



2002 Meeting Minutes Area 5

- December 16, 2002
- November 18, 2002

Area 5 Committee Meeting Minutes December 16, 2002

The TAP members for the Area Five Committee met via telephone on Monday, December 16, 2002.

Members in Attendance:

- Linda Bader
 - Dianne Glass
 - Maria Hermann
 - John Hollingsworth
 - Kenneth Logan
 - Tom Seuntjens
 - Paul Smathers
 - Nan Wilson
 - Lillian Woo
 - Frank Woods
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- Mary Ann Delzer, TAP Analyst
 - Sandy McQuin, TAP Program Manager
 - Lori Mings, Taxpayer Advocate Kansas City Campus

Guests:

- Ken Eichner

Roll call was taken and minutes from 11/18/2002 approved with corrections.

Introduction of William Woods

Woo welcomed Woods to the Area 5 TAP committee. Woods shared that he is retired from the Federal Bureau of Prisons, serving as a warden, with his specialty being the personnel area. As TAP Chair, Seuntjens welcomed Woods as well and informed him of the orientation conference call to held in January.

Midwest CAP Issues:

Woo shared that she had invited John Boehm, Chair of the former Midwest CAP, to join the call. Boehm was unavailable, but gave Woo a prioritized list of the issues he felt still needed to be worked.

Partner with SBSE to get the CAP message out-Discussion included concerns that TAP needs to partner with more than SBSE and self-employed taxpayers. Members should make an effort to contact their LTA and CPA societies or similar groups to get the word out about the program. Seuntjens



encouraged members to inquire about participating in the Stakeholder Relationship Management Local Councils (SRMLC). The SRMLC is one way to get insight into the IRS. Smathers and Bader both reported they had success contacting the media in their marketing efforts. Seuntjens recommended partnering with the media specialist to achieve this goal. Glass suggested members should contact their Local Taxpayer Advocate (LTA) for help getting involved with the SRMLC. Parking lot.

ACTION: Delzer to send Woods LTA information.

Innocent Spouse Claims Processing and Increased Education-After discussion, the committee decided to learn more about the issue and request a speaker for the February meeting in Kansas City.

ACTION: Delzer will arrange for a speaker to discuss the Innocent and Injured Spouse programs at the February meeting.

"Just in Time" Notification -- Woo shared that Boehm did not list this issue as a priority. Delzer shared that Area 4 was working the issue with a subcommittee formed.

Employer Identification Number (EIN) processing -- Logan shared that he saw a slippage in service about six months ago, with the backlog to receive an EIN of six weeks. McQuin shared that the issue came about from a large backlog problem that develops at the beginning of the calendar year when many business start and rush to obtain an EIN. Parking lot.

Toll Free -- Bader stated that toll free service is a problem, as she recently spent 20 minutes on hold in an attempt to get an answer to a problem. Seuntjens stated that this time of year it might be difficult to get through, as resources are re-aligned for the filing season. Committee will monitor and look at again in February or March.

ACTION: Delzer to send out phone list of the new toll free numbers for the upcoming filing season.

Walk-in Accessibility -- Seuntjens stated IRS needs to do a better job of letting people know when an office is moving. Smathers shared that in North Dakota the IRS has a mobile unit that travels to different locations. McQuin explained that the currently IRS is undergoing a major movement to close IRS offices. The plan is to re-direct traffic to the larger offices. The Midwest CAP pursued the idea of increasing the number of mobile units to take the service to people who otherwise had no access. McQuin suggested the committee review which sites will be open during the filing season in their states.

ACTION: Delzer will send out the list of Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TACs) that will be open for the upcoming filing season.

Estate and Gift -- Delzer gave a background of the issues as the CAP had worked it. Smathers stated the issue was in flux with many tax law changes. Parking lot.

Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Tax -- Smathers shared that many small organizations are aware that they even have a filing requirement. Delzer shared that Area 4 was working the issue with a subcommittee formed. Parking lot.

SIMPLE IRA plans -- Delzer shared that Area 4 was working the issue with a subcommittee formed. Parking lot.

New Issues

Bader has been contacted about a concern with student loan inequity. A young attorney with student



loans a few years old is unhappy that he is unable to consolidate his loans at the new lower rates of 3-4%.

ACTION: Bader will research the law in regard to the deductibility of student loan interest and will report in January.

Woo has been reading about the expansion of Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT). Glass suggested the committee reads the National Taxpayer Advocate's Report to Congress for good background information on the issues.

ACTION: Delzer will arrange for a speaker to discuss AMT at the February meeting.

Status of Template TAP Presentation

McQuin reported that on December 12, 2002, the Area representatives held a conference call to look at the various TAP presentations that have been completed. It was decided that parts from each would be made into one template, hopefully creating a streamlined presentation. This will then be brought to the Joint Committee for further discussion. The template will be Power Point and can be used as talking points, notes or as the actual show. Members will be able to pick and choose the slides they need according to the time allotted/kind of presentation they are doing. Members will also be able to personalize the presentation with the assistance of the staff. Smathers expressed his concern that too many graphics will make it difficult to e-mail/download. McQuin said the committee had the same concern and will limit the graphics.

Future meeting planning

Glass discussed the logistics of the Kansas City meeting. Lori Mings the Taxpayer Advocate at the Kansas City Campus will assist in the planning. A tour of the pipeline processing will be available, as well as the Directors of the compliance and call sites to answer questions. The Campus visit will be scheduled for Friday morning February 7, 2003.

ACTION: Delzer will secure a hotel for meeting space and Robb will contact members to make travel arrangements.

ACTION: Delzer will arrange for a press release to alert the public of the open meeting on Friday afternoon, February 7, 2003 and Saturday morning, February 8, 2003.

Public Comment

Ken Eichner asked the committee to consider taking on two issues related to the Offer In Compromise (OIC) program.

1. The program is poorly run. The intent of the program is to bring people back into the system paying taxes. To be eligible for an OIC, a taxpayer must be "current" with any estimated tax payments that are due. If a taxpayer cannot make estimated tax payments, then they cannot file an OIC. This actually creates a system where there is no incentive to pay the estimated taxes. It causes the majority of OIC to be filed in January/February before any estimates are due. So IRS has a backlog of cases at the beginning of each year and is over staffed at the end of each year as no one files OICs at the end of the year.
2. The other issue is that CPA fees are not adequately accounted for when the living expense formula is considered. Taxpayer needs the CPA to help them negotiate through the system, but the IRS formula does not allow for them adequately in determining what the taxpayer can pay on the OIC.

Eichner indicated that he has brought this to the attention of the IRS before with no results. He will send written materials to the committee for their further consideration.



ACTION: Delzer to email Eichner the street address to send his written materials.

Logan agreed that the OIC process is a good issue to be look at and should be moved up the priority list.

ACTION: Committee will discuss the OIC issues at the January meeting.

Next Scheduled meetings:

January 13, 2003, 2:30 p.m. CT

1. OIC program and process

February 7-8, 2003, Courtyard Overland Park, Overland Park, KS



Area 5 Committee Meeting Minutes November 18, 2002

The TAP members for the Area Five Committee met via telephone on Monday, November 18, 2002.

Members in Attendance:

- Linda Bader
- Denise Bigger
- Patrick Castleberry
- Laura De Marais
- Dianne Glass
- Maria Hermann
- John Hollingsworth
- Kenneth Logan
- Tom Seuntjens
- Jeana Warren
- Nan Wilson
- Lillian Woo

- TAP Analysts: Jim McGurn and Mary Ann Delzer
- TAP Program Manager: Sandy McQuin
- Local Taxpayer Advocate/Brooklyn, NY: Randy Swartz
- Guests: Ken Eichner, Steve Bankler

Roll call was taken and minutes from 10/7/2002 approved without discussion. The recommendation was made to send meeting materials 10 days before each meeting.

Old Business:

Finalize dates, times and locations of meetings

- The date and place for a face-to-face meeting was discussed. Kansas City was chosen with the thought of a Service Center visit. Glass will explore the possibility of a service center tour. The dates proposed are February 6-7, 2003. Thursday would be a travel day, full day Friday meeting, and fly home on Saturday.
- The time for monthly teleconferences was set for the second Monday, 2:30-4:30 C.T. December 9, 2002 will be the next meeting scheduled.

New Business:

Establish a quorum

After discussion, a quorum was set at 8 members.

Election of temporary vice-chair

Castleberry volunteered to take on the job with the consent of the members.

Questions arose about status of the representation from Texas and Nebraska. One member from Texas is still waiting FBI clearance. Recruitment is under way in Nebraska.



Tracking outreach

McGurn will track with the help of the Speakers Report. Members should complete the report and forward to McGurn/Woo. This information will be included in the monthly committee report sent to the Joint Committee. The combined monthly report will share information from across the country and be a great source of outreach ideas.

Outreach activities

- Bader met with her media specialist and was featured on KMOX and in two newspapers.
- Bigger had a press release prepared and has been contacted by a taxpayer.
- Castleberry had a press release prepared and has gotten some taxpayer calls. He also spoke at a practitioner breakfast and will be speaking at a CPA conference the first week in December. He was also invited to the Area 5 TAS meeting.
- De Marais met with her LTA with Seuntjens.
- Hollingsworth will be meeting with the LTA in Aberdeen and participate in the Stakeholder Relationship Management Local Council meeting. He has also talked to his media specialist.
- Logan was able to attend a Taxpayer Education and Communication (TEC) meeting and speak on a panel about burden reduction. He was able to also meet the LTA. He has also been in contact with several Hispanic groups about issues related to the MLI committee.
- Seuntjens shared that he has met with the folks in his local IRS office and finds that this is a great relationship to build.
- Warren stated that she has been in contact with her media specialist and has had coverage in a few papers. She has not yet had any feedback from the articles.
- Wilson attended the TEC meeting with Logan. She found that the IRS employees had little knowledge about TAP but were interested in more interaction.
- Woo shared that she was fortunate to have radio coverage about her TAP membership.

Further ideas for outreach were discussed. McGurn will re-send the LTA information to encourage contact with the LTAs. Seuntjens reiterated that meeting the LTA was a great idea as well as other local IRS management. He also stated that professional groups were a great place to do outreach. Swartz cautioned that members consult the DFO prior to travel. Hollingsworth reminded the members as well to use the staff for travel arrangements, as they have to make any flight arrangements with the common carrier.

Wilson inquired about the availability of business cards. Robb will send out a template for the cards. The cards will include the toll free number and the TAP web address.

Prioritization and handling of issues

McGurn and Delzer discussed how the former CAPs prioritized issues and explained the use of the database. Seuntjens requested the staff create a form to capture issues from the members to ensure they are recorded on the database. Bader requested issue information be received 10 days before the scheduled meeting to review. Bigger questioned how to handle individual problems of taxpayers. McQuin discussed the role of TAS. Seuntjens suggested looking at three to five issues that would make the most impact.

Remaining Midwest CAP issues

To be discussed on the next call.

Miscellaneous

Castleberry shared he has done an outline for a ten minute speech. His talk is composed of three ideas: history of CAP and TAP mission, examples of types of issues and successes, how to contact the



TAP. He will share his outline for others to use. Support staff will put together key messages to assist all members in their outreach efforts.

Public comment

Ken Eichner, a veteran tax practitioner from Houston, praised the members for doing a good job. He requested that the group set a standard time for the public to speak. He would also appreciate receiving in advance any materials to be discussed on the calls. He would also appreciate seeing the minutes. Eichner was advised that the minutes for all the TAP meetings are on the web site.

Steve Bankler is a practitioner from San Antonio. He would also appreciate seeing the minutes. He would also like the contact information for the people on the panel. He would like to call or drop them an email. He stated he would think public comment would be better at the beginning of the call rather than the end.

Next Scheduled meeting:

- December 9, 2002, 2:30 p.m. CT1.
Midwest CAP issues
- January 13, 2003, 2:30 p.m. CT