

## **MINUTES**

### **Real Property Tax Administration Committee Meeting (RPTAC) March 11 and 12, 1999 Quality Inn, Albany**

**Members Attending:** Gary Bennett, Bill Cinquanti, Stephen Dorsey, Tom Frey, Tom Griffen, Dick Harris, Rick Hubner, Peter Keitel, Paul Maniacek, Edye McCarthy, Vince O'Connor, Fred Pask, Ramon Rodriguez, Anne Sapienza, Curt Schoeberl, Ron Shetler, Rich Sinnott, Bill Budde

**Others Attending:** John Bonanno, Linda Martinelli, Carol Cusano, Anne Sapienza, Sue Otis, Jeff Jordan, Don Card, Joe Gerberg, Paul Miller, Bonnie Scott, Dennis Jersey

**Facilitator:** Dan Curtin

**Recorders:** Philly Reilly and Tina Kane

#### **A. Get Organized**

Dan Curtin began the meeting by reviewing the agenda. Members agreed to topics and times. The agenda item for Team Reports was inadvertently left off the agenda. We will try to cover this at the end of today's or tomorrow's session.

Minutes from the last meeting have been approved and will be posted on the Internet.

#### **B. Webboard Demo**

Linda Martinelli and Carol Cusano from ORPS Internet Unit presented software that will enable RPTAC to have a secure site to share information within the group. The software is called Webboard and will be used as an online conference for RPTAC. ORPS has been developing this in-house and it is not accessible yet, but should be available within the next two weeks to the group. Everyone should be able to access this software. All you need is an Internet provider.

Claudia Weeks will be the Webboard administrator and will be the contact person that will add participants to the board and maintain its contents.

Handouts on the demo were distributed to the group. There are more complex components in the Webboard software and as you become more comfortable with the product you may contact the ORPS Internet Unit to explore those components.

How does a secure site address FOIL since we are all public employees? Steve

Harrison is the attorney responsible for FOIL information. **Action Item #1: Linda Martinelli and Carol Cusano will talk to Steve Harrison regarding the FOIL information.** **Action item #2:** Rick Hubner made a suggestion that a message comes on when you sign on "Secure site contains draft information not approved by the group. Approved minutes are available on the site." Also include a list of what's on the board so as to not appear to be concealing the contents. Peter Keitel and Rick Hubner suggested that we do not want this on the ORPS Home Page. We should dial into a direct site for RPTAC. Dick Harris suggested a short life span for anything we put out there. The software is designed to handle these types of limits.

**Action item #3:** Dan Curtin suggested that these meeting minutes will be posted on the board and requested that comments on these minutes should be posted on the site.

Just members will be included in the initial use of the board.

### **C. Leader's Reports**

County Directors: Ron Shetler asked ORPS to revisit the 5217 form so that notification of the property owner goes to the assessor. A suggestion was made that we add a block on the 5217 form to indicate that the property is the primary residence of the new owner. (STAR) **Action item #4:** This item will be turned over to the STAR RPTAC committee.

STAR - Bill of Rights - when you do an update you receive a tax notice in January and an impact notice in March. They may have two different values and is confusing to taxpayer. **This item will be discussed further under the "Sustaining Equity" portion of the meeting (511 notice vs. Taxpayer Bill of Rights).**

Assessors: Curt Schoeberl brought up a situation with respect to a town in Saratoga County with respect to a large unit parcel, Stewart's was valued by the assessor; the value agreed on by the assessor and the company, but it is felt (by ORPS) that the value is too high. Because of this value in relation to the class, the municipality will not be eligible for MA. He commented that we're looking futuristic before the problems of old are taken care of. This will be discussed further in the large parcel segment of the meeting.

ORPS: Update on deployment of SalesWeb - Internet access of SalesWeb is currently available by ORPS. Currently this is available now to agency staff and will be deployed to local officials in April. We've decided to delay distribution to the general public until we sort out privacy issues.

**Action item #5:** As a result of a flier that Rick Hubner had received regarding RAR challenge and discussion by the group it was felt that we need to examine streamlining decisions on documenting physical and quantity changes. It is felt that ORPS needs to clarify new sales procedure when it applies (**Peter**). Assessors will be

included in this discussion

#### **D. Alliance**

Tom Griffen reported that the Alliance group has been meeting for a year and now we're looking to find a way to document our progress and discussions. We're looking into putting the document in the form of Guiding Principles and publish them.

Edye McCarthy reported that the Alliance will be bringing concepts and recommendations to RPTAC and RPTAC will make the operational decisions (eg. \$5/\$20 program). Alliance will not be making operational decisions.

#### **E. Budget**

Tom Griffen reported on the budget, it is status quo, we have not been hurt with it and the biggest piece is the \$5/\$20. We even may be able to hire a few folks.

Curt Schoeberl asked questions about \$5/\$20 how much interest has it generated and how long before your "hopper is full" (you turn people away). Tom responded that we've had quite a bit of interest. Interest ranges from fantasy to serious. We don't think there will be too many that qualify this year, but beginning in 2000 the number will get bigger.

#### **F. Sustaining Equity**

ORPS Senior Managers spent 5 minutes each on detailing the tasks identified for the \$5/\$20 program. Some comments and questions on each of the tasks are outlined below. Tasks identified for \$5/\$20 follow:

- (1) Rules for Aid
- (2) Guidelines for Staff and Local Governments
- (3) Public Relations
- (4) Data Communication
- (5) Equalization Rate
- (6 & 7) Advisory Appraisals - Utilities
- (8) Market Analysis System (MAS)
- (9) Trending (Almy)
- (10) Training Issues (NEW)**

Dan wanted the group to think about three questions in respect to the tasks identified.

Any comments on existing tasks?

Are there other tasks that need to be identified in the next three months?

How do you want to participate?

Comments/Concerns

Ron Shetler: educate town board not assessor (Task #3); Dollars will not create equity, politics will (Task #8)

Buy in of local government, not assessor (Task #3)

Paul Manacek: Scale back, put in laymen terms, too technical (Task #3)  
(Concept in all tasks)

Anne Sapienza: Find another word for "trending" (Task #9)

Curt Schoerberl: remove element of surprise (Task #5)

Steve Dorsey: Negative special rates for those not doing reval (Task #5)

Curt: let market sort out level of assessment, not ORPS; look at sales after project (Tasks #1 and #2)

Gary Bennett: leave out roll section 3 and 6 (Task #5), change it so anyone can grieve the equalization rate including taxpayer (Task #5)

Edye McCarthy: school districts don't have a say; keep them informed, there's a perception that there is a loss of tax \$ - decrease in assessed value due to decreased market value (Task #3).

Edye McCarthy: Town of Greenfield, Saratoga County (Stewarts), Owner and Assessor agree, ORPS doesn't; result is no Maintenance Aid, single parcel creating problems (Tasks #1, 2 and 5).

Roll section 3 creates problems can't allow system to negate result if caused by one parcel or class, all or nothing situation (Don't need statute change per Rich Sinnott)(Task #5).

Perception \$5/\$20 applies only to Nassau/Westchester, not rest of state (Task #3)

Open procedures/policies (Tasks #1, 2 and 3)

Paul Manaciak: Are some localities with recent reval will be closed out (legislative fix is being discussed) (outside of 9 tasks)

Peter Keitel: Sunsets - why - \$5.00 good government/\$20.00 one shot deal (statute).

Curt: Is ORPS hoping to work just a few places? *50-60 localities likely in 1999*

(Tasks #1, 2 and 5). How do you determine if a locality has program to sustain (Tasks #1, 2 and 5)? Monitoring of locality may vary based upon make up of locality (Tasks #8 and 9).

Tom Frey: Why is Task #3 internal?

Roll Section 8 is not included (statutory).

Add County Directors to Task #8

What hardware/software is needed to support sustaining equity (Tasks #4 and 8)

### Missing Tasks

Informing Assessors (Task #3)

Training - on how to do trending - separate component for the whole process, valuation tools in general, technology (do sooner) (new Task #10).

How do you want to participate in these tasks?

**The group agreed to discuss it within their respective units and come back tomorrow and discuss further. Vince O'Connor asked that the group consider the April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline (Task #1, #2 and #5). The rest are between April 1 and July.**

- 1) Rules team already in place - participants from assessors and county directors (Andrea, Josette, Steve Childs)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4) Action Item #41 - Charter
- 5) Equalization subcommittee - Large Parcel Team?
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)
- 9)
- 10) AATP/TCPC

## **G. Team Reports**

### Agricultural Issues Committee

Anne Sapienza and Mark Twentyman discussed their report which was distributed at the beginning of the meeting. The handout included information regarding their charter and recommendations regarding who should take the Farm Course.

A question came up regarding the Ag Exemption. The exemption is being addressed by this committee. They will work with the Farm Bureau and Ag and Markets to work on statutes.

Gary Bennett expressed a concern that the farmland protection board was not represented on this team. The farmland protection board encompasses local soil and water, county director and planning departments.

Rick Hubner suggest that we are putting the "cart before the horse" we need to be clear on what we're training and who.

Dick Harris brought up the fact that TCPC is looking at the whole educational process for assessors, county directors and ORPS staff. This generated much discussion with the outcome being the charter being approved with the omission of items 1 and 2 under problem description and an addition under the communication that communication be provided to the "farmer on the board".

## **Day Two - March 12<sup>th</sup>**

### **G. Get Organized**

Dan Curtin reviewed the agenda. No changes were made. Members agreed to items and times.

### **H. NYT**

Dick H. did a quick review of what NYT (New York State's Intranet) is and introduced Tom Milner, Project Director, NYS Office for Technology, to the group. Mr. Milner did a demo on NYT and discussed the following:

- Difference between intranet and internet
- Net multi gov't./level net work
- Management principles
- NYT Governance Council
- Old way & NYT way
- TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol
- NYT Backbone
- Bandwidth elements
- Why internet (anyone can get on) vs intranet (private)
- Extranets - connection of intranets without going into internet
- Security Risk Assessment
- Application Access
- Common applications under consideration (i.e., E-mail)
- NYT participants (i.e., State agencies, local and county gov't.)
- NYT goals
- Connects local gov't. with state government

Mr. Milner reported that on March 17<sup>th</sup> he would be presenting NYT to the Governor's Counsel for their consideration and approval.

If interested in contacting Tom Milner, his E-mail address is **tmilner@oft.state.ny.us** and his phone # is (518) 402-4010.

## **I. RPS Fee Structure**

This topic was presented by Bonnie Scott and Dennis Jersey.

Bonnie distributed a handout on the Proposal for Revisions to RPS Fees and did a run through of the fee structure. Bonnie reported that the Future of RPS Study Group met on March 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss the proposal/fee structure. Rick H., member of the RPS Study Group, was very encouraged by the 3/11 RPS meeting.

Group discussion took place on the following:

- Slight decrease in #'s of V-4 users
- V-4 will be competitive on open market
- Vendor products are considerably more expensive
- Total commitment of upper management
- Licensing fees will be established for 3 year periods
- Recommendations will be made if fees need to be adjusted
- New licensing fees take effect April 1, 2000
- Before bills are sent out, they go to the regional offices for confirmation
- Would like to have RPTAC involved in the development of support among stakeholders for recommendations of the Group
- Rick H. suggested there be a RPS newsletter - Bonnie will work on getting one out
- There will be a mass distribution by June 1<sup>st</sup> to get info. out on RPS Governance Group
- Curt thought a list showing local government on the committee/group would be beneficial
- Bill C. is not happy with the 60% increase but supports the committee
- Dick H. feels you need to look at quality of the product, not so much the money
- Bill C. doesn't agree with Dick
- Gary B. is very concerned. Need to be on one system. Clerks receive \$3 out of the \$25 fee. Asked where the \$22 revenue to the agency goes. Peter said staffing and general revenue fund
- Initial production sites will go into effect on 9/1/99
- V-4 will be a window base - easy to learn - some training will take place
- Increase fee structure will be for both V-3 and V-4 users
- Need PR now. Very important to see V-4 - Dennis will bring back to RPS Study Group
- Dennis wanted to clear a rumor he's heard that RPS V-4 is not on schedule.

Dennis noted that V-4 is on schedule (all 4 platforms)

**J. Update on Large Units**

Jeff Jordan addressed the group. Jeff noted that the Large Parcel Team was charged in 1997. In the fall of 1997, a mailing went out requesting three way participation between locals, ORPS and owners. 67 responses were received. Out of the 67, 25 (or 37%) towns and owners were willing to meet with ORPS. (Mostly water generation properties 84%)

Jeff raised the following questions to the group:

- What was expected, as a group, on the large parcel effort?
- What is the role of the team in considering resources?
- Should maintenance aid be denied?
- What should we do in case of eq. rates?

Vince noted that a meeting took place on 3/11, with ORPS, the assessor for the Town of Greenfield, the Town Attorney and contractor. Advisory appraisals were provided - ORPS appraisal was 2.3 million, Town's appraisal was 7.5 million. The Town of Greenfield reduced appraisal to 5.5 million. Full disclosure purposes - owner agreed to 4.9 million. Need to see how to narrow difference between 2.3 mil (ORPS) and 4.9 million.

Curt S. noted that \$5 & \$20 is always a large parcel problem. We need to identify and solve problems before moving forward. Vince agreed with Curt and noted that a clear set of rules and guidelines need to be developed. You lose credibility with assessment community if problems are not being solved.

There was some confusion whether maintenance aid procedures were mailed out. Peter noted that they were and there were some recommended changes to the procedures. The procedures will soon be available via the Internet.

Peter assumed that if a parcel fails and the parcel is in litigation, we would hold maintenance aid and wait for outcome of litigation.

The group decided that the large parcel issue needs to be discussed by the Large Parcel Team. It was noted that the team was inactive. The Large Parcel Team will be revitalized for one meeting to discuss the issue of (1) 5% class - difference in FVM, (2) monitor status reconciliation, (3) deregulation effect of new STAR legislation and Bill of Rights and (4) valuation.

- Dick H. will contact Edye and Bill B. to review membership and charter of the Large Parcel Team.
- Parameter - refer to equal. committee FVM issues.

Tom G. reported that he received two letters dealing with the large parcel issue on utility deregulation. The letters were from David Briggs, Chairman of the Assessors Equalization Support Team and Thomas Bloodgood, Chairman, NYSRPDA Equalization Committee expressing the urgency to be pro-active to the impending valuation issues and problems that may result from deregulation and divestiture of electric generating plants in New York State.

## **K. Legislation**

Joe Gerberg started out by saying that ORPS received clearance from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to release our legislative program. Joe also mentioned that four bills were introduced this year and distributed a handout explaining them. Also discussed was the STAR/Art. VII Bill Outline and Non-STAR related portions of the Budget Bill.

### Outline of 1999 Legislative Program

1. Deregulation
2. Fostering Local Equity
3. Proof of Ratio
4. Condo and Co-op Assessment Mandate Relief

The FLE bill was addressed by the group. The assessors feel that the added information is not necessary and shouldn't be added to the tax bill. There's too much on the bill now and adding more info will just confuse the taxpayer (may muddy things up). The assessors noted that the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights has just been added to the tax bill and feel the more info you add the more confusing the taxpayer will get.

Joe G. said the impetus to the FLE bill is to try to get a handle on the problem where over assessed and under valued assessment could be corrected. If passed, wording would need to be figured out. Re-examination of the segment rates on the tax bills need to take place.

Time did not permit for more discussion on the four bills. Dan C. advised the group to contact Joe or Paul if they had more questions regarding the bills. Paul noted that there is a huge volume of RPT bills this year (approx. 750) and it's very early in the stage.

## **L. Status of Action Items**

See attached chart for 1998.

## **M. Current Issues**

### Team Reports

7. Discussion/review of the Charter for RPTAC 953 Committee

Gary B. noted that a meeting to discuss 953 issues is scheduled for March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

2. Vince discussed SOL System (Topic #54). Jim Dunne prepared a memo and two charts, which Vince reviewed. Jim D. concluded:

1. System needs to be looked at more than just COD
2. Unbiased estimates (not always high or low)
3. Estimates are close

**N. Wrap-Up**

Next Meeting

June 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>

Location to be announced (Possibly Hampton Inn, Rt. 9 - Latham)

Agenda

- 1 RPS V-4 - Marketing Plan
2. Legislation - Q & A  
New STAR  
Other
3. \$5 & \$20 Tasks
4. Use of Webboard Reaction
5. Update of Procedures  
Status/Process (What ones are out there and what ones are coming)