked how many staff members are working on records in Tempe. Kara replied that their Assistant City Clerk is the lead and the whole team helps out. She shared what the Tempe Clerk's Office is currently working on with inventorying records.

**7. GOOD OF THE ORDER/COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, OR INPUT FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

There were no additional comments from the Committee members.

**8. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION**

Tuesday, March 22, 2022, from 9 to 11 a.m., via Microsoft Teams (includes call-in option)

Minutes Taker: Sherry Aguilar

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

Annie Meredith

Minutes Taker

***Kara DeArrastia***

Kara DeArrastia, Deputy City Clerk – City of Tempe  
2021/2022 Membership/Mentoring Committee Chair

**APPROVED ON MARCH 22, 2022**