ARIZONA MUNICIPAL CLERKS' ASSOCIATION
REGION 5 QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 13, 2023
10:00 a.m.

Tempe Center for the Arts, Lakeside Room
700 West Rio Salado Parkway
Tempe, AZ 85281 and
Microsoft Teams

Committee Members: *Lisa Anderson, Denise Archibald, Erica Barba, Amy Beyleryan, Cathie Butteweg, Megan Casey, Blaine Comeaux, Rommel Cordova, Kara DeArrastia, Dana DeLong, Ashley Doering, Karen Doncovio, Carrie Dyrek, Jennifer Ekblad, Angela Espiritu, Christopher Feltz, Kandace French Contreras, Angie Garcia, Samantha Gesell, Maria Gonzalez, Agnes Goodwine, Regina Guisto, Patti Hageman, Nicole Harding, Chaveli Herrera, Misty Johnson, Jim Keen, Jeff Kulaga, Ben Lane, Vanessa Liristis, Patricia Lopuszanski, Joy Maglione, Judy Martinez, Yvette McKinney, Linda Mendenhall, Duncan Miller, Jennifer Miller, Holly Moseley, Elaine Pattison, Jennifer Pena, Amy Rebenar, Carla Reece, Lisa Rivera, Teresa Riza, Victoria Roedig, Rocio Ruiz, Denise Stroh, Jessica Sweet, Melanie Talbot, Vera Warhurst, June Wilson, Jennifer Wingenroth*

1. CALL TO ORDER – Roll Call

The City of Tempe hosted the hybrid meeting; Interim City Clerk (and Region 5 Leader) Kara DeArrastia called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

Members present in-person: Kara DeArrastia, Regina Guisto, Nicole Harding, Linda Mendenhall, Elaine Pattison, Carla Reece, Victoria Roedig, and Jessica Sweet.

Members present via Microsoft Teams: Lisa Anderson, Denise Archibald, Amy Beyleryan, Cathie Butteweg, Blaine Comeaux, Rommel Cordova, Ashley Doering, Karen Doncovio, Patti Hageman, Chaveli Herrera, Ben Lane, Judy Martinez, Duncan Miller, Jennifer Pena, Amy Rebenar, Melanie Talbot, and June Wilson.

2. MINUTES

Discuss and consider approval of the April 13, 2023, Region 5 Meeting Minutes.

Carla Reece moved to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2023, Quarterly Region 5 Meeting as presented, seconded by Regina Guisto, which carried unanimously.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. Group Discussion – Best Practices for City Clerk Succession Planning

Region 5 Leader Kara DeArrastia asked the meeting attendees to share their practices and strategies for onboarding new staff members in their office and the knowledge transfer process when a staff member is about to leave their organization, either for another position or retirement.

Carla Reece, with the Town of Cave Creek, discussed her experience previously as City Clerk in the Tempe City Clerk's Office, when she initially faced challenges with vacancies in the Deputy City Clerk and Assistant City Clerk positions. She emphasized the importance of offering training opportunities to everyone on the City Clerk team, especially the new hires. Carla highlighted the value of networking and knowledge-sharing within the municipal organization and through external networks like the AMCA, which can provide valuable insights and experiences, even for Charter Cities with differences in their operations. She also noted the significance of succession planning and supporting training initiatives within the organization, even with limited budgets, by participating in affordable training opportunities like AMCA's Best Practices.

Victoria Roedig, with the City of Chandler, discussed the importance of documenting procedures and addressing gaps in her office's operating procedures, particularly due to recent staff changes and role transitions. She emphasized the need to prioritize documentation during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for essential functions and system access. Regina Guisto, also with the City of Chandler, reviewed their efforts in onboarding new City Clerk staff members by bridging the gap between what the organization covers and what is Clerk-specific, ensuring that new hires have the necessary resources and answers to common questions from day one of their employment.

Linda Mendenhall noted that she was an office of one as Town Clerk at Fountain Hills and she was planning to write procedures for various tasks she was responsible for to prepare for unforeseen situations. She also mentioned sending the Executive Assistant to Town Manager, Mayor and Council to training, particularly in elections, to ensure someone else is knowledgeable in case of emergencies. Linda said she is organizing campaign finance complaint procedures, emails, and other resources to be easily accessible in one place. She also expressed the desire to eventually have a Deputy Town Clerk to share the workload.

Elaine Pattison, with the City of Tempe, discussed the process of refining a handbook/manual for each position in the City Clerk's Office, to help the staff members learn from each other. Nicole Harding, also with the City of Tempe, emphasized the importance of following procedures step by step and having reference tools to perform the job well, but she acknowledged that the process takes time.

Chaveli Herrera, with the Town of Gilbert, noted that the Town Clerk team used to operate in "silos" with specific skill sets and they wanted to change this approach, so they were successful as a team. She explained the following: team members are given opportunities to learn all aspects of the Clerk's Office even if it is not part of their core job, to understand the bigger picture and the significance of their roles. Collaborative training and knowledge sharing are essential in achieving this goal. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are developed and refined based on input from subject matter experts within the team to ensure everyone is on the same page. Certain tasks only make sense when they are experienced firsthand; elections was provided as an example. The goal is to create a team where any member can step in to handle a project when needed or can follow a procedure in a member's absence, reducing reliance on specific individuals and ensuring continuity. In this team environment, staff members feel supported and can take time off, knowing that nothing will drop in their absence.

Chaveli further explained that the Gilbert Town Clerk team has not been able to focus on succession planning because they are currently in a foundational phase with many changes occurring since she became Town Clerk and Judy Martinez became Deputy Town Clerk. She said they plan to start considering succession planning in the future. Chaveli believes that SOPs in place, engaging in collaborative conversations, and team meetings have been crucial to their success, and she hopes to continue building on this foundation in the future.

Jennifer Pena shared her experience of taking over the role of City Clerk at Apache Junction, where the previous City Clerk had been ill, and the Deputy City Clerk had left six months before her arrival. She explained that the existing staff knew their jobs but had no written documentation of their responsibilities. To address this issue, she initiated the creation of SOPs where each staff member documented their job responsibilities from start to finish, including software usage and the entire step-by-step process involved.

Jennifer further explained that these SOPs are treated as living documents, continuously updated whenever there are changes in procedures. She highlighted that they are in the process of changing software systems, which will affect the entire business licensing process. Nevertheless, having these SOPs in place ensures that anyone can step in to perform the tasks. The SOPs are available online and in printed binders for easy access.

Ben Lane discussed the importance of succession planning and reviewed the recent reorganization in the Scottsdale City Clerk's Office, which consists of two Senior Administrative Assistants, one Technology Specialist, one Management Assistant, two City Clerk Supervisors, one Deputy City Clerk, and one City Clerk. He described how the organizational structure of the Scottsdale City Clerk team supports upward mobility for staff, providing them with opportunities for career advancement. Ben discussed their commitment to procedures, planning for staff absences, and cross-training to ensure smooth operations. He explained Scottsdale's practice of hiring retirees back on a short-term basis to help with knowledge transfer and training of new staff members. For example, Scottsdale Deputy City Clerk Cathie Butteweg is retiring early August, but she will return on contract to train the new Deputy City Clerk when they are hired to allow for a smooth transition. He highly recommended this approach, emphasizing the productivity and cost-saving benefits of knowledge transfer through retired staff members, if it is allowed by the organization and the department's budget. Another instance is when Carolyn Jaeger (retired Scottsdale City Clerk) was also brought on contract to help Ben when he started as City Clerk. He also discussed the importance of regular team meetings, especially during elections, to ensure consistent and accurate information is provided to Scottsdale residents and voters, the Mayor, and members of Council.

b. Group Discussion – Planned Baskets/Donation Items for Annual AMCA Fundraising Raffle on July 27th

Region 5 Leader Kara DeArrastia thanked the region members who are actively collecting items for the upcoming basket raffle fundraiser to support AMCA scholarships. She noted she provided a link to a spreadsheet to capture the basket raffle items planned to be contributed from the various municipalities within the region.

Meeting attendees shared their planned themes for the fundraising baskets in their respective municipalities:

- City of Tempe – Date Night in Tempe and Family Fun in Tempe
- Towns of Carefree, Cave Creek, and Fountain Hills (Tri-Community Basket) – Home Improvement and Gardening
- Town of Gilbert – Hiking/Nature Walk
- City of Scottsdale – Fitness and Relaxation
- City of Mesa – Zen, Yoga, and Self-Care

Kara thanked everyone for sharing their ideas and requested that they submit pictures and descriptions of their basket raffle items to Scholarship Committee Chair Crystal Hadfield by the deadline of June 30th. She also encouraged further contributions, noting that individuals can choose to donate a single gift card or other item to an existing basket. She thanked everyone for their support of the AMCA Scholarship Fund.

c. Share your experiences attending the 2023 IIMC Annual Conference in Minneapolis

Region 5 Leader Kara DeArrastia asked region members who attended the Annual IIMC (International Institute of Municipal Clerks) Conference in May to discuss their experiences.

Lisa Anderson, with the City of Mesa, said she attended the IIMC Conference for the first time and found it to be a great experience, although she wished she had been more prepared for the "Purple – Tribute to Prince" theme because the conference was held in Minneapolis. She mentioned the Prince costume contest and the purple-themed banquets. Lisa also highlighted the guided bus tour around Minnesota's historic Twin Cities that IIMC Vice President Lisa Garcia (Deputy Town Manager/Town Clerk at the Town of

Florence) had arranged for Region 8 East and West members the first night. She expressed her desire to have a "buddy" to accompany her on activities outside the conference hotel. Lisa noted that Mesa Deputy City Clerk Agnes Goodwine planned on attending the 2024 IIMC Annual Conference in Calgary, Canada.

June Wilson, with the Town of Gilbert, shared that it was also her first IIMC Conference and she had a fantastic time, making new friends and learning a lot from the classes and speakers. She recognized Lisa Garcia for organizing a great bus tour. She highlighted the welcoming atmosphere and noted that her co-worker, Amy Beyleryan, also attended with her and they were grateful they could bring their spouses along for some of the events.

Linda Mendenhall, with the Town of Fountain Hills, said she was hoping to attend next year's IIMC Conference in Calgary.

Jennifer Pena, with the City of Apache Junction, shared her perspective attending her first IIMC Conference after many years of service in the Clerk's Office. She praised the professionalism and educational aspects of the conference and commended Lisa Garcia for organizing a bus tour that allowed attendees to experience the Minneapolis community.

Jennifer also discussed the IIMC Foundation, emphasizing the availability of scholarships for conference registration fees. She encouraged AMCA members to apply for these scholarships, and she mentioned the possibility of coordinating flights for Arizona attendees. In response to an inquiry from Kara about the IIMC scholarships, Jennifer explained their coverage of conference registration fees, and the application process. She also noted a raffle at the IIMC Conference for the following year's hotel and conference registration. To apply for scholarships, individuals were encouraged to visit the IIMC website and look for information about scholarship opportunities.

Kara encouraged the 2023 IIMC Conference attendees to share their experiences in the next issue of the AMCA newsletter. She mentioned she saw many pictures and videos posted in the IIMC Region 8 Facebook group of the "Purple – Tribute to Prince" theme event featuring a cover band. Kara thanked the conference attendees for sharing their experiences.

4. GOOD OF THE ORDER / COMMENTS FROM REGION 5 MEMBERS

At the request of Region 5 Leader Kara DeArrastia, Jennifer Pena, who is also AMCA Board Vice President, discussed the new AMCA Executive Board Director position representing a community with a population less than 20,000. This position was created to provide a voice for smaller communities, ensuring they have representation on the Board. She further explained that the AMCA Board underwent changes to its composition due to feedback from AMCA members who preferred shorter-term commitments for members serving on the Board. The officers of the Executive Board now consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Director representing a community with a population greater than 20,000, and Director representing a community with a population less than 20,000.

Jennifer further explained the following: this year, the position of AMCA Executive Board Director (representing small populations) has been opened for a two-year term of office which starts at the Annual Meeting in July. The deadline for applications for this new Board Director position is June 30th. The objective is to have applications from small communities, and if there are multiple applications, the voting members of the AMCA will vote to select the new Director. Additionally, it was mentioned that Treasurer duties have been restructured and outsourced to the League of Arizona Cities and Towns to streamline operations and benefit all members, regardless of municipality size.

5. REMINDERS

a. AMCA Education Survey deadline is June 22nd (Take the survey online)

Region 5 Leader Kara DeArrastia reminded everyone to please complete the AMCA Education Survey if they have not already done so. She noted that the agenda packet for this meeting included a link to the survey. The survey will close June 22nd. Kara highly recommended that everyone take the AMCA Education Survey because it will provide feedback to the AMCA Board and Education Committee regarding the topics AMCA members are interested in receiving future education on, and the preferred format (virtual, in-person, hybrid) for the training opportunities offered by the AMCA.

b. 2023-2024 AMCA Membership Application and Renewal is open: Please renew your membership for July 2023 – June 2024 if you haven't already. (AMCA Membership Renewal Form available online)

Kara reminded everyone to please renew their AMCA membership for the upcoming fiscal year if they have not already done so. She noted that the meeting agenda packet included a link to the renewal form.

c. Submissions for the Summer issue of The Clerk's Insider newsletter are due by Monday, July 3rd.

Kara noted that if anyone is interested in providing articles or other topics of interest for the AMCA newsletter, the deadline for summer issue submissions is July 3rd.

d. Please notify the Region 5 Leader of new clerk arrivals, clerk departures/retirements, or promotions.

Kara provided her regular reminder to region members to please inform her if there are new staff members on their team, if they know of AMCA members retiring, or if they are aware of AMCA members being promoted. She provides this information to the Communications Committee Chair so that it can be announced through the AMCA Facebook group and AMCA newsletter.

e. Please provide any suggested topics or questions for the AMCA Facebook discussion posts to the Region 5 Leader.

Kara asked if anyone has any suggested topics for the AMCA Facebook discussion posts to please inform her so that she can convey it to the Communications Committee Chair.

f. Summer Athenian Dialogue: July 24th, Fountain Hills Community Center (Registration Information available online)

Kara announced that a Summer Athenian Dialogue is happening on July 24th in Fountain Hills and the registration information is outlined in this meeting's agenda.

g. 2023 AMCA Annual Conference and Elections Training: July 25th – 27th, Fountain Hills Community Center (Registration Information available online)

Kara also announced that the AMCA Annual Conference and Elections Training is happening on July 25th through 27th in Fountain Hills and that registration has gone live too. She said she is looking forward to attending this year. She also mentioned she is taking the AMCA Elections Certification Test this year and is hopeful she will pass the exam.

6. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

Schedule to be determined in August 2023

Region 5 Leader Kara DeArrastia noted this is the final Region 5 meeting for the current fiscal year. She said when the next meeting kicks off in the new fiscal year, the region members will set the upcoming meeting schedule at that time likely around August or September. She asked if anyone was interested in hosting the next Region 5 meeting to please let her know.

Kara thanked everyone who joined the meeting virtually or attended in person, and wished everyone a great rest of their day.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Kara DeArrastia

Kara DeArrastia, Interim City Clerk, Tempe, and
Region 5 Leader
Minutes Taker

Approved on: September 27, 2023