

New Hampshire City & Town Clerk's Association
Executive Board Meeting
October 10, 2008

Attendance: Kathy Seaver, Deb Clark, Sue McKinnon, Susan Wagoner, Meg Seymour, Pat Waterman, Phyllis Thompson, Lori Holmes, Teri Upton, Rita Eigenbrode, Debra Cornett, Jean Oleson, Judith White, Kathleen Valliere and Tricia Picuch. Absent from the meeting were Linda Hardy and Judy Rogers

President Kathy Seaver called the meeting to order at 8:15 AM.

Kathy S. stated that her first order of business was to know who was on first and who was going to stay and whose terms were up. Sue said there was an opening in the Merrimack Valley Regional and that Meg Seymour was on her first year term of 07-09. Jean Oleson was on her third year term of 07-09; Judy White was on her third year term of 08-10; Deb Cornett was on her first year term of 07-09; Pat was on her second year term of 08-10; Susan Wagoner was on her second year term of 07-09; Theresa Upton was on her second year term of 08-10; Phyllis Thompson was on her first year term of 07-09; Lori Holmes was on her first year term of 08-10; Judy Rogers was on her first year term of 07-09 and Linda Hardy was on her first year term of 08-10. Sue said she would provide us with a list of all individuals.

Kathy S. stated that someone came to her thinking that their term was up and didn't know, so the only vacancy currently was in the Merrimack Valley Region. Kathy V. stated that Jeanette Vinton came to her first on the Merrimack position. Kathy S. said that Kim Johnson had come to her and Tricia stated she heard that Diane Trippett was also interested. Meg said Diane had stepped down because of becoming President of New England. Kathy S. stated she now had three volunteers for the Merrimack Valley Region.

Kathy S. asked if there were any other openings, like on the convention committee. Pat stated that she has had some people come up to her during the conference, one being the new Windham Town Clerk who wanted to come forward on the conference committee and there are several, and she could provide the names to Kathy, of those that were interested in serving on the legislative committee. Meg mentioned that Patty could use more people and that Patty was incredible in what she does for the legislative committee. Kathy S. mentioned that Patty does that as part of her responsibilities as City Clerk with researching all legislation so it was beneficial to us. Kathy S. said that Sue as 2nd Vice President would be ex-officio on the Conference Committee and Deb Clark as 1st Vice President would be ex-officio on the Legislative Committee.

Rita stated that after this meeting she would send Denise, the Secretary and Treasurer their stipend. Kathy S. stated that those positions do a lot of work and she thinks that the Tax Collectors Association also pays the legislative chairman as they do a lot of work as well.

Kathy S. asked for an update on money from the conference. Sue stated from hospitality it was \$321 and that \$182 was made on the first night which was a record. Also, that this was the most ever received from doing hospitality. Kathy S. stated she was given a total of \$824 from the 50/50 raffle from Evelyn Connor and the main raffle was \$2,948 which was kept separate. Pat stated that Virginia McGinley would give the money from the registration area to Rita and Kathy S. stated she had a check she was giving on behalf of Middleton for \$50 to Virginia McKinley so that she could get a

registration package and that she gave Meg a check for \$100 for four jackets. Meg said that she had \$403 in the sale table and Jean said the special Nascar raffle raised \$257.

Kathy S. stated she would like to discuss at this meeting anything that went good or bad so far at the conference and asked if anyone received any complaints.

Someone stated the one thing they heard was about doing the afternoon raffle on Thursday and how we should have just continued on with the educational part; that we should have waited until later to do it. Tricia stated that she thinks what happened was because of the scheduling; that if you look at the schedule it was different than in the past as motor vehicles were normally given 1 – 4 PM and this time it was only 2 –4 PM with what turned out to be a half hour break. Plus we had the people from the fraud unit which was in addition to what we normally have. They were great and we wish that we had more time for them, but it was very difficult to get it all in. What also occurred was that we were supposed to be in the rooms behind us, but that changed and so we wouldn't have had the longer break time as we would have been much closer. A lot of discussion ensued about how great all the presentations were and the amount of interaction amongst the clerks and it was also great to have the investigators from the fraud unit. Deb Clark even noted it would be good to have them at regionals. Deb Cornett said that they would go to as many regionals as we want them to. Kathy S. asked if they felt it was too soon to do the same exact thing and the consensus was that it wasn't as they weren't able to give their entire presentation and maybe they could even go deeper into what they do.

Kathy V. stated that the only thing she heard about the convention was all positive. Others said that they have not heard anything bad, some heard it was awesome. Tricia said she heard complaints regarding the first day, because she stopped people from asking questions, so that the speakers could get through the presentation as some of the questions being asked would have been answered during the presentation. A couple of people wanted to know where the evaluation forms were so that they could mention it. Someone stated isn't that what the round table on Friday was for. Discussion ensued about next time we should make mention to hold all questions in advance so that people were aware of it up front.

Kathy V. stated that she would like to know what happened with the evaluations and Pat asked the same question. Kathy V. then corrected herself and asked about the sign in sheets. Judy said that it did not work. Kathy V. said that you need to have someone sitting at the door and having them sign as they come in. Judy stated what happen was she gave it to one person and it started going around and then it just sat at a table and nobody continued passing it around. Discussion centered on how some received them and how others didn't; that someone went looking for them for people that hadn't signed and at times two were going around and people were confused to which one they were signing, or thought they had already signed it. There was talk if doing it next year that we put one on each table and collect them when we want and put a fresh one out for each session. Deb Clark said the only problem was that if you only have them sign in once what happens if they leave, do you know if they really stayed. Kathy S. said you really don't and that was why at certification, because people were leaving for break and then not coming back, they now have them sign in every time they walk into class as it wasn't fair to the others taking the class. Deb Cornett said it was also not fair to the taxpayers who were paying for them to attend. Kathy V. stated that she doesn't think too many people left.

Kathy S. said that she and Pat talked last night about what they should do regarding time. Do we extend it a half day, as it is nice to have the class like the fraud, but then you can't do it if you want to

get it all in. So, do you start earlier in the day which would be tough for people that travel a couple of hours, or do you extend it further into the third day?

Pat stated if we could change the business meeting to earlier in the day it would be a big help. I know it would still be hard for traveling people, but we could have it maybe at 9 AM instead of 1 PM and that would free up the afternoon. Kathy S. stated another thing we could do was to move the new clerk session to a smaller room from like 4 – 5 PM if class was out at 4 PM. They would miss some of the social hour, but you then move that away from your regular schedule. Pat asked if that session was a good turnout and Sue said that it was. Kathy V. stated she felt it should be in the morning as they would be fresh. She said to move the business meeting to 11:00 AM then have lunch 12 – 1 PM and start right after that. Kathy S. stated then you still won't be starting your sessions until 1 PM.

Deb Cornett said with the fraud, there were some that left, but a lot of people stayed. Tricia stated that was why she mentioned she appreciated everyone's patience and thanked them for staying. Pat said they did and never heard anything negative. Deb Cornett said that we just did not have enough time to cover everything they wanted to cover, but it really sparked a lot of interest. Pat stated that she was going to invite them to their regionals and other clerks agreed.

Judy mentioned that next year we would not have that intense of an election year.

Kathy S. stated she was not sure how many people remembered that they used to alternate August and September instead of September and October so a suggestion she mentioned to Pat was maybe every fourth year we should look at having it in August so that we would be doing the election class earlier. So in 2012, say we look at having it earlier so we are not told you did all this stuff wrong, so we do it in August. Meg questioned about how much they would already know at that point, as that would be one of her biggest concerns. Kathy S. stated they should know because they are getting ready for it. Someone mentioned that if the meeting was earlier then they would be prepared for it. Tricia stated that they would have to cover two elections, as the primary is so much different then a general. Kathy S. knows that August would be tough as certification was in August, but we can work around it and that they would have to move the certification school. She further stated that the hotel guy overheard her talking about it and said that time would be good as you don't have all those buses of leaf peepers. Meg mentioned that a lot of people were on vacation and it affects vacation time in the office. Pat mentioned that the rates were different in August but we could still investigate it. Meg asked that they keep in mind those that are town clerks and tax collectors as it was the only time her staff can really take vacation. Kathy S. stated that her staff doesn't take time in August as it was during certification time so they take it in July. Meg stated that she had people with longevity and it was not as easy to say, no you can't go on vacation in August. Kathy S. stated that it could be planned for if you know four years in advance. Pat said it was all about planning your conferences as she had Kathy's in for 2 ½ years, so you plan for it. Kathy S. stated it would be for just that one time every four years.

Pat asked Deb Clark what she thought about it and she replied that when she goes back in on Monday she would have water and sewer billing, then she had real estate and she hasn't even taken a vacation this year and then it's the end of the month and then it's the election, so September and October were very busy months.

Pat stated that we alternate with the Tax Collector's so next year we would be in September and they would be in October. We could investigate it. Kathy S. said that it can't hurt to look into it and see what the rates would be and that she remembers even going Thursday, Friday and Saturday and asked if anyone remembered that. She said it was when she became tax collector in 1979 and her first three

or four conventions were Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Talked around the room was that it would not be something we would want to do and Kathy S. agreed, but again there were other options out there and that was at least 34 years ago.

Kathy S. asked if there were any other issues that anyone else has. She stated that her only other question would be about the November meeting, which would be on the 19th and that was during the New England Conference and she already has two meetings planned for the 20th and she would really like to go to support Diane. The following week was Thanksgiving which was late this year. Deb Clark asked if we could bump it up to the week before. Kathy S. said we could, but wasn't sure who goes to LGC as she doesn't. The consensus around the room was to do it the week before. Kathy S. asked if the meetings were kept on Wednesday would it work for everyone. Everyone agreed they would, so it was decided that the next meeting would be on November 12th. Deb Clark asked if it was going to be at Vitals or at Motor Vehicles and Kathy S. asked which place would be better to hold the December meeting and it was decided that the December meeting would be best at Vitals, so she said that she would see about Motor Vehicles for November and let everyone know and then would also get us out a meeting schedule.

Kathy V. stated that she made her schedule out for the year and then called and verified that we could meet at the locations. Kathy S. said she was going to do the same thing as the handout of all the dates was very beneficial.

Kathy S. asked Kathy V. if there were any topics that she had wanted to do that she didn't get around to doing. Kathy V. stated that she thought there was so much this year to get done with the elections that you couldn't really think about too many other things; that one of the biggest things she thinks coming up was the vote on whether the town clerk should be appointed or elected. Kathy S. said that there was not going to be a vote; that was the standing position of LGC and they will not put it in.

Kathy V. said she received a call from another clerk, couldn't remember her name as it was at her office, regarding the \$.50 hike that went to the town and why we didn't do something about it. Kathy V. told her we tried, but when it got to the legislature they decided it was going to go to the towns. Deb Clark stated that she was not raising her prices and Pat said she wasn't either. Deb Clark stated it wasn't fair to the people that were paying for this service and thinks it just wasn't right for the State to pass it on to the consumer. She further stated that she just doesn't feel it was right and she had already talked to her Selectboard and they were fine with it. Kathy S. said she didn't give them a choice because she wanted to get more hours out of her part-time person next year, so she just did it. There was discussion amongst the board that some were doing it and others weren't doing it now and not sure if they would do it in the future. Meg stated that they did so many fleets that the additional revenue was huge for them. Deb Cornett said that now with the price of gas if people have to travel far away it won't be worth it for them to go to the substation. Kathy V. said if you look at the economy and what everyone else was paying in the country and how that the fee hasn't been raised for years. Someone interjected how many years has it been, which no one was sure. Kathy S. stated that there were arguments on both sides and she did not personally support putting in legislation to increase the fee only because she doesn't think we would have the support of the legislature and doesn't feel we should go down that road, but again that was only her. Kathy V. stated she thought her town would leave her on fees, but when she leaves she would suggest they put the next person on salary. Kathy S. stated that you have to admit that people that were on fees were probably better paid in the end than those that were on salary. Some say that may not be true in certain places.

Deb Cornett stated in getting back to the conference was there a reason why we couldn't get the State Veterinarian? Remember our meeting when he came in and it was incredible. Kathy S. said she has heard that a lot of people want something with dogs. Pat said that if we can't get him for the conference, then we could have him at the regionals.

Pat stated that she was very impressed at the number of people that attended the conference. Someone asked how many people came and Pat said that we had over 202 clerks and spouses, but not too many spouses. She further stated that she was going to give the list of the 49 towns to the Secretary of State and he will take care of it as the towns were in violation of the RSA. He said he would contact the clerks to find out why they weren't able to attend and if it was a Selectmen's issue then he will follow it up with the Attorney General.

Someone mentioned there was a town next to them that just has no desire to attend. Deb Clark said that they could come up for at least one day. Kathy V. said that in one instance she knew that someone's daughter was getting married. Someone mentioned that was a little different than them not attending for the past couple of years. Kathy S. said in another town the clerk's husband was undergoing a procedure. Kathy V. stated it was the ones that were habitual and don't ever attend. Pat said that those 49 towns didn't come in 07 and she would have to check for 06, but didn't come this year. Meg asked if they at least went to the regionals but Pat was not sure. Someone asked Pat how many new clerks didn't come and she said that she thinks most of them came. Judy said that the Town Clerk of Bethlehem didn't come and Kathy V. stated that Peterborough didn't come either. Deb Cornett said that if they were brand new and just starting in the office it would be hard to remove yourself when you were just starting to get into a routine and kind of understand what you were supposed to do. Meg stated that she would say as a new clerk they may not realize that there were conferences they were supposed to attend, as she knows her clerk never told her about it. Some of those people might just not know.

Pat said that was why we have the new clerks workshop in April and Kathy S. said that she didn't start until later.

Pat asked how many clerks did their own budget. Most people raised their hands, but Kathy S. stated if you were to be in the big room you would find that most people don't.

Deb Clark asked Kathy S. if she had any goals. Kathy S. said that her big goal was what Kathy V. started in wanting to get some more people in for the meetings. Hopefully with no elections we would be able to do that. Also, if anyone had anything else or some other area of work like we did with UCC's to let her know. Somebody mentioned filing of liens, things like that which we don't get that often. Wetland permits would be another. We did that once, but so much has changed and there were new forms that not everyone may know about.

Lori mentioned appointments and swearing in of officers as changes have happened. Kathy S. said that was good as there have been changes and it seems more complicated because if you postpone your meeting portion until Saturday you can't swear people in until that session was over. Kathy V. said what happened to her was that her Supervisors went to training in Concord and they asked them for a copy of the sheet where they were sworn in and Kathy V. said that they were all sworn in at town meeting and it was in the minutes and then the person read her the RSA and said that they should have signed. She further stated that she was not aware of that in the 24 years she has been clerk. Tricia said that her people get sworn in the Aldermanic meeting by Corporation Counsel so it is in the minutes, so we don't have a paper copy signed by them. If they did not attend the meeting, then a letter is sent out

to have them come in or have in done in the presence of a Justice of the Peace. Kathy S. said it would be good as everyone does it so different. Discussion ensued whether they were a permanent record or until the term of office had expired as some clerks had records going back to the 1800's. Most said it was a permanent record.

Jean said that another good one would be retention. She stated she had an old list and it would be good to have something that was more current. Kathy S. said it was now an RSA and not a list, so it has changed from what we have. Jean said it would be nice if it was broken down into what Town Clerks do.

Deb Cornett asked how many clerks were keeping their checklists past retention. The consensus around the room was that some did keep them longer and others didn't as they didn't have the storage room. Deb Cornett stated said she was wondering as she had a lady that was going into a nursing home and needed proof that she was a resident in the town long before she was clerk and was fortunate as she had found the old checklists which had this person's name on it, so she was able to do a letter proving she was a resident of the town for that year.

Someone asked about the longevity awards and Kathy S. said that she had picked them up last night as she didn't want them left behind and some people took them for surrounding towns, so she only had a few left and she was going to give them out. Sue mentioned that usually the secretary gets them out.

Deb Clark stated she would like to see IRP and a lot of members agreed. Kathy S. stated it would be nice to have an understanding of what we were sending them off to do. Deb Clark stated she had a small paving company in her town and she was doubting herself as to whether she was going to continue allowing our residents to register the vehicles in her town because they pave in New Jersey and Massachusetts and they are not here physically in the town much any more and so she had talked with IRP and there were guidelines that they have that were more different than us, so she felt it was kind of important to us.

Kathy S. said that we could do those different things in several meetings.

Motion by Kathy V., seconded by Rita to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:57 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia Picuch
Secretary