



## **2013 Meeting Minutes Joint Committee**

- November 27, 2013
  - October 23, 2013
  - September 25, 2013
  - August 28, 2013
  - August 6-7, 2013
  - July 24, 2013
  - June 26, 2013
  - May 22, 2013
  - April 24, 2013
  - March 27, 2013
  - February 27, 2013
  - January 23, 2013
  - December 13, 2012
- 

## **Joint Committee Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP) Meeting Minutes November 27, 2013**

### **Designated Federal Official**

- Sheila Andrews TAP Director

### **Members Present**

- Richard Bilancia National TAP Chair
- Colleen Hitchcock National TAP Vice-chair
- Bob Hayden Chair, Tax Forms and Publications Project Committee
- Seth Flanders Chair, Taxpayer Communications Project Committee
- Mark Marshalek Chair, Internal Communications Project Committee
- Kenneth Armstrong Chair, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee
- Edward Sykes Chair, Taxpayer Assistance Center Improvements Project Committee



### **Staff Present**

- |                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| • Louis Morizio   | Chief, TAP East        |
| • Susan Jimerson  | Chief, TAP West        |
| • Susan Gilbert   | Senior Program Analyst |
| • Steven Berkey   | Senior Program Analyst |
| • Linda Rivera    | Senior Program Analyst |
| • Russ Pool       | Database Analyst       |
| • Timothy Shepard | Program Analyst        |
| • Donna Powers    | Program Analyst        |
| • Ellen Smiley    | Program Analyst        |
| • Patricia Robb   | Program Analyst        |
| • Kevin A. Brown  | Management Assistant   |

### **Members of the Public**

None

### **Welcome, Review Agenda**

Richard Bilancia welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda.

### **Roll Call**

Quorum was met.

### **Review and Approve Minutes**

Consensus to approve the October 23, 2013, minutes with a minor change.

### **National Office Report**

Sheila Andrews announced that Susan Gilbert is retiring at the end of the year. She also thanked those who are ending their tours and let them know their service has been greatly appreciated. Andrews reported that the selection package has been approved by the Commissioner and will be sent to Treasury no later than Monday, December 2, 2013. A discussion followed regarding several committees who had outstanding issues remaining and how they will be credited for addressing them this year. That process is still being worked out and Andrews will have more information about it in January 2014.

### **TAP Chair Report**

Bilancia congratulated Kenneth Armstrong and Mike Swartz on their election as TAP Chair and Vice-chair respectively. Bilancia spoke about having a permanent TAP Director, getting a fairly productive start to the year, the scandal the IRS experienced, and the budget



challenges as being the most significant events for the last year. Above all else, Bilancia reported that TAP still was able to perform despite all of the significant challenges the Panel and the government have been faced with this year.

### **Project Committee Review**

- Tax Forms and Publications

Issue 26529, Where to File Return Requesting a Refund

Bob Hayden talked about the IRS options to file a return if no payment is made or if a payment is made. This proposal is recommending the IRS expand the heading to say if no payment is made or you are claiming a refund find the state you are in and send the return to that location. There were also some grammatical corrections made to the form suggested.

**Action:** Consensus to approve with a few grammatical corrections.

### **Regional Meetings/Training**

The orientation session scheduled for December 9, 2013, may be changed since the new member selections have not received final approval from Treasury. The decision will be made at the December 6, 2013 Regional Planning meeting. Berkey said the final approval from Treasury could take two weeks. Seth Flanders suggested the training subcommittee have a conference call the day of the approval to make a decision on the date to ensure we get the turnout that will be most beneficial for the Panel as a whole. Edward Sykes reported the course materials are already prepared and the instructors are ready to go. The TAP Member Handbooks cannot be sent to the new members until the selections are final. No date has been set for the orientation calls. Once the selections have been approved, the staff will immediately send information to the newly appointed members in preparation for the orientation meeting.

**Action:** Consensus to approve the week of February 24, 2014 for the Regional meetings.

### **Reconsideration Team**

Assignment completed. Reconsideration was done on whether we wanted a template or formal way to send up the rebuttals and do we want them to go through the JC. The team decided that we do not want them to go through JC, instead staying with each committee. A courtesy copy of the reviews should be sent to the JC even though the duty will remain within the committees. A template has been recommended for the reconsideration process. They were attached as pre-reads before the meeting. The second part this team faced was reviewing the, "Rules of Engagement." In an effort to try to cut down on the number of reconsiderations, the team found that many issues come about because of a disconnect that can occur between what the IRS wants us to do and what is actually done. A position paper about the rules of engagement has been brought forward for clarification by the IRS.



The IRS should identify what they want from TAP upfront so that the TAP knows what their role is in this process. If a focus group is the only thing needed or some sort of validation of a process should be made plain and clear. The JC reviewed both the template and the position paper and added suggestions that made it plain and easy to understand.

### **Mentoring**

Flanders reported that as soon as the mentoring guide is complete it will be sent to the JC and the annual training committee for review. The framework and structure will be provided by Linda Rivera. Rivera asked that a new chairperson be identified to replace Flanders as he is rotating off after this meeting.

### **2013 Annual Report**

Mark Marshalek is working with a target date of January 1, 2014, at the latest for submission of the committee chair reports. Marshalek stated that the committee reports are needed in order to complete this project. The goal is to have it written and ready for production by the end of March 2014.

### **Member Survey**

Morizio reported that in the last few weeks the 2012 survey has been used to start the new one. After review it will have some minor changes to some of the questions and some spelling suggestions. TAP leadership was added to the questions also to make the survey a bit more effective. Approval has been requested to send this survey out to the retiring members so that their feedback can be received before their tour officially ends.

**Action:** Consensus to send the survey to the retiring members.

### **Update: Internal Committees (Communications & Outreach)**

Colleen Hitchcock reported that Swartz is ready to assume his role as chairperson of the Outreach Committee next year. Hitchcock also expressed her appreciation for the staff and all of their efforts, as well as the members who have contributed greatly to the TAP's outreach efforts. Marshalek reported that they are working on the year-end newsletter and they hope to have it completed early next month. The retiring members from the JC have requested that they be included on the distribution list as it will be distributed after their appointments are completed.

### **Project Committee Activities**

Sykes had no updates for the Taxpayer Assistance Center Improvement Committee. Armstrong reported that the Toll-Free Committee is working on reconsideration of 9 issues and will send copies to the JC when ready. Bob Hayden, Tax Forms & Publications, has one issue being worked. Flanders said the Taxpayer Communications Committee is not



getting responses in a timely manner. He added he is hoping the 2014 Committee focus submitted to the IRS gets approved.

**Closing**

Bilancia thanked all of the members for all their hard work throughout this year. Happy Holiday greetings were extended to all.



**Joint Committee  
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
Meeting Minutes  
October 23, 2013**

**Designated Federal Official**

- Steve Berkey                      Acting TAP Director

**Members Present**

- Richard Bilancia                      National TAP Chair
- Colleen Hitchcock                      National TAP Vice-Chair
- Bob Hayden                      Chair, Tax Forms and Publications Project Committee
- Seth Flanders                      Chair, Taxpayer Communications Project Committee
- Kenneth Armstrong                      Chair, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee
- Edward Sykes                      Chair, Taxpayer Assistance Center Improvements Project Committee

**Members Absent**

- Annie Fishman                      Chair, Notices and Correspondence Project Committee
- Mark Marshalek                      Chair, Internal Communications Committee

**Staff Present**

- Louis Morizio                      TAP East Manager
- Susan Jimerson                      TAP West Manager
- Susan Gilbert                      Senior Program Analyst
- Steven Berkey                      Senior Program Analyst
- Linda Rivera                      Senior Program Analyst
- Russ Pool                      Database Analyst
- Timothy Shepard                      Program Analyst
- Donna Powers                      Program Analyst
- Ellen Smiley                      Program Analyst
- Patricia Robb                      Program Analyst
- Kevin A. Brown                      Management Assistant

**Members of the Public**

None



**Welcome, Review Agenda-** Richard Bilancia welcomed the participants to the call and indicated that this is almost the only official activity for TAP since the government partial shutdown.

**Roll Call-** Kevin Brown

**Review and Approve Minutes-** With minor corrections, consensus was given to approve the September minutes.

### **National Office Report**

No project committee meetings occurred as a result of the government shutdown causing a delay in a number of committee activities this month. This may cause a problem with issues being carried forward to next year based on the lost time the committees had, but every effort will be made to minimize this problem. The shutdown delayed the regional meeting package, the new member selection package, finalizing the focus of the project committees, getting the 2012 annual report finalized, the TAP *Meet the Candidates* call, and the election to follow. The date for the regional meeting was pushed back from December 2013 to as late as February 2014. A new date will be selected and announced later. Filing season will also be pushed back a week or two. The National Taxpayer Advocate will include the shutdown in her Annual Report to Congress as being a problem for taxpayers. The *Meet the Candidates* call will be held on October 24, 2013 at 2PM ET.

### **TAP Chair Report**

Bilancia reported that due to some part of the referrals possibly not getting an IRS response this year, the 2014 committees will almost undoubtedly be faced with dealing with late or no responses next year. This will probably be a significant issue for committees next year and they should be prepared for it when it comes up.

### **Training Pre-reads**

The member handbook chapters were reviewed and updated by Louis Morizio, Tim Shepard, and Marisa Knispel. The changes and corrections should reflect what has taken place over the last year and should also ensure that the handbook is free of spelling and grammatical errors. Morizio asked if there are any additional changes or corrections, please send them to him by email.

### **The role of the Alternate**

Several suggestions were given as a way to keep the alternates engaged, such as a monthly email that includes committee times to allow an opportunity for them to listen in on calls. The

alternates would be seen as members of the public and therefore would not have speaking privileges. They would not be treated as members nor should they be given any expectations that their status would change, but this would be a way to keep them involved in the process of operating TAP. Steve Berkey has also been including the alternates in the monthly TAP newsletter, which has been somewhat successful. Bilancia and Seth Flanders suggested including the alternates in both the quarterly All TAP conference calls and some of the virtual training sessions for TAP that don't incur any additional costs.

#### **TAP - Issue 25636 e-file Burden Reduction - Final Disposition**

Flanders requested consensus to close this item because the rebuttal was not written yet. It's almost too late to do so now and the committee set up to improve the rebuttal process should have much more of an impact than a response at this point.

**Action Item:** Consensus to drop Issue # 25636.

#### **Training Meeting Dates**

The first week in February was recommended, but consideration is being given to the filing season being pushed back. Edward Sykes opened the discussion about what would be the best time for the meeting with the largest amount of member participation.

**Action Item:** Consensus for the Training Subcommittee to make suggestions based on input from the newly elected Chair and Vice-chair and ultimately being decided by the JC by November 11, 2013.

The members were reminded that logistically speaking, the staff can only take suggestions and nothing final will be decided until all aspects of the planning process have been taken into consideration. This will ultimately determine the final decisions for the Regional meetings.

**Update: Internal Committees (Communications & Outreach)**- Colleen Hitchcock likes the changes that have been made to the newsletter and believes it is a very good source of information now.

#### **Project Committee Activities**

Sykes said the TAC Committee is working on three recommendations at the moment. Kenneth Armstrong said Toll-Free is working on writing rebuttals to IRS responses. Robert Hayden said Tax Forms & Publications has two or three issues that should be finalized before year-end. The hope is not to carry over too many issues into the next year. Flanders added the Taxpayer Communications Committee is still figuring out what they will work next year.





### **Closing**

Bilancia indicated that we should be prepared to have a long call next week considering how much we will have to cover next month. Berkey mentioned the mentoring program was stalled because of the government partial shutdown. Flanders will work with Linda Rivera on the mentoring program for next year. Bilancia closed the meeting.

**Next Meeting: November 27, 2013 2:00 p.m. ET**



**Joint Committee  
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
Meeting Minutes  
September 25, 2013**

**Designated Federal Official**

- Sheila Andrews TAP Director

**Members Present**

- Richard Bilancia National TAP Chair
- Colleen Hitchcock National TAP Vice-Chair
- Bob Hayden Chair, Tax Forms and Publications Project Committee
- Seth Flanders Chair, Taxpayer Communications Project Committee
- Annie Fishman Chair, Notices and Correspondence Project Committee
- Mark Marshalek Chair, Internal Communications Committee
- Kenneth Armstrong Chair, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee
- Edward Sykes Chair, Taxpayer Assistance Center Improvements Project Committee
- Stephanie Campbell Member, Taxpayer Communications Project Committee

**Staff Present**

- Louis Morizio TAP East Manager
- Susan Jimerson TAP West Manager
- Susan Gilbert Senior Program Analyst
- Steven Berkey Senior Program Analyst
- Russ Pool Database Analyst
- Marisa Knispel Program Analyst
- Timothy Shepard Program Analyst
- Donna Powers Program Analyst
- Ellen Smiley Program Analyst
- Patricia Robb Program Analyst
- Kevin A. Brown Management Assistant

**Members of the Public**

None

**Welcome, Review Agenda**

Richard Bilancia

**Roll Call**

Kevin Brown



### **Review and Approve Minutes**

Joint Committee (JC) Face-to-Face Meeting Minutes August 6-7, 2013 – Consensus to approve

JC Minutes August 28, 2013 – Consensus to approve

### **National Office Report**

The election process is proceeding as scheduled with a *meet the candidates* session at 2 p.m. for this coming Tuesday, November 1, 2013. The voting will go from October 1, 2013 through October 17, 2013. Preparations have to be made if there is a government shutdown. This will involve rescheduling events that are affected by this action. An email will be sent to all TAP members if there is in fact a government shutdown. With that said, there is no Federal Advisory Committee activities allowed if there is a government shutdown.

### **TAP Chair Report**

Bilancia and Mark Marshalek will be working to get the 2013 annual report completed in a timely fashion. This will be Bilancia's primary role while his tenure winds down as TAP Chairperson. Bilancia and Robert Hayden are starting to talk about finding work or participation opportunities for alternates under FACA guidelines.

### **Project Committee Review**

#### **Taxpayer Communications – 23725 resubmission**

Stephanie Campbell discussed the website chat issue and how it would benefit the taxpayers. There was a suggestion to add more information in the proposed solution and extending operating hours. Campbell also spoke about the increased budget that might be needed. There were three changes made: Improving a background sentence by making it two instead of a long run-on. The second change on page two was adding more information and clarifying the message of the paragraph for easier reading and understanding. The chat feature would prove that the IRS was using modern technology.

**Action Item: The changes have been approved by consensus.**

### **Rebuttal Team Update**

Susan Jimerson is leading the Upfront Processing team – what can we do to clarify the issues so as to not require rebuttals or reconsiderations? Louis Morizio is revising the response form that the IRS provides to us. Instructions will be added to the form to give the IRS an idea of what we are looking for and what we are expecting from them as a response to show they have reconsidered our recommendation. October is the projected date for a response by both teams.

### **Recruitment/Election Status**

The recruitment package hopefully will be pushed forward this week. We will be going



forward without one person has not supplied the required information. Seth Flanders stated that something special should be done to encourage members to vote during this year's election.

### **2013 Annual Report, Chair Report Template**

Marshalek will get started beginning in October with the proposed changes. The annual chair report will also allow the report to be completed sooner. Two pages is the maximum for these reports to maintain some control on the amount of information we will use for the report. The initial report is November 30, 2013. Marshalek is available to assist any of the members with these reports via phone or email.

### **Update: Internal Committees (Communications & Outreach)**

Marshalek will be sending the pending newsletter either today or tomorrow for the JC to review before sending it to the Panel. Colleen Hitchcock reported that outreach should still be a priority and ideas to access low-income taxpayers would be welcomed. Hitchcock also reminded the JC of the recent outreach stories to know that outreach is still being done. Edward Sykes mentioned the LTAs may be a good source for issues.

### **Project Committee Activities**

Sykes, TAC, says they are working on five issues and progress is being made slowly but surely. Annie Fishman, Notices and Correspondence, mentioned they are still working on three issues drafting referrals for improvement at this time. Kenneth Armstrong, Toll-Free, says they are working on rebuttals to IRS reconsiderations. They are dealing with this aggressively. They drafted two big referrals and sent them forward. Seth Flanders, Taxpayer Communications, is waiting on responses to queries from the IRS. Bob Hayden, Tax Forms & Pubs, said they have a couple of referrals that will be finished soon and presented to the JC. Publication No. 17 will be made into a focus group with 17 referrals for next year.

### **Closing**

Andrews reported that Panel members received suggestions at the tax forums about "resolution rooms" and how effective they used to be. Nina Olson, the NTA, pushed back because of TAPs feedback validating how important this service was to taxpayers. Bilancia suggested that members not be afraid to send ideas for improvement of services. Meeting was closed afterwards.

**Next Meeting: October 23, 2013 2 p.m. ET**



**Joint Committee  
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
Meeting Minutes  
August 28, 2013**

**Designated Federal Official**

- Sheila Andrews TAP Director

**Members Present**

- Richard Bilancia National TAP Chair
- Colleen Hitchcock National TAP Vice-Chair
- Bob Hayden Chair, Tax Forms and Publications Project Committee
- Seth Flanders Chair, Taxpayer Communications Project Committee
- Annie Fishman Chair, Notices and Correspondence Project Committee
- Mark Marshalek Chair, Internal Communications Committee
- Kenneth Armstrong Chair, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee
- Edward Sykes Chair, Taxpayer Assistance Center Improvements Project Committee
- Boris Mikhail Member, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee

**Staff Present**

- Louis Morizio TAP East Manager
- Susan Jimerson TAP West Manager
- Susan Gilbert Senior Program Analyst
- Steven Berkey Senior Program Analyst
- Linda Rivera Senior Program Analyst
- Russ Pool Database Analyst
- Marisa Knispel Program Analyst
- Timothy Shepard Program Analyst
- Donna Powers Program Analyst
- Ellen Smiley Program Analyst
- Patricia Robb Program Analyst
- Kevin A. Brown Management Assistant

**Members of the Public**

None

**Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda**

Richard Bilancia

**Roll Call**

Kevin Brown



## **Review and Approve Minutes**

No Minutes to approve

## **National Office Report**

Sheila Andrews and staff met to see if we were providing efficient and effective assistance and whether we were in compliance with the FACA guidelines and it seems that we are. There will be some small subtle changes that the staff will make, but these changes won't affect the Panel. Andrews is working with the IRS to prevent items that have been implemented already by the IRS being suggested by TAP in the future.

## **TAP Chair Report**

Rich Bilancia thanked the Panel for all they did to contribute to the Joint Committee (JC) face-to-face. Bilancia mentioned how effective the All TAP calls are and how helpful they have been. Bilancia conversed with Steve Berkey about updating the charter. Bilancia says Issue Collection instead of Outreach should be our primary focus. Bilancia feels this is the most important part of what we do.

## **Issue 26772 is revised and submitted again for review**

Boris Mikhail indicated that the issue was redrafted and grammatical and formatting changes were made to the document. This makes it easier to read and comprehend what we want done and address all of our issues with these suggestions. Seth Flanders feels the revised version makes the point much, much clearer and effective now. **Consensus was given to submit Issue 26772 to the IRS.**

## **Approval of 2014 Project Committee Proposals**

Edward Sykes updated their proposals based on Rena Girinakis' comments about technological needs. Kenneth Armstrong stated that the Toll-Free committee continues to have problems with long waits, call drops, poor routing, and misrouting calls on the toll free lines. There is also an issue with sending and retrieving the power of attorney (POA) form on the fax lines. Armstrong pointed out the need for an online or a dedicated toll-free phone line for the reporting of fraud that might better serve the taxpaying public who needs to share this information. Seth Flanders indicated that TP Communications tried to revamp our charter. Flanders said they discovered that going broad and covering a lot of bases is a much more successful approach. We want to have specific things to work on but we also want to be open to four other standing subcommittees dealing with email; the website; education; and the ability of taxpayers to provide feedback to the IRS, which will cover a lot of the communication challenges that still exist. Annie Fishman indicated that the Notices Committee would like to continue to make sure notices are clear and understandable, extraneous language removed. Fishman also wants redundancy of notices being issued after problems have been addressed to stop, which will minimize TP confusion. We would also like to continue reviewing the forms that the IRS wants us to focus on. Berkey and Bilancia discussed the "Issues Addressed" statement that needs to be removed or changed. **Consensus has been given by the Panel to approve the Project Committee**



**proposals for next year.** Steve will make small corrections and forward them to Sheila to send to Systemic Advocacy for approval to send to the IRS.

#### **Approval of Mentoring Program Guidelines**

Flanders is working with Linda Rivera to be sure that the program is set up to successfully prepare members for the Panel. Approval was requested to go out to seek volunteers for mentors in September to make the pairing in October a fast and quick process. The point is to put guidelines and structure into the program so that it is a success. **Consensus approved for the mentoring program guidelines.**

#### **Approval of 2014 Chair and Vice-Chair Election Process**

Hayden asked who would make the questions that could be proposed to all of the candidates? Questions should be sent to all candidates instead of only one. Bilancia says the JC should come up with questions if the Panel does not. This subject will be included in the email that goes out for the candidate self-nomination process before the election. We will leave it up to the Panel members to determine if questions will be asked of the candidates.

#### **Handling Responses from IRS and Rebuttals**

Rebuttal process should be reviewed especially the responses: considered and resolved prior to elevation. Should the rebuttal process be formalized? Should it be the JC or include the entire Panel? Specific invites will be presented to convene members for this project.

#### **Update: Internal Committees (Communications & Outreach)**

Mark Marshalek said last year's annual report is currently with IRS Publishing for final formatting. Berkey stated that 36 members voted to adopt the bylaws. Colleen Hitchcock-some changes are being looked at to improve the feedback and shifting the focus to issue gathering instead of just outreach.

#### **Project Committee Activities**

Sykes-5 referrals being worked currently with research and information gathering from the IRS being our biggest problems. The Affordable Care Act should bring about several issues next year and we should be prepared to deal with them. Flanders – Nothing new. Armstrong – Nothing new. Hayden – one issue rejected and after being rebutted it was approved by the IRS. It was about payments made after the fourth quarter payment but before complete settlement of the payment and how to properly report this activity.

#### **Closing**

Andrews and Bilancia thanked everyone for all of their efforts and formally ended the call.

**Next Meeting: September 25, 2013 2 p.m. ET**



**Joint Committee  
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
Face-to-Face Meeting Minutes  
Milwaukee, WI  
August 6-7, 2013**

**Designated Federal Officer**

- Andrews, Sheila, TAP Director, Indianapolis, IN

**Committee Members Present**

- |                           |                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Bilancia, Rich (phone), | TAP Chair                          |
| • Hitchcock, Colleen      | TAP Vice-chair                     |
| • Armstrong, Ken          | Chair, Toll free                   |
| • Fishman, Annie          | Chair, Notices and Correspondence  |
| • Flanders, Seth,         | Chair, Taxpayer Communications     |
| • Hayden, Robert          | Chair, Tax Forms and Publications  |
| • Marshalek, Mark         | Chair, Internal Communications     |
| • Sykes, Edward           | Chair, Taxpayer Assistance Centers |

**Executive Director Systemic Advocacy**

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| • Girinakis, Rena | Indianapolis, IN |
|-------------------|------------------|

**TAP Staff**

- |                          |                |                        |
|--------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| • Jimerson, Susan        | Seattle, WA    | Chief, TAP West        |
| • Morizio, Louis         | Brooklyn, NY   | Chief, TAP East        |
| • Berkey, Steve          | Plantation, FL | Senior Program Analyst |
| • Gilbert, Susan (phone) | Des Moines, IA | Senior Program Analyst |
| • Rivera, Linda (phone)  | Brooklyn, NY   | Senior Program Analyst |
| • Robb, Patti            | Milwaukee, WI  | Program Analyst        |
| • Smiley, Ellen          | Milwaukee, WI  | Program Analyst        |
| • Pool, Russ             | Seattle, WA    | Program Analyst        |

**Guests (phone)**

- |                           |                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Webster, Walter (phone) | Taxpayer Communications Committee |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|

**Tuesday, August 6, 2013**

**Welcome/Review Agenda**

Colleen Hitchcock announced she will chair this face-to-face meeting as Rich Bilancia is ill and unable to talk. He will be present during the meeting by telephone and if he has comments, he will commute through Sheila Andrews via text. Following is his welcome letter:





Welcome all to the 2013 annual Joint Committee face-to-face meeting. I am deeply sorry that I am unable to attend this two-day meeting. While I cannot be in physical attendance with you at our meeting, I will be listening in via conference call to the entire meeting. Since my talking causes coughing/whooping fits, I plan to communicate my thoughts electronically with Sheila Andrews who will then read them to you when appropriate. It's not ideal, but hopefully we can make it work.

Again, Welcome to the 2013 annual Joint Committee face-to-face meeting. By now you've had a chance to review the agenda. There is much to be accomplished during the next two days. I do not believe that it can be said too often, so let me say it again: thank you very much for volunteering your leadership for the very important work of the TAP.

While we've worked together over conference call lines for 8 months, many of you will be meeting each other face-to-face for the very first time. It has always been my belief that the best way to get to know others is in such situations. It's important for all of us to learn how we can best work together. Don't let this time be wasted. Spend time getting to know each other and renew a focus of cooperation for your remaining time with the TAP.

As we volunteers and the TAP staff struggle to complete our mission with what seems to be ever-increasing fiscal restraint, we need to continue to experiment with changing processes and practices. While I'd like to think otherwise, there is no returning to the practices of a few years ago. The structure and procedures we follow have evolved over the last couple of years and that evolution must continue. We must figure out how to do more with less. We need to continue work, learn and adapt together to make sure the TAP remains successful. More importantly, we need to pass along that spirit, knowledge and attitude to the new volunteers following behind us.

You all bring different skills, interests and experiences – it is that diversity that makes us who we are. I have observed repeatedly that this diversity is one of the strengths of the TAP. We are each equal to each other. We leaders must continue to facilitate, but not control and/or dictate. Our job is to reach “consensus” on all that we ultimately recommend. Use your individual skills to accomplish the work we do. Continue bringing your individual experiences to make us all better and foster your committee members to do likewise. Always encourage others to help with the leading.

This past year the IRS has been in the news way too much. I suspect that certain segments of the media will ensure that remains the case for some period of time. This attention on the IRS, albeit negative, presents the TAP with a huge and unique opportunity to spread the word on who we are and what we can do for taxpayers. Please keep this opportunity in mind as you conduct your TAP



obligations and use this opportunity to motivate each member of your respective committees.

Additionally, the 2012 TAP annual report is just about done and ready for publication and distribution. When you get your copy of this document don't just consider it something to "file away." Rather, be creative in finding ways to use it as a tool for your outreach activities as well as those of your fellow committee members.

You've already had the opportunity to meet our new TAP Director, Sheila Andrews, face-to-face. I'm jealous – I have not. Sheila and I have developed a solid working relationship over the phone and over e-mail over the last several months. Having a permanent TAP Director for the first time in almost two years will facilitate all that the TAP needs to accomplish. I'm convinced that Sheila will only make that even better. You'll also get to spend time with Sheila's boss, Rena Girinakis, the Executive Director Systemic Advocacy. Rena reports to Nina Olsen, the Taxpayer Advocate. Let there be no doubt, Nina, Rena Sheila and the entire TAP staff want us to be successful. While we JC members are the volunteer leaders of the TAP and this is our mission and work, the TAP staff is here to help us. They are a great team that always works hard for us. Together we can and will achieve a lot beginning this week and into the future!

There is a lot of work for all of us to accomplish today and tomorrow. Before arriving, you should have already begun working on parking lot issues. There will be several referrals to review and approve. There is also the approval of the bylaws and the follow-on planning for ratification by the entire TAP membership. There is also the planning for next year which includes working on the 2014 project proposals, training for the annual regional meetings in December as well as the getting ready for the annual TAP member survey. Since there is so much to do, let's get started.

If at any time during the meeting should you have questions for me, voice them. I am listening and will respond to Sheila who will relay my answer to you. After the meeting, please reach out at any time by e-mail. I will always respond. Thank you and again welcome to the 2013 TAP JC face-to-face meeting.

Rich Bilancia  
August 6, 2013



## **Review and Approve July 24, 2013, Minutes**

The July minutes were approved by consensus as submitted.

## **National Office Report**

Andrews recently met with the Small Business/Self Employed (SBSE) and Wage and Investment (W&I) Liaisons. They plan to reinstitute their quarterly meetings. This is definitely a step in the right direction.

The staff and members are proceeding with plans for the regional training meeting as if we will have the money in the budget. Who knows what the next year/budget will bring.

## **Project Committee Review**

### **Annie Fishman, Notices and Correspondence**

Issue 26553, IA Letter 2273C – **consensus to elevate to IRS as submitted.**

Issue 26554, IA Letter 3217C – **consensus to elevate to IRS as submitted.**

Issue 26555, IA Letter 4458C – **consensus to elevate to IRS as submitted.** These recommendations are very similar but each one addresses a different letter.

### **Ed Sykes, Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC)**

The TAC is currently working on five issues. The recommendations are 50 to 75 percent completed.

### **Robert Hayden, Tax Forms and Publications**

Issue 24745, Revise Form 1041, *U.S. Income Tax Return for Estates and Trusts* – the IRS is already looking at implementing what we proposed in this recommendation. This may just be the impetus that gets it done. **Consensus to elevate to IRS as submitted** with slight formatting changes.

Issue 27624, Review Publication 555, *Community Property* – Hayden said this is a tough one and applauded the authors. This applies to all the community property states that recognize same sex marriages. This is a slightly different format than a regular referral because it is easier for the IRS to follow. The recommendation is to change some of the verbiage in the Form as of June 2013. **Consensus to elevate to IRS as submitted** as submitted with minor changes to font and margins.

Issue 27935, Revised 2012 Form 12153, *Request for a Collection Due Process or Equivalent Hearing* - there was a line error on the instructions. **Consensus to elevate to IRS with some minor grammatical and spelling changes.**

(Steve Berkey noted that some of the recommendation titles say Joint Committee Project Referral Form and some say Taxpayer Advocacy Panel Project Referral Form. All the referrals need to be consistent and be standardized. They should all say



Taxpayer Advocacy Panel Project Referral Form. The footer will be removed as well. The new template will be sent to all analysts for subsequent use.

### **Ken Armstrong, Toll Free**

The purpose of these referrals is to alleviate the long wait times on the IRS toll free line.

Issue 26772, Transcript Requests for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – most taxpayers aren't aware you don't have to request a transcript to apply for student aid. It was pointed out the project statement is not reflective of the referral.

**Consensus to return to the Committee for more work.**

Issue 26391, Employees and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Directing to IRS.gov – we attempted to recommend all notices and queries to the IRS should be directing taxpayers to the IRS.gov website as much as possible instead of instructing taxpayer to wait on the line to talk to an IRS representative. We are making four different recommendations as to how to accomplish that goal. Many people are frustrated with the wait time on the toll free line and this might be a solution. Seth Flanders and Mark Marshalek agreed when you call the toll free line you have probably already tried the website and if you hear a prompt on the phone, it might tend to make you angrier. Most people know the Internet and that the information is out there. Annie Fishman said the average taxpayer will not think to check the IRS website. Ken Armstrong said the more you can encourage taxpayers to go to the website, the more it will free up the telephone assistants. The assistants should tell the taxpayers to use the search engine. **Consensus to send the issue back for formatting and grammar then elevate to the IRS. Louis Morizio captured the information for his analyst to make the changes.**

Armstrong added he thinks IRS.gov is wonderful. It has come a long way and information is accessible, including prior years. He added the publications are all on the IRS website as well.

### **Seth Flanders, Taxpayer Communications**

Issue 26381 – HTML format – **Consensus to elevate to IRS with minor changes.**

Issue 23725 – IRS Website Chat – the IRS needs to make the chat feature more prominent. **Consensus to send the issue back for some changes.**

Issue 26417 – Increase use of the Online Payment Agreement (OPA) – Walter Webster presented this recommendation. Marshalek recommended the background be shortened but Webster said they wanted to show the IRS that they really did their homework and this was well thought out. **Consensus to elevate to the IRS.**

Issue 26418 – Identity Theft of Business Taxpayers – This is actually a non-recommendation recommendation and is a good example of where the IRS needs to give us clear direction and parameters. Add a sentence to proposed solution –



“therefore, the TAP will recommend this issue be dropped.” **Consensus to elevate to IRS with the addition to the proposed solution.**

Berkey said there is a measure of recommendations accepted or rejected for closed issues. We will need to work out some wording so these issues are captured and will count in the next annual report.

### **Wisconsin LTA – Welcome, TAS Information**

Local Taxpayer Advocate Barbara Johnson introduced herself and talked a little about the Milwaukee office. She has nine employees and introduced one of her Program Analysts, Joan Corrao. Johnson said she issued eight Taxpayer Assistance Orders this year according to Code Section 7811. They are issued when TAS needs to stop the IRS from taking a certain step that would cause a taxpayer to suffer a significant hardship. All eight of the TAOs were successful. One example was a taxpayer filed an Offer in Compromise (OIC). He filed an innocent spouse claim that was rejected by the IRS. He got an excellent attorney who filed a doubt to liability. The Examination Organization held this case for over four years. If the IRS has not rejected an OIC within two years, it must be accepted. Johnson issued a TAO which went to National Taxpayer Advocate Nina Olson. As a result, the IRS finally accepted this taxpayer's OIC. TAS always tries to work together with the IRS functions, but we will fight them if necessary.

**ACTION: Send copy of information provided in the TAS folders to Susan Gilbert and Rich Bilancia.**

Identity theft (ID) cases rose 178 percent last year. Our rate in Milwaukee rose 87 percent. ID theft is a huge problem right now. This will be included as a most serious problem (MSP) in the 2014 National Taxpayer Advocate Annual Report to Congress. Johnson said she met with Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson to discuss ID theft. Florida actually has the highest number of ID theft cases and is very focused on helping the victims.

The top issues TAS is seeing is ID Theft, First Time Homebuyers Credit (FTHBC), Adoption Credit, Return Preparer Fraud – another one of the MSPs for 2014 – Direct Deposit, Back Door Preparers (fraudulent), and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC was a big one with grandparents claiming the kids; parents claiming the kids; aunts claiming the kids, etc.

Andrews noted that Armstrong is about 200 miles away from his LTA and asked for suggestions on working long distance? Johnson suggested holding a monthly conference call to work on relationship building. The LTA can set up conference calls with congressional representatives. Their travel funds are very limited just like the TAP travel funds. Johnson talks about TAP, TAS, LITCs, and SPEC when she does outreach.

### **Project Committee Focus for 2014**

Steve Berkey said this is the introduction for reviewing the parking lot issues. The Joint Committee currently has 158 issues already screened and we need to decide what should be done now. The list is divided and you will split into two groups to review each issue and then categorize them. After completing your review and making recommendations, group by category to work in project committees next year.

TAP is going to keep the five standing committees and we need to identify what fits with them. Andrews had several discussions with Girinakis, mainly about the toll-free project committee and they may expand it to include all toll free lines. Keep the five but tweak their focus to make them better.

Our goal will be to get the five project proposals completed by the end of the day; and hopefully we can finalize them during August 28 Joint Committee call later this month. Andrews and Girinakis will review and work with the IRS to come back with what they would like us to work. We already have the existing committees so we can set the tone each year for the direction

### **Executive Director Systemic Advocacy Rena Girinakis**

Girinakis asked the Chairs what they felt was the most important issues.

Ken Armstrong – the toll free line. There is a long wait time, wrong answers, and sometimes you get a nasty and unknowledgeable customer service representative. He thinks redirecting taxpayers to the IRS.gov website is a great idea. The long wait time tends to make the taxpayers angry. According to statistics, the wait time has actually increased and the percentage of calls answered has gone down. Frequently they don't end up helping you in the end because of a lack of training. When people get the wrong answers or don't get the answer they want, they tend call back and call back.

Ed Sykes – asked what kind of tools do the assistants have? Are they adequate? Girinakis said they have a probe and response guide, but she is not a fan. They are presented with a situation and it walks them through several steps. Lack of training is the key. Do they have the taxpayer information in from of them? Are they utilizing E-Fax?

Mark Marshalek added some of the things talked about today are coming, but it's not coming fast. Industry can do so much more than the IRS e-signature; e-fax; the outside world is using it now. Why is the IRS so slow to implement them? Click to chat; those types of things are more customer service oriented. People inherently want to do a good job. Girinakis added the IRS budget has been cut and they lost approximately twelve thousand employees. Information Technology (IT) cannot retain the contracts to fix their existing printers and we now use shared printers. They are disabling Disclosure Authorization (DA) and Electronic Account Resolution (EAR) from e-services. Where are we going to put our resources? We need to focus our resources. We need to get our priorities in order.





We are moving to using shared printers and we recently ended e-services. It's a matter of where are we going to put our resources. Do we want to make sure you can see your Form 1040, *U.S. Individual Income Tax Return*, online or should the e-services be brought back? We are behind in processing about 30,000 cases in the direct debit installment agreement process. They need to change procedures. Quit demanding they use direct debit installment agreement when we cannot process them. Innocent spouse returns – not enough time to process. Now we are given Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) to process. ID theft – we stopped 300,000 returns with invalid Employer Identification Numbers. This is the real picture of the IRS. The employees are committed to doing a good job but we don't have the resources. The budget will have big impact as to what we do next year. We need to look at priorities. How do we move there with limited resources? The IRS is unable to implement systems to meet our needs. Although they are good at implementing failed systems. Same as the public sector - technology drives process improvement. And IT does not know how to plan.

We have to change policies of the IT department. IRS employees are being targeted by the media now and they are afraid. Their names are being put out there. Liens and levies have gone down since all this tax exempt information happened. The real failure is management not getting involved. There is no proper oversight and a lack of knowledge of processes. The conference in Anaheim; the video was ridiculous, but the dancing and making people laugh was not bad. That conference happened shortly after a man flew his plane into the Austin office and killed an IRS employee. That was managers trying to make their employees feel better. Did we goof up? Yes. But now they are cutting our budget.

We need to train our employees. How do I train 100 employees on a computer system over the phone? Something has to change. How do we fix this? The Oversight Committee talked to Principal Deputy Commissioner Daniel Werfel and National Taxpayer Advocate Nina Olson about ID theft and it turned ugly. It was immediately turned into the exempt organization issue. Werfel has made significant changes. We need money, we need training, and we cannot do without money. We cannot hire and replace people going out the door. We are just moving our employees from one crisis to another.

We've got to look at what is going on upfront. Why are so many letters being generated when there isn't enough staff to support them? We need to change the guidelines. We need to say until we get caught up with the backlog, taxpayers have the option of opting out of direct deposit installment agreements.

Colleen Hitchcock said ID theft is a fire right now. Girinakis responded there are a lot of people working on those cases and those are resources that could be doing other things. These fires have to be put out. But you pull resources from essential jobs to put them out.

The IRS did not move with what is happening in the world. The systems should be able to identify discrepancies between years when filing. People are stealing social security



numbers (SSN) of people in hospices and deceased children and then using them to file false returns. We are losing billions to ID theft and holding refunds for legitimate taxpayers. We are encouraging taxpayers to use the Equifax system. We are prosecuting people for ID theft. But a big problem is resources. Dishonest taxpayers are very much aware of what the threshold is for filing a return before it triggers a red flag.

If 1,000 returns are being filed from a post office box, we stop them. Unfortunately if they use a tribal address, we stop those too and should not.

Rich Bilancia – more important to IT is having the employees willing to try new systems and procedures.

Girinakis agreed we need to improve our systems and get rid of everyone who is unwilling to change.

Andrews said IRS employees are empowered to do things but she cannot give her employees permission to do what they need to do because of budget. The IRS currently has eighty attorneys going through thousands and thousands of documents so they can be copied for this Exempt Organization issue. They all have to be sanitized. We also had to supply all of our information about all of our conferences from the past five years. Let's go forward, not backward.

Annie Fishman said the notices system needs to be completely overhauled. The IRS needs to get to the point and not bury the information. Why can't the IRS interact like the credit card companies?

If a notice improperly drives a taxpayer to call to the toll free line – it's wrong. Are we asking for the right information? Girinakis was audited last year and was asked for lots of information that was impossible to get. It was an improper audit notice.

Ester Beale, Technical Liaison Examination, put together an info graphic about the audit process. It's very good! It tells the taxpayers exactly what to do next.

Seth Flanders said the Taxpayer Communications Project Committee is working to figure out ways for IRS to better communicate with taxpayers. We spend most of our time on this, but we are also the catchall. Electronics make it easier to get information, but it's like bailing the ocean with a thimble. DOMA is ruled by courts; the Form 1040X, *Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return*, is filed but there is no one to process them, etc. Yet there is no information out there telling the taxpayer what the problem is. The IRS needs to inform people – just like they should with the direct deposit installment agreement. Our Committee would love to get into those processes and find out where we can add value. We need to narrow the scope. Why do we have to go through all the layers? The steps should be: problem; definition; focus.

Girinakis agreed the IRS needs to communicate upfront with taxpayers. Why is the information hidden? Why does it take two or three months to process a direct deposit? What is the problem?





Bob Hayden pointed out the presentation today is one dynamic reason TAP needs to have the annual meeting each year. Having the Commissioner speak, Nina Olson speak, and Girinakis speak just pumps everyone up. I wish all 71 of us could hear that same information. Your passion drives our passion.

He added he is a practitioner and spends time with clients to make them see the IRS is actually one of the good guys. The IRS is a kinder gentler organization. When the IRS has questions, you just need to answer them. If you are trying to pull something on them, forget it. He will end up doing some damage control this year though. All in all, the IRS image outside of the controversy right now is pretty good.

Girinakis said look at taxpayer rights. My office reviews every Internal Revenue Manual (IRM) and all instructions. Collection is trying to take shortcuts because it's too much to follow the laws and they don't want their staff to take on more things. IRS is required to have a local number in the phone book and someone is supposed to answer it. The Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) is the only one that has one listed. None of the other Organizations in the IRS have one listed. If you do happen to find a local number, does someone answer or do you get a message to call the toll free line? This is a critical issue. If I am disabled or have a disability I should be able to call the local office and get service. We need to communicate with the media and local offices when the Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC) is going to be closed. We need to let taxpayers know what is going on. They should not let the people stand in line when they know they cannot service them

Marshalek added the IRS website is great. It has come a long way. The IRS needs a section that articulates the IRS strategy. It would be very helpful to know what is on the IRS roadmap.

Girinakis said if the IRS was left to do what they were supposed to do, collect taxes, things would be fine. But we are given these other programs to implement; Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); Healthcare; Adoption Credit; First Time Homebuyers Credit (FTHBC); and they are social programs. We are just giving money out – and ripe for fraud.

Meeting Adjourned for the day.

**Wednesday, August 7, 2013**

### **Outreach Report / Discussion**

Colleen Hitchcock encouraged the chairs to continue to encourage their committee members to do outreach. She thanked the vice-chairs for their input and willingness to help.

She thanked Louis Morizio and Marianne Dominguez for modifying and simplifying the Outreach Time Reporting sheets. Some members indicated they like the older reporting



sheet a little better and will continue to use it. We need to keep encouraging the members to turn them in. It does appear like more members are turning them in now.

Annie Fishman said we send outreach reminders, but maybe we need to take the next step and start contacting the members who don't turn in their sheets.

Seth Flanders said at some point, you have to start contacting them. Hitchcock suggested congratulating and acknowledging the members for their outreach and ask members if they have anything special coming up.

Hitchcock added we will be posting outreach information to TAPSpace and will be pushing outreach comments through Facebook. The Outreach Toolkit has been modified and the information is also available on TAPSpace. It includes directions on how to go on the TAP Facebook page and add information. We are updating information and keeping things current. The Internal Communications Committee is updating the pocket guide as well. It's a little like the one minute TAP dance. There are also lots of Speak Up trifolds and self-mailers available. Utilize them as much as possible.

### **Election Process**

The nomination and election process sheet used last year was reviewed. Steve Berkey will update it with new dates for this year. Do we need to update anything else?

It would be like a controlled campaign this year. A list of questions will be sent out for each candidate to answer. They will be posted for all members to read – a debate without the debate as everyone would answer the same questions. We would still have campaign call as well.

Flanders said the candidates will still write a campaign statement and it would be posted to TAPSpace.

It's still a little difficult because you don't know who people are.

### **Election Committee**

**Steve Berkey, Bob Hayden, Mark Marshalek**

Last year 48 out of 74 members voted. We need to set some parameters for candidates as far as contacting other members. Candidates should not contact other members by email or telephone.

The Election Committee will come up with a list of questions and parameters for a statement. Leadership is critical so please encourage members to run if you think they are qualified.

The Chairs have to look at their own committee members and encourage them. The chairs are vital and good leadership is essential.



The current panel will elect the TAP Chair and Vice-chair. The new members will vote for their own committee chairs at their regional meetings.

### **2012 Annual Report Update**

Marshalek said the 2012 TAP Annual Report is basically complete for TAP's part. It still needs to go through the Communication and Liaison (C&L) review. We just got the four final versions of the cover this morning. Berkey shared them and asked for feedback for the final selection. Part of the delay in finalizing the report is waiting for IRS responses to elevated recommendations.

Marshalek identified that there is some redundancy in the report and areas that should be eliminated. He and Berkey will review this year's report to review for redundancy. A template will be sent to all the current chairs and they will be asked to submit their reports before the end of the year. The whole shell of the report should be done by December, we can plug the numbers in and get it published. The pictures can be selected before the end of the year as they should already be posted to TAPSpace by each committee.

Bilancia will select the team to start putting the report together.

### **2012 Survey Summary/Regional Meeting Planning**

Ed Sykes said we know the dates of the Regional Meeting and it will be the first week of December. He asked about the funding for the meetings. Andrews said we are proceeding as if we have the funding, but it all depends on which version of the Senate appropriations gets passed. Girinakis is fairly confident we will have the meeting as things stand right now.

The bylaws state the TAP will meet on an annually basis. It would be best if it's face-to-face but it can be done virtually as well. We will have to keep within the budget. The downside of not having an all TAP meeting in Washington, DC, is we will miss the high level speakers and their messages. It would be nice if we could get a fifteen or twenty minute video or live call from them addressing TAP.

These speakers really infuse and enthuse the members. If Nina Olson and Girinakis could do a video or we could see them, it would also give everyone energy. We need to have a flexible training schedule so if a last minute opportunity pops up, we can plug it in. If it cannot be live, a taped presentation would be great as well.

The Planning Committee will be completing an agenda right away as it is required in the request for funding. A cost comparison will need to be done to identify locations and logistics. We must meet in an IRS facility too.

The selection list for new members is pending initial approval from Nina Olson. If we can get final approval from Treasury by October 15, we are in great shape.

TAP will have the same five project committees as last year. We are hoping to have an equal number of members on each committee. Our international member is from



Canada, and they may not be flying in for the meetings due to the budget. Once we get the focus for each project nailed down, that may drive the size of the committees. We try to put people on the committee they want to work on as much as possible.

Hayden said we need diversity from across the U.S. You get a better perspective of the full picture.

- There will be some virtual training on information in the TAP Member Handbook before the regional meetings.

Virtual training:

- FACA
- TAPSpace
- Travel
- Overview of Outreach
- Outreach time reporting
- Orientation

Workshops:

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| • TAP Overview          | 2 hours  |
| • Process Flow          | 1 ½ hours  |
| • Speaker panel         | 1 hours  |
| • Outreach              | 1 ¼ hours – include examples –<br>role play, interactive |
| • Working with your LTA | 45 minutes   |

The Chairs will need more training than they got last year. Hands-on training and a transfer of information would accomplish so much more. Generally a new member does not express interest in becoming a chair or vice-chair. The chairs should share their knowledge with members who express interest in their replacement. Mentoring, mentoring, mentoring.

The plan is to have five meetings; two the first part of the week and three the last part of the week.

### **Workshops**

TAP Overview – 2 hours – some of this will be done virtually before the face-to-face



Process Flow – 1 ½ hours – need to focus on the what and the why – will try to work a very simple issue to walk people through the flow. We need to know what the IRS does once they get a recommendation from TAP. Russ Pool will put together a process flow – the life of an issue.

Speaker Panel – 1 hour – Hayden thinks this could easily be stretched to 3 hours if necessary. What they have to impart is important to us. Flanders said it depends on the purpose of the meeting. If it's taped, it's a moot point. The TAP Chair has to be a ruthless timekeeper because some members will dominate if you let them. We need speakers to tell TAP how the affordable care act will affect the IRS. We can add more time if we need to: Speakers – Girinakis, Olson, Andrews, and the Commissioner?

Outreach – 1 ¼ hours – include examples, role play, interactive – it's good to have the members involved with outreach doing role plays. Have virtual outreach and then have everyone do role play.

Working with your LTA – 45 minutes

In addition to sending the member handbook in advance, we could also send the new members a copy of the current TAP annual report. Marshalek would also like to present social networking information during the TAPSpace presentation (it is already done and in the handbook). Flanders cautioned giving too much information. Berkey suggested we send out the TAS Tax Toolkit as well. Hitchcock said this should be brought up to current members on the next committee call. Weber-Shandwick also sends out Tweets and posts things to Tumblr. They actually posted a message about this meeting last week.

Sykes asked if we could improve on the TAPSpace presentation. The TAPSpace system sends an invitation to the new members as directed by Pool. Berkey said this should be presented by each committee analyst because they all do things just a little bit differently.

It would be great to get three great LTAs to make presentations as well. We need to encourage the members to meet or get in contact with their LTAs. Andrews noted the LTAs are used to working in a virtual world so we need to help the members that don't live in close proximity to their LTA. We need to ensure the LTA understands working with TAP is in their expectations. Some of the LTAs are new and some are from the outside so we need to work with them.

Sykes asked what are the protocols are for members to contact subject matter experts. Andrews responded we don't want to damage our relationship with the IRS and have to go through channels. TAP is pushing back in some areas, however, we have to tread lightly as the IRS has limited resources available and we have to respect that. We had a call a few weeks ago because TAP has been sending requests and not getting what we need. They committed to getting back to TAP within 15 days.



TAP should not be submitting their recommendations to the IRS only to get a response that it has already been implemented. We are working through some things right now and the staff has been very vocal about some of these issues.

Communications between TAP and a subject matter expert is handled by the staff. It is important to know what this protocol is. Flanders suggested putting this as a slide in the process flow presentation.

Flanders said it is incumbent upon us to be clear and concise when we submit our issue recommendations to the IRS.

We will need quite a few instructors for the orientation and workshops. Who do we want to get to instruct some of these classes? Last year we drafted the project committee chairs and vice-chairs. We asked them if they could recommend a few people from their respective committees. The TAP vice-chair should probably lead the outreach presentation. A lot of the presentations need to be done with both a TAP member and an analyst or manager. Some portions are appropriate for the staff to present.

Mentoring – is the process working? What are some of the things we are doing that is working? Marshalek said he is in contact with his mentee at least once a month either by email or telephone. Flanders suggested setting up a lunch date at the regional to get to know each other. The Taxpayer Communications Committee also has mentoring as an agenda item for a few months after the regional meeting to see how things are going. We need to get feedback from the mentees, not the mentors. There is also a question in the annual survey about the effectiveness of the mentorship program. It is addressed in the handbook.

Flanders volunteered to help write up procedures and will present them during the Joint Committee meeting at the end of the month.

The meetings went better for the committees who met the second half of the week. Having the subject matter expert attend the meeting is important. We got much more done when they were there as opposed to when they attended via conference call.

### **Bylaws**

The Bylaws are for the membership so we need Joint Committee approval to present them to the members. Approval only requires a majority of the votes cast – not consensus. We are not asking for comments, just a yes or no. The initial draft was developed in summer of 2011. The draft went through TAS Counsel and IRS Counsel for review and approval and we just got it back.

Armstrong said they are very well written and he agrees with them 100 percent. The Joint Committee came to consensus to approve to send to the members. Bilancia will send out a cover letter asking members to review and respond. Berkey will add the letter to the Bylaws and send it out with a response due in two weeks.



The chairs were asked to mention this on their next conference call and encourage the members to respond (if it's before the response due date).

### **TAP Member Expectations (email from member Allen Goldberg)**

Goldberg recommended that all members be required to timely submit two reports each year on their individual accomplishments as a panel member. Flanders said the members who are involved and contributing would be the only ones who would respond.

Morizio sends an attendance sheet to his committee chair each month. The chair is the first line approach for contacting a non-contributing or unresponsive member; the Manager is second; the Director is third.

The Joint Committee thanked Goldberg for his input but feel the only ones who would respond are the ones who are already actively involved.

Fishman suggested having each mentor set goals at the beginning of the year and revisit them half way through the year. We need to keep the mentee engaged.

### **2012 Member Survey Analysis**

Bilancia recommended TAP repeat the TAP Member Satisfaction Survey and use the same one used last year so we can do a side-by-side comparison.

Flanders recommended the retiring member survey go out at the end of September.

Morizio said any positive changes made from comments made in the survey should be noted in the TAP Newsletter. Have a success story made from the survey comments and say we are listening. This should be mentioned during the all-member quarterly call coming up as well as the Newsletter. We also need to let the members know the survey is coming out soon. And let them know that we are addressing as many comments as we can coming from the survey, but some things we just cannot change.

### **TAP Newsletter**

Marshalek asked about whether anyone minded all the edits he makes in order to keep the Newsletter it to one page.

Morizio asked if updates about what is happening on Facebook could be added since the staff is unable to view it.

The links to Facebook and other TAP social media sites will be added as a footer and the header will be compressed. Excerpts from the Newsletters are posted on social media as well.

The Internal Communications Committee will add a blurb noting IRS responses in the monthly TAP Newsletter. Marshalek said he would also like to add a running total of issues elevated on a monthly basis.





### **Quarterly Meetings**

Messages will be sent out to ask for agenda topics for the quarterly all-member meetings. We will keep the meetings to one hour. Girinakis shares the hot issues and that would be a good time to share them with members. The meetings will be scheduled for a set day/time each quarter.

### **Rena Girinakis**

Girinakis handed out a copy of the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bill, 2014 – TAS Specific. (See Attachment 1)

Please review this document and decide how you can play into the information. Share this information with your committees to decide where your issues can fit into these topics.

### **Closing Comments**

Flanders said he does not want the Taxpayer Communications Project Committee to become a dumping ground. The managers can assign a committee member to do the quality review for each final recommendation.

When the Area Committees were eliminated, we needed like-kind issues grouped to determine what to focus on the following year. We need to address how to approach this from now on so we don't have to review such a great number of issues. Smiley said the intent was to divide and screen the issues on a monthly basis.

Hitchcock added it's been a difficult year because there were a lot of changes. We lost our analyst but did keep the manager for consistency.

Flanders echoed Hitchcock's comments. The transition to Systemic Advocacy has been challenging, but as we move forward it will be beneficial. Andrews added Girinakis has a passion for TAP.

Hayden said he really enjoyed reviewing the issues from the parking lot. The issues tend to accumulate and nothing gets done. Hopefully the new Chair will take that wisdom into the next year to make sure our mission is accomplished. This has been the best three-year ride - starting as an alternate and then becoming a member. It has been personally satisfying. He said he met great people from across the country, both members and staff and come December 1 it will be tough to leave. Thank you all – it's been a great ride.

Armstrong will be coming back and glad he's coming back. He loves the idea of helping and giving back.

Fishman reiterated Hayden's comments. The three years flew by. It's been a privilege being on this panel. We are leaving it in good hands. She liked how despite the obstacles, we kept plugging away and moving forward.





Hitchcock noted the first year was enjoyable. Being a project committee chair the second year became more vital to her. Really figuring out how it operated made it so much better. And this has been a really good year.

Marshalek said the staff does a wonderful job. Talking through the parking lot issues during this meeting was wonderful. He really enjoyed the three years.

Sykes was part of the class of 2014. It's taken two years to come up to speed as a concerned citizen who was upset with the IRS. We have the capability and need to find ways to use our skills better. Sometimes we deal with stuff that is too small. We could be working more closely with the IRS. We as volunteers have more power than the staff and can ask for things they cannot. We need to find new ways to get better. He added he is not happy about some of the rejections we get from the IRS. He is looking forward to the next year and how we can improve and get better.

## **ATTACHMENT #1**

FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS BILL,  
2014...TAS Specific

### **Tax Compliance**

The Committee remains concerned that absent a better understanding of the current sources of noncompliance, efforts to improve compliance may be hampered, misdirected, and difficult to measure. To gain meaningful insights into taxpayer behavior, the Committee strongly supports the work of the National Taxpayer Advocate and the IRS Office of Research to examine factors that influence taxpayer compliance behavior, including how and the extent to which various factors influence such behavior, and how the establishment of a cognitive learning and applied research laboratory might facilitate continued evaluation.

The Committee recommends \$2,316,246,000 for Taxpayer Services, which is \$81,022,000 above the fiscal year 2013 enacted level, and \$96,330,000 below the budget request. Bill language is included providing not less than \$5,600,000 for the tax counseling for the elderly program, not less than \$10,000,000 for low-income taxpayer clinic [LITC] grants, not less than \$18,000,000, to be available for 2 years, for a community volunteer income tax assistance [VITA] matching grant program for tax return preparation assistance and \$210,000,000 for the Taxpayer Advocate Service.

The Committee recognizes the significant service challenges requiring rapid implementation that the IRS has faced as a result of recent tax law provisions designed to assist taxpayers in difficult economic times.

### **Telephone Level of Service**

The Committee acknowledges that telephonic access to the IRS is critical to promoting voluntary compliance. In recent years, the IRS has experienced a decline in its level of service on its toll-free taxpayer service line due to increased volume. In 2012, the IRS



answered just 68 percent of its calls, and callers spent an average of 17 minutes waiting on hold. The Committee encourages the IRS to continue to make steady progress in its telephonic response performance and work to sustain taxpayer service delivery in an atmosphere of fiscal austerity and budgetary constraints.

### **E-Filing**

The Committee is heartened by the IRS's steady improved performance in increasing the number of tax filers who submit their returns electronically and without additional cost. Electronic filing benefits taxpayers and promotes effective tax administration because it decreases processing errors, expedites processing and payment of refunds, and allows the IRS to efficiently maintain up-to-date records. It costs the IRS 15 cents to process an electronically filed return, compared to \$3.50 to process a paper filed return.

During the fiscal year 2012 filing season, nearly 119 million individual tax returns, or almost 81 percent, were filed electronically, an increase of 4.7 percent from the previous year. Business returns filed electronically were up by 15 percent to 36.7 percent of the total filings, and tax professionals' use of electronically filing rose to nearly 76 million returns, a jump of over 5 percent compared to 2011.

In view of the high rate of electronic filing of tax returns, the IRS's ability to process returns on a daily basis, and the popularity of electronic deposit of refunds, the Committee strongly urges the IRS to reevaluate and update its measure on refund timeliness as recommended by GAO and the IRS Oversight Board.

### **Taxpayer Assistance Blueprint.**

In response to the Committee's directive in the fiscal year 2006 Treasury Appropriations Act, the IRS, in consultation with the IRS Oversight Board and the National Taxpayer Advocate, developed a "Taxpayer Assistance Blueprint" to institute a 5-year strategic plan for taxpayer services. The Committee expects the Taxpayer Assistance Blueprint to be an integral and guiding component of ongoing strategic planning for delivering services. The Committee supports continued efforts to conduct research on taxpayer needs and taxpayer service performance.

The Committee directs the IRS, the IRS Oversight Board, and the National Taxpayer Advocate to continue to submit to Congress annual updates to the Taxpayer Assistance Blueprint identifying any changes to its current strategic plan for taxpayer service, including the results of any new research and relevant

The Committee provides that, within funds provided, \$18,000,000 shall be available for 2 years for exclusive use as part of continuing a matching grant program established and administered by the IRS, in consultation with the Taxpayer Advocate Service, for not for profit organizations which provide volunteer income tax return preparation services for lower income individual taxpayers.

The Committee strongly urges the IRS to make every effort to expand the quantity and funding level of VITA grants focused on serving persons with disabilities proportional to



the growing disability population requiring tax assistance. The Committee understands that entities that are currently increasing their outreach efforts to better serve the needs of the disability population have experienced difficulty in applying for Federal grant assistance due to a lack of resources at the local level needed to complete the application. The Committee urges the IRS to allow national coalitions responsible for the coordination of local community partnerships focused specifically on the expanded provision of tax services for individuals with disabilities to compete in the VITA community matching grant processes.

### **Taxpayer Services**

Furthermore, the Committee strongly believes that the IRS, particularly the Exempt Organizations component, should work quickly to vastly improve its consultations with the Taxpayer Advocate Service [TAS]. This shall include responding to TAS directives for expedited processing of significant hardship cases, promptly referring over-age cases, and routinely alerting TAS to systemic issues. Moreover, the Committee notes that the Taxpayer Advocate has publicly issued a report outlining 16 recommendations to address the factors that contributed to the use of questionable screening criteria and processing delays. The Committee expects the IRS to consider and identify the suggestions and input of both the Taxpayer Advocate and the IRS Oversight Board in issuing any future public report on the status of reforms instituted in response to the TIGTA report on processing of applications for tax-exempt status.

### **Preventing Payroll Tax Fraud.**

The Committee recognizes that many employers outsource payroll and related tax duties to third-party payroll service providers to help assure filing deadlines and deposit requirements are met and streamline business operations. While most payroll service providers are trustworthy, failures can pose devastating financial setbacks for multiple clients, particularly small businesses. The Committee is aware that the National Taxpayer Advocate has recommended an array of practical solutions to address this persistent problem, including more effective early detection of potential fraud; registration, certification, and bonding requirements for third-party payroll tax services; restrictions on changing addresses of record; and greater consideration of offers in compromise to assist defrauded businesses with relief from tax liability.

The Committee directs the IRS to intensify its scrutiny of questionable practices of payroll service providers and continue to inform taxpayers of their responsibility for payment of all Federal and State employment taxes notwithstanding any contractual relationship with a payroll service provider. The Committee directs the IRS to report to the Committee within 90 days of enactment on (1) what data is currently collected on delinquent payroll service providers, (2) how this data is currently being used to prevent fraud, and (3) what the IRS would do with this data if given additional resources for this purpose.

The Committee includes an administrative provision requiring that the IRS issue a notice of confirmation of any address change relating to an employer making



employment tax payments, and that such notice be sent to both the employer's former and new address and requires that an officer or employee of the Internal Revenue Service shall give special consideration to an offer-in-compromise from a taxpayer who has been the victim of fraud by a third party payroll tax preparer.

#### **National Research Program.**

As noted previously, the Committee strongly supports the work of the National Research Program [NRP] to increase understanding of the tax gap. The Committee agrees with GAO, TIGTA, the National Taxpayer Advocate, and the IRS Oversight Board, which have all recommended greater and more frequent data collection and studies of the tax gap including the portion of the tax gap attributable to international transactions.

#### **Information Technology Reports.**

The Committee directs the IRS to submit quarterly reports on particular major project activities to the Committees on Appropriations and the GAO, no later than 30 days following the end of each calendar quarter in fiscal year 2014. The Committee expects the reports to include detailed, plain English explanations of the costs and schedules for the previous 3 months and a description of the anticipated cost and schedule for the upcoming 3 months for the following major information technology project activities: IRS.gov; Returns Remittance Processing; EDASIIPM; Information Returns and Document Matching; E-services; Taxpayer Advocate Service Integrated System and other projects associated with significant changes in law. The Committee further directs GAO to review and provide an annual report to the Committees evaluating the cost and schedule of activities of all major IRS information technology projects for the year, with particular focus on the projects about which the IRS is submitting quarterly reports to the Committee.

**Joint Committee  
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
Meeting Minutes  
July 24, 2013**

**Designated Federal Official**

- Sheila Andrews TAP Director

**Members Present**

- Colleen Hitchcock National TAP Vice-Chair
- Bob Hayden Chair, Tax Forms and Publications Project Committee
- Seth Flanders Chair, Taxpayer Communications Project Committee
- Annie Fishman Chair, Notices and Correspondence Project Committee
- Mark Marshalek Chair, Internal Communications Committee
- Angeliki Kalimeris Vice-Chair, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee

**Members Absent**

- Richard Bilancia National TAP Chair
- Kenneth Armstrong Chair, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee
- Edward Sykes Chair, Taxpayer Assistance Center Improvements Project Committee

**Staff Present**

- Louis Morizio TAP East Manager
- Susan Jimerson TAP West Manager
- Susan Gilbert Senior Program Analyst
- Steven Berkey Senior Program Analyst
- Linda Rivera Senior Program Analyst
- Russ Pool Database Analyst
- Marisa Knispel Program Analyst
- Timothy Shepard Program Analyst
- Donna Powers Program Analyst
- Ellen Smiley Program Analyst
- Patricia Robb Program Analyst
- Kymberly Maine Management Assistant
- Kevin A. Brown Management Assistant

**Members of the Public** – None

## **Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda/Roll Call**

**Review and Approve Minutes** – Minutes for the June meeting approved for final posting.

**National Office Report** – Sheila Andrews stated that the travel arrangements have been made for the JC Face-to-Face meeting next month and the staff should be notified immediately if there are any changes necessary. The most recent furlough day, July 22, 2013, was canceled and we are not sure about the last furlough day, August 30, 2013. The Panel will be notified as soon as a decision has been made. In addition, Principal Deputy Commissioner Werfel will be attending the Dallas Tax forum and the Panel members there will be able to see him address the audience.

**TAP Chair Report** – Colleen Hitchcock greeted everyone and mentioned that if we are not able to get to all of our project issues today, they could be finished at next month's Face-to-face meeting.

## **Project Committee Review**

### **Taxpayer Communications**

Seth Flanders

**26409: Technology for Outreach and Education** – After minor corrections the recommendation(s) was accepted by the committee as completed.

### **Notices and Correspondence**

Annie Fishman

**26591: Letter 2273C Frequently Asked Questions Landing Page** – After minor corrections the recommendation(s) are accepted by the committee.

**27746: Letter 96C** – The recommendation(s) have been accepted by the committee.

**27747: Letter 0147C** – After minor corrections the recommendation(s) have been accepted by the committee.

**27807: Letter 3217C Frequently Asked Questions Landing Page** – After minor corrections the recommendation(s) have been accepted by the committee.

**27808: Letter 4458C Frequently Asked Questions Landing Page Recommendation** – After minor corrections the recommendation(s) have been accepted by the committee.

## **Tax Forms and Publications**

Robert Hayden

**24010: Change 1040 Instructions to Allow Use of PO Box** – After minor corrections the recommendation(s) have been accepted by the committee.

**26204: Focus Group on Form 4684, Casualties and Thefts** – The findings from the focus group have been accepted by the committee.

**26205: Focus Group on Publication 523, *Selling Your Home*** – The findings from the focus group have been accepted by the committee.

**26207: Focus group on Form 8941, Credit for Small Employer Health Insurance Premiums** – The findings from the focus group have been accepted by the committee.

**26621: Tax Form 1040A Instructions – Update for line 9a** – After a minor change the recommendation(s) have been accepted by the committee.

**26623: Tax Forms 1040 and 1040A Instructions – Pension Income** – After a minor change the recommendation(s) have been accepted by the committee.

**27033: Review of 2012 Publication 544, *Sale of Assets and Other Dispositions*** – The recommendation(s) have been accepted by the committee.

**27532: Focus Group on Tax Software and E-filed Forms** – After a minor change to the findings from the focus group have been accepted by the committee.

**Number of issues on agenda** – Susan Gilbert thinks there should be a limit on issues during a meeting. Flanders recommended a “judgment call” on the time to be spent on issues for the meeting and not a limit placed on the number of issues on the agenda. There will be a “cutoff” point for issues to be submitted on the agenda. Any issues not received the Thursday before the meeting, will go on the next meeting’s agenda.

**TAP Bylaws** – Steve Berkey reported that the bylaws have been approved by the Panel, sent to Rena Girinakis, TAS, and IRS Chief Counsel, and are now ready to come back to the JC for review. This will be discussed in greater detail at the meeting in Milwaukee.

**Action Item:** Flanders recommended that a vote be taken during the August meeting for review and approval, by the entire Panel, as the project is ready to go.



**Newsletter** – Mark Marshalek would like the committee to take a look at the narrative to make sure it is substantively correct since changes were made for the cosmetics and the length of the newsletter.

**Update: Internal Committees (Communications & Outreach)**

Marshalek, Internal Communications committee, reported that a final draft of the annual report is just about ready with minor changes needed like picking a cover. In addition, we will be looking for ways to get the report out sooner than we previously do now. That will be an agenda item for Milwaukee.

Hitchcock, Outreach Committee, sent a special thanks out to Timothy Shepard for all he does for the committee and the website. Hitchcock also wanted to highlight the “TAPSpace Spotlight” as a way to highlight the things that TAP members are doing out in the community. Most recently a member made a webinar for the Tennessee BAR Association.

**Public** – None

**Project Activities** – Flanders recommended that Colleen Hitchcock also send reminders out to the Panel members as additional motivation to complete the time sheets. Hitchcock has been involved in a community property activity committee and likes what they are doing.

**Closing** – Berkey mentioned that any comments or additions to the agenda are welcomed before it is finalized. Reviewing the “Parking Lot” issues will be part of the Face-to-Face meeting. Hitchcock thanked everyone for getting their issues reported in a timely manner and looked forward to seeing everyone in Milwaukee next month.

**Next Meeting: August 6 & 7 Face-to-Face Meeting and August 28, 2013 2:00 p.m. ET**



**Joint Committee, (JC)  
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
Meeting Minutes  
June 26, 2013**

**Designated Federal Official**

- Sheila Andrews TAP Director

**Members Present**

- Colleen Hitchcock National TAP Vice Chair
- Ed Sykes Chair, Taxpayer Assistance Center Improvements Project Committee
- Bob Hayden Chair, Tax Forms and Publications Project Committee
- Ken Armstrong Chair, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee
- Seth Flanders Chair, Taxpayer Communications Project Committee

**Members Absent**

- Richard Bilancia National TAP Chair
- Mark Marshalek Chair, Internal Communications Committee
- Annie Fishman Chair, Notices and Correspondence Project Committee

**Staff Present**

- Louis Morizio TAP East Manager
- Susan Jimerson TAP West Manager
- Linda Rivera Senior Program Analyst
- Susan Gilbert Senior Program Analyst
- Timothy Shepard Program Analyst
- Donna Powers Program Analyst
- Ellen Smiley Program Analyst
- Kevin A. Brown Management Assistant

**Members of the Public**

None

**Welcome, Review Agenda**

Roll Call

**Review and Approve Minutes** – JC Minutes May 22, 2013 were approved.

**National Office Report** – On Monday, the Principal Deputy Commissioner, released his report and it was positive for TAS. Today Nina, the National Taxpayer Advocate, released her June Report focusing on the current tax exempt situation along with the most serious issues. Both will be posted to Tapspace website ([www.tapspace.org](http://www.tapspace.org)). The request for the JC Face-to-Face meeting is going back to the NTA. The request has to start from the beginning due to a processing change and new request form. We are still waiting for this process to be completed. The meeting dates will be August 6 and 7, 2013 and the travel dates will be August 5 and 8, 2013. The request for the face-to-face Regional Planning Committee session was turned down.

The budget is still tight and additional furlough days are trying to be avoided, but that decision hasn't been made yet. We will proceed as is it will occur and respond if it does not come through. The administrative staff should be contacting the members in regards to making preparations for the reservations.

On Recruiting we are right on schedule with this process. The initial package is being prepared for Rena and Nina for review and initial approval. The final package is scheduled to be presented later in August. There were three resignations which will be accounted for during this recruitment process. There are 29 vacancies and 46 returning members and 46 alternates for the 2014 year. There were 6 international applicants, 3 were interviewed, and 1 was recommended as a member and two as alternates.

The Tax Compliance requirement is now an annual requirement so members are asked to be on the lookout for their form in the mail shortly.

**TAP Chair Report** – None at this time

**Project Committee Review** – None at this time

**Issue #25636 Discussion Re: IRS response** – Seth Flanders, chair of the former Taxpayer Burden Reduction committee responded to what the IRS came back with. The IRS has responded to most of the recommendations with the "Resolved prior to elevation" status because of the e-file pre-file changes that they have made. Flanders said something should be written about this in the form of a short rebuttal for clarifying our intent with this recommendation. Flanders will write up a rebuttal and present it to the JC to see if they can be presented back to the IRS.

**TAP Newsletter** – Steve Berkey indicated that the newsletter should be reviewed and any changes should be sent to Mark Marshalek or Berkey by cob by June 27, 2013 so corrections can be made before being issued.

**J C QR Review** – Louis Morizio proposed eliminating the JC Quality Review (QR) since each committee has that same duty already and it is becoming a redundant process. In addition, the QR teams are actually rewriting the proposals instead of “just reviewing” which is what their purpose is. Flanders asked, is anyone on the staff able to offer an expertise in regards to the style guide as it pertains to the referrals as they come forward. Area QRs can be trained instead of having JC QR training. Action Item: **Consensus has been given to eliminate the JC QR team.** This will be effective immediately and more training and focus will be placed on the committee QR teams. Any proposals already in the JC QR will continue to be worked by the team.

**Outreach Reporting Form** – The form was adjusted to have only two columns to account for TAP outreach hours and all other TAP activities. In Tab 2 there is now a section for TAP issues that can be sent on the same form. A Comments Section was added for staff review also. Another column in the Outreach Section has been eliminated that we were not using anyway. It can be started in July or December. Action Item: **Consensus has been given to start using the new form for July reporting.**

**Annual Regional Meeting Planning Committee Update** – December 9-13, 2013 is the recommended dates for the meeting. The current committee structure will be ok for next year and members can select their committees based on what the committees will be addressing next year. Outreach roll playing and other virtual training will be needed to better prepare the new members before these meetings start.

**Update: Internal Committees (Communications & Outreach)** – Colleen Hitchcock spoke about the Pocket Guide Publication. It has important tips and information that can help members with their outreach efforts. There is a suggestion for the guide to be updated and the Internal Communications committee might be able to do it. This may be a good topic for the regional meetings. Andrews suggested having the JC review it and send changes to Berkey and have this issue revisited during the next JC call.

**Project Committee Activities** – Ken has 2 referrals that are being worked and will soon be presented.

**Public** – None



**Closing** – Hitchcock thanked everyone for all of their ideas and participation on the call.

**Next Meeting: July 24, 2013**



**Joint Committee  
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
Meeting Minutes  
May 22, 2013**

**Designated Federal Officer**

- Sheila Andrews TAP Director

**Members Present**

- Richard Bilancia National TAP Chair
- Colleen Hitchcock National TAP Vice Chair
- Ed Sykes Chair, Taxpayer Assistance Center Improvements Project Committee
- Annie Fishman Chair, Notices and Correspondence Project Committee
- Bob Hayden Chair, Tax Forms and Publications Project Committee
- Angeliki Kalimeris Vice Chair, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee
- Ken Armstrong Chair, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee
- Seth Flanders Chair, Communications Project Committee
- Mark Marshalek Chair, Internal Communications Committee
- Roger Lees Vice, Chair, Internal Communications Committee
- Samuel Sorich Member, Taxpayer Communications

**Staff Present**

- Sheila Andrews TAP Director
- Louis Morizio TAP East Manager
- Susan Jimerson TAP West Manager
- Steve Berkey Senior Program Analyst
- Linda Rivera Senior Program Analyst
- Susan Gilbert Senior Program Analyst
- Timothy Shepard Program Analyst
- Patricia Robb Program Analyst
- Audrey Jenkins Program Analyst
- Donna Powers Program Analyst
- Lisa Gabriel Program Analyst
- Marisa Knispel Program Analyst
- Anita Fields Program Analyst
- Kymberly Maine Management Assistant
- Kevin A. Brown Management Assistant



### **Members of the Public**

None

### **Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda**

Richard Bilancia welcomed everyone to the teleconference and reviewed the agenda to start the meeting.

### **Review and Approve Minutes**

Minutes for April meeting were approved for final posting.

### **National Office Report**

Sheila Andrews informed the Panel of the new Acting Commissioner, Daniel “Danny” Werfel and that he wants an update on the progress that has been made on fixing some of the issues that the IRS is facing in an effort to restore public trust. Andrews also wanted to remind the Panel that as members of a federal advisory committee, we have to avoid providing political rhetoric to remain in compliance with the responsibilities of our charter.

### **TAP Chair Report**

Bilancia echoed the sentiment of Andrews, but reminded the Panel that our job is to improve the IRS per our duties as a federal advisory committee.

### **Project Committee Review**

#### **Tax Forms and Publications**

- #26731 Publication 4681, *Canceled Debts, Foreclosures, Repossessions, and Abandonments (for Individuals)* – Action Item: **Referral edited and consensus given to elevate this issue.**

### **Survey approval for all member distribution**

Should we distribute the item to the entire panel? Kenneth Armstrong recommends it be distributed to the member and Timothy Shepard supported that motion. Action Item:

**Consensus has been given to distribute the item to the members of the Panel.**

Susan Gilbert will distribute the survey results to the entire Panel within the next several days.

### **TAP Dealing with Legislative Issues**

Because TAP is now under Systemic Advocacy (SA), Bilancia felt it was a good time to see if TAP could now start introducing legislative issues to the IRS. This has historically been an area that TAP could not be involved in, but Andrews mentioned that, although TAP still cannot work these issues, there is however an avenue with which TAP could

submit such issues. With that said, it would still be SA working the issues; TAP will at least have an avenue to funnel these issues through SA for IRS review.

### **Face-to-Face Annual Regional Meeting Planning Committee**

#### **2012 Survey Discussion: Training Issues**

The training curriculum is currently being developed and volunteers are still being accepted for this project. Times and places to meet are currently being worked on and we are making lots of progress. Workshops are being developed and look like they will be improved from last year. As a point of reference, Bilancia mentioned that departing third year members will not be able to attend these meeting. The committee should keep this fact in mind as they plan for this event. Our next meeting will be on June 21. Edward Sykes has been named the chairman of that committee.

**Issue #23763 SB/SE Decreasing Non-Filers Project Committee for consideration of 24 IRS responses** – What can the IRS do to improve taxpayer compliance with filing?

There were 24 separate responses with 15 that were either fully or partially accepted. The remaining 9 rejected; 5 were similar to processes already in place, 3 were not legislatively allowed; and one would lead to potential disclosure violations. Bilancia recommended accepting the responses and making sure that the accepted 15 be implemented. Ken Armstrong supported the recommendations also. Action Item:

**Consensus has been given to accept the responses from the IRS.**

**TP Communications #27015 AD HOC (short deadline)** – How to get new small business owners up-to-date and prepared for all of the things needed to be successful. The web-based video environment system needed to be reviewed to see if it could be easily navigated. Due to the time constraints, this task could only be worked by the Communications Committee, but the folks in SB/SE really appreciated our response. These improvements were almost immediately used for the project. Action Item:

**Consensus has been given to approve the report that was sent forward.**

### **Recruitment/Interviews – Linda Rivera**

The managers are finalizing the interviews and should be done by the end of next week. Once this is done, we will move to the recommendation phase of the recruitment project.

### **Update: Internal Committees (Communications & Outreach)**

Colleen Hitchcock brought up the 3 things that could be given out for outreach which are





to include: Business cards, Speak-up Publication and mail in issues forms. Members should contact their analyst if they need any of these supplies. Hitchcock wants the Screening committee to contact the submitters with status updates. Hitchcock brought a new PowerPoint that was recently added to Tapspace site that is pretty helpful for members. Mark Marshalek reviewed the Annual review and they are in the process of making some significant changes to have the final version.

### **Project Committee Activities**

Annie Fishman, Notices and Correspondence- several referrals being drafted by the committee many in the Quality review process. Fishman, Notices and Correspondence- said the committee hopes to have a few ready for the next call hopefully in 3 weeks or so. If we are able to do so, it will be provided in the pre-reads for next month's meeting. Ed Sykes, Taxpayer Assistance Center- won't be ready for next month, but we are in the process of putting some issues together. Ken Armstrong- Toll Free, one referral in quality review may be available next month. There is also another referral that is almost ready to be moved forward. Armstrong wrote a letter to local newspaper and described TAP and said that we are here to advocate for the taxpayers despite the current situation going on with the IRS. Bob Hayden, Tax Forms and Pubs- final touches are being put on 2 pub referrals. There are 3 others in the works. Referral form template created to improve their progress in this area. It should be out to the committee by the end of the week. The Tax Forms and Publications Committee will be part of a focus group online forms vs. IRS printed forms. There will be two former members participating in this process as well. Seth Flanders, Taxpayer Communications, hopes to have several recommendations ready for next JC meeting.

### **Public**

None

### **Closing**

Bilancia thanked everyone for attending.

**Next Meeting: June 26, 2013 2 p.m. ET**

**Joint Committee  
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
Meeting Minutes  
April 24, 2013**

**Designated Federal Official**

- Sheila Andrews TAP Director

**Members Present**

- Richard Bilancia National TAP Chair
- Colleen Hitchcock National TAP Vice Chair
- Ed Sykes Chair, Taxpayer Assistance Center Improvements Project Committee
- Annie Fishman Chair, Notices and Correspondence Project Committee
- Bob Hayden Chair, Tax Forms and Publications Project Committee
- Angeliki Kalimeris Vice Chair, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee
- Roger Lees Vice Chair, Communications Project Committee
- Mark Marshalek Chair, Internal Communications Committee

**Members Absent**

- Ken Armstrong Chair, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee
- Seth Flanders Chair, Communications Project Committee

**Staff Present**

- Louis Morizio TAP East Manager
- Susan Jimerson TAP West Manager
- Steve Berkey Senior Program Analyst
- Linda Rivera Senior Program Analyst
- Susan Gilbert Senior Program Analyst
- Patricia Robb Program Analyst
- Audrey Jenkins Program Analyst
- Lisa Gabriel Program Analyst
- Janice Spinks Program Analyst
- Marisa Knispel Program Analyst
- Audrey Jenkins Program Analyst
- Kevin A. Brown Management Assistant

## **Members of the Public**

None

## **Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda**

Richard Bilancia welcomed everyone to the teleconference and reviewed the agenda to start the meeting.

## **Review and Approve Minutes**

Minutes for March meeting were approved by full committee for posting.

## **National Office Report**

Sheila Andrews thanked the Panel for the volunteer efforts. The first all TAP virtual quarterly meeting went well. The Joint Committee (JC) face-to-face is still being planned and awaiting approval. The meeting is planned for the first full week in August, Tues – Wed August 6 – 7 with travel on Monday and Thursday. The meeting will take place in Milwaukee. An update was given to the Panel about the upcoming sequester, the days the Service will be furloughed and how this will affect the Panel. The dates are:

May 24, 2013; June 14, 2013; July 5 and 22, 2013; and August 30, 2013. The entire IRS will be closed on these dates. In addition, there could be two additional days of which notifications will be given if there is no budget later on in the year.

## **TAP Chair Report**

Richard Bilancia mentioned that the TAP-wide call was a very good success for TAP. We will attempt to get Nina Olsen, the National Taxpayer Advocate on the next call. This has yet to be confirmed. Bilancia has encouraged all of the committee chairs to institute a roundtable, when appropriate to increase participation in their meetings. Bilancia also expressed hope that the regional meetings be approved for later this year.

## **Project Committee Review**

### **Tax Forms and Publications**

Issue# 25463 Form 8586, *Low-Income Housing Credit Revision* – Suggestion is to modify the text to indicate the location is on form 3800 further defined as part 3. **Action Item:** There is consensus to elevate this issue to the IRS.

Issue #26731 Publication 4681 – This issue is not ready to be moved forward and therefore is dropped.

## **2012 Survey Update**

Louis Morizio the report is almost complete but some analysis remains to be done yet. The next call is scheduled for this Friday and the hope is that the report will be done by then. Once completed, the report will be submitted to the JC and the Annual Regional Planning

committee. **Action Item:** This will be added to the next JC call to decide whether we will share this report with the entire panel.

### **Recruitment (Ranking)**

Linda River: There were 407 applications to include international candidates also. Interviews will be conducted from May 5 through the 31, 2013. Members are welcomed and encouraged to be part of the interview process especially in the case that a candidate wants to speak to a current TAP member. **Action Item:** A team will be formed to change and perfect the application questions for next year. A two hour commitment is being requested for each Panel member for this process.

### **Annual Regional Meeting and Training Planning Committee**

The workshops and agendas from last year were reviewed. Our next meetings will be on May 3, 2013 and May, 17, 2013 then once every Month. Edward Sykes has been named the chairman of that committee.

### **Update: Internal Committees (Communications & Outreach)**

Communications – Mark Marshalek – We'd like feedback about the newsletter, but if there are no questions or comments by the end of the week, we will send it out via email the Panel. It will also be shared on the Facebook and the LinkedIn page. Progress is being made on the Annual Report, but we are still waiting for some information from the IRS. Issues that came from a committee that no longer exists will be handled by the Joint Committee. Bilancia suggested that the review of such an issue start via email so as not to be delayed even though the JC only meets once a month.

Outreach – Colleen Hitchcock – success stories are being added to the TAPSpace site so the committees are suggested to look out for them and report them so they can be noticed. We currently have 50% participation of members submitting their outreach reports, but this number needs to be improved greatly. Annie Fishman suggested a monthly report of member outreach submission be sent to the Panel as a reminder and motivating factor for all members to turn in their outreach reports. Numerous suggestions were given to make the report easier to complete to include daily or weekly recording of member outreach efforts. Rivera suggests that the outreach reports be required before members attend the face-to-face regional meetings.

Forms & Pubs – Robert Hayden – Two of their forms have been worked by the IRS already: form 8888 Direct Deposit to up to 3 accounts and form 2848 the POA form. There was a discussion on how to prevent the duplication of efforts by other Federal Advisory Committees



and other departments in the IRS. **Action Item:** This issue will be added as a talking point on our face-to-face meeting later in the year.

**Public**

None

**Closing**

**Next Meeting: May 22, 2013 2 p.m. ET**

**Joint Committee  
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
Meeting Minutes  
March 27, 2013**

**Designated Federal Official**

- Sheila Andrews                      TAP Director

**Members Present**

- Richard Bilancia                      National TAP Chair
- Colleen Hitchcock                      National TAP Vice Chair
- Ed Sykes                      Chair, Taxpayer Assistance Center Improvements Project Committee
- Annie Fishman                      Chair, Notices and Correspondence Project Committee
- Bob Hayden                      Chair, Tax Forms and Publications Project Committee
- Ken Armstrong                      Chair, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee
- Seth Flanders                      Chair, Communications Project Committee

**Members Absent**

- Mark Marshalek                      Chair, Internal Communications Committee

**Staff Present**

- Louis Morizio                      TAP East Manager
- Susan Jimerson                      TAP West Manager
- Linda Rivera                      Senior Program Analyst
- Susan Gilbert                      Senior Program Analyst
- Russ Pool                      Database Analyst
- Timothy Shepard                      Program Analyst
- Marianne Dominguez                      Program Analyst
- Donna Powers                      Program Analyst
- Patricia Robb                      Program Analyst
- Ellen Smiley                      Program Analyst
- Lisa Gabriel                      Program Analyst
- Audrey Jenkins                      Program Analyst
- Anita Fields                      Program Analyst
- Kevin A. Brown                      Management Assistant

**Members of the Public**

None

**Review and Approve Minutes**

DRAFT Joint Committee Minutes February 27, 2013 are approved for final posting.

### **National Office Report**

Sheila Andrews gave an update on the status of applications and emphasis was given to the states that we aren't getting enough participation from but coverage is needed. Currently, Puerto Rico and South Dakota have zero applications, New Hampshire has one, Kentucky has two and DC has three.

Andrews wanted to give thanks to both Richard Bilancia and Colleen Hitchcock for making the communication lines between the staff and the Panel very efficient and quite effective.

### **TAP Chair Report**

None

### **Project Committee Review**

None

### **Announcement of TAP-wide quarterly virtual meetings**

In an effort to increase participation, communication and personal involvement by the Panel, Andrews and Bilancia have proposed quarterly TAP-wide meetings. This idea seems to be a good way to accomplish that goal. There may be an option to record these sessions in case some panel members cannot make the meeting, but this option is still being considered. The end of April is being strongly considered for the first meeting. Consensus has been given to allow the staff to continue to plan and coordinate these meetings.

### **Survey Committee Update**

The committee has separated into teams and are currently working on this project. The plan is to have the results by the end of April or May and the next meeting will be the beginning of April to check progress.

### **Approval of Members for Annual Regional Meet & Train Meetings**

Eleven responses were received, 9 for active participants and 2 for alternates, if necessary. Consensus has been given to accept the 9 members and 2 alternates for this committee. The alternates will be invited to all of the meetings and kept abreast of all actions taken by the committee. Chair and Co-chairs will be selected during the first meeting in April and Susan Gilbert will function as the Staff Chair for the committee.

### **Proposed VITA Project**

Morizio is the point of contact and should be contacted if anyone is willing to volunteer for this project. Each committee chairperson will check with their members to see if any of them would like to participate in this project. All of the meetings will be conducted virtually. An email was sent by the TAP Director asking for volunteers. Members were given until April 8<sup>th</sup> to respond.

### **August JC FTF Dates**

Andrews reports that there will be only one meeting this year due to budget constraints. August



5, 2013 is the recommended date contingent on the budget analysis. This will be revisited once the budget analysis is complete.

### **Interview Process – May (Volunteers)**

Volunteers are being requested for the interview process that will start in May 6, 2013 through the end of that month. The managers, Susan Jimerson and Louis Morizio, will have interview dates on their calendars and will send out invites to members who wish to be a part of this process.

### **Contacts to issue submitters**

Hitchcock suggested that the individual committee respond to the issue submitters as they have the information in detail should the submitter have any questions regarding any request submitted. A suggestion was made to inform the TAP member, where the issue came from, about the issue. Hitchcock will take this back to her committee and draw up a paragraph or two regarding how each committee would follow through with this procedure. The final result will be presented on the next JC meeting call.

### **Should an email be sent out to all members to get feedback on Outreach before interviews?**

Hitchcock wanted to focus on what steps can be taken to improve the outreach or lack thereof during this year's interview process. Interview questions are being considered and improving the way that outreach is recorded are other options. According to Linda Rivera, the staff is working on improving the interview questions so that there is a focus on selecting candidates who will have a want or desire to conduct outreach. A survey can be conducted about training and outreach for next year. Reaching out to the LTAs may be a good start to establish and even improve outreach. Hitchcock will draft an email for the Panel to be sent out by Linda Rivera regarding the problem with outreach.

### **Update: Internal Committees (Communications & Outreach)**

Success stories can be shared to spotlight events about successful outreach events. The newsletter is another option on [www.tapSPACE.org](http://www.tapSPACE.org).

### **Project Committee Activities**

Timothy Shepard has updated the outreach part of [www.tapSPACE.org](http://www.tapSPACE.org). Members are encouraged to review it to see how useful these changes are for the site and for our outreach efforts.

### **Public**

None

### **Closing**

Bilancia reports great meeting and encourages continued success with each committee.

Next Meeting: April 24, 2013 at 2 p.m. ET

**Joint Committee  
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
Meeting Minutes  
February 27, 2013**

**Designated Federal Official**

- Sheila Andrews TAP Director

**Members Present**

- Richard Bilancia National TAP Chair
- Colleen Hitchcock National TAP Vice Chair
- Ed Sykes Chair, Taxpayer Assistance Center Improvements Project Committee
- Annie Fishman Chair, Notices and Correspondence Project Committee
- Bob Hayden Chair, Tax Forms and Publications Project Committee
- Ken Armstrong Chair, Toll-Free Phone Line Project Committee
- Seth Flanders Chair, Communications Project Committee
- Mark Marshalek Chair, Internal Communications Committee

**Staff Present**

- Louis Morizio TAP East Manager
- Susan Jimerson TAP West Manager
- Steve Berkey Senior Program Analyst
- Linda Rivera Senior Program Analyst
- Susan Gilbert Senior Program Analyst
- Russ Pool Database Analyst
- Timothy Shepard Program Analyst
- Marianne Dominguez Program Analyst
- Donna Powers Program Analyst
- Patricia Robb Program Analyst
- Audrey Jenkins Program Analyst
- Anita Fields Program Analyst
- Kevin A. Brown Management Assistant

**Members of the Public**

None

**Review and Approve Minutes**

DRAFT Joint Committee (JC) Minutes January 23, 2013 approved for final posting.

**National Office Report**

Sheila Andrews was introduced as permanent Director of TAP. Steve Berkey reminded the JC about the message sent to the Panel that included the new recruiting items for this

year's recruitment campaign. This message included the one major change for an International representative living abroad or one of the U.S. Territories.

### **TAP Chair Report**

Richard Bilancia encouraged all the members to get the word out about this year's recruitment process to increase participation. The Communication Committee is reviewing the Small Business Taxes virtual workshop. Contact Seth Flanders if you want to participate." This training is for new small businesses to let them know what the IRS requirements are. There is nothing to be reported about possible sequestration, but if something does occur, notice will be provided to the Panel by Andrews as soon as possible.

### **Review and Approve TAP Bylaws**

Flanders – the process of drafting bylaws has been going on for some time now. The revised draft is ready for JC approval. Once they have been approved by the JC they will be sent to director, counsel, EDSA, etc., for review and concurrence and then back to the Joint Committee. Once it comes back from the IRS the JC can either accept or reject any changes that have been made or the process starts all over again. Final adoption of the bylaws will be done by member vote, not consensus.

**Action Item:** JC consensus has been given to move the bylaws forward through the IRS approval process. Steve Berkey to elevate for approval.

### **Face-to-Face Annual Regional Meeting Ad Hoc Committee**

Ed Sykes wanted to know why we could not ask for a national meeting as we have done in the past. Andrews explained that based on budget constraints, it is no longer possible for this type of meeting to occur. The regional setup is the only option that will allow for the budgetary thresholds in place, which is why they are ok and not the national annual meeting. The Panel still wants to request the annual meeting, but it was determined that the regional meetings should remain an option in this planning. An Ad Hoc committee will be established to plan the regional meetings and training. The TAP staff will help to develop training material and logistics and the committee should be able to work the rest of the issues. No date has been set for the start of this committee.

**Action Item:** Consensus has been given for Bilancia to send a request to the Panel to solicit volunteers for the Annual Regional Meeting Ad Hoc committee and Susan Gilbert will be the staff support.

### **E-Signature Feedback**

There has been no feedback from the Panel about this issue.

**Action Item:** Consensus has been given to drop this issue.

**2012 Survey Results (email to membership)**

**Action Item:** There is consensus granting Bilancia permission to send the message out as it was drafted to the Panel within the next 2 days.

**Update: Internal Committees (Communications & Outreach)**

Progress is being made to update materials on TAPSpace with the staff providing lots of support and it will get easier for TAP to use the site for outreach.

**Program Committee Reviews**

Taxpayer Communications – New subcommittee has been formed to work on some web issues and will be done by March 7, 2013.

Taxpayer Assistance Center Improvements – Getting good information and coming up with some good proposals at this time.

Toll-Free Phone Line – there are currently two subcommittees we are working on referrals for and continue to make progress on them right now.

Tax Forms and Publications – Some issues have been proposed to JC Quality Review (QR) about how issues are reported and the format is in need of change, but program owner is comfortable with changing. The current format is slow and needs to be fixed.

Notices and Correspondence – We are working on draft referrals for quality review along with some suggestions about landing pages.

Andrews mentioned that soon project management and TAPSpace training will be available for the Panel. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

**Closing**

Bilancia encouraged everyone to help with outreach to get their time sheets turned in.

**Next Meeting: March 27, 2013 2 p.m. ET**

**Joint Committee  
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
Meeting Minutes  
January 23, 2013**

**Designated Federal Official**

- Louis Morizio                      Acting TAP Director
- Sheila Andrews                  Senior Analyst

**Members Present**

- Rich Bilancia                      TAP Chair
- Colleen Hitchcock                TAP Vice–Chair
- Annie Fishman                    Chair, Notice & Correspondence
- Robert “Bob” Hayden            Chair, Tax, Forms and Pub
- Edward “Ed” Sykes                Chair, Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC)
- Kenneth “Ken” Armstrong        Chair, Toll–Free Phone Improvement
- Mark Marshalek                    Chair, Communication Committee
- Seth Flanders                      Chair, Taxpayer Communications

**Staff Present**

- Louis Morizio                      TAP East Manager
- Susan Jimerson                    TAP West Manager
- Steve Berkey                      Senior Program Analyst
- Susan Gilbert                      Senior Program Analyst
- Audrey Y. Jenkins                Program Analyst
- Russ Pool                          Database Analyst
- Marianne Dominquez              Program Analyst
- Ellen Smiley                      Program Analyst
- Patti Robb                         Program Analyst
- Meredith Odom                    Program Analyst
- Donna Powers                    Program Analyst
- Nina Pang                         Program Analyst

**Members of the Public**

- Jackie Rollins

**Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda – Rich Bilancia/Louis Morizio**

Rich welcomed everyone to the call and thanked everyone for sending their project committee monthly reports. It appears that everyone has been able to hit the ground running. He has also asked that the chairs express his appreciation to the rest of the members.

### **Roll Call – Kymberly Maine**

Steve took roll call and quorum was met.

### **Review and Approval Minutes – Rich Bilancia**

Both November 2012 and December 2013 meeting minutes were approved by consensus.

**National Office Report – Louis Morizio** Susan canvassed the chairs with the dates for the two JC meetings. There is one chair that will not be able to attend, so we ask that you have your vice-chair attend in absence. Just a reminder the meetings are still in the planning stages and have to be approved by the commissioner. Please plan for these dates.

Friday, January 25, 2013 is National EITC Awareness Day. There aren't any TAP planned events but we would like for you to reach out to your LTAs to see if they have anything you can attend.

### **TAP Chair Report – Rich Bilancia**

Rich stated that TAP is getting off to a good start according to the monthly reports received. He asked that everyone continue to timely submit their reports so that the internal Communication Committee could smoothly work on the TAP newsletter.

Louis took over for Tiffany and will be the Acting TAP Director until, Friday, January 25, 2013. Shelia Andrews an Analyst in TAS C&L will be reporting as the TAP Director beginning Monday, January 28, 2013. The selection of a permanent TAP Director will most likely be an outside party and will take a few months to be completed.

### **Project Committee Review – TFP**

Issue 20226 – Additional Chart C for 1040 Instructions – Approved by consensus

Issue 23507 – Form 8949 Revision – Approved by consensus

Issue 25051 – Additional Line on Form 1040 – Approved by consensus

### **Notice Committee Issues**

1 – We feel that TAP as a panel should have a consistent as to how to inform the public about issues they have submitted. Should we contact the person and keep them updated, etc?

### **Discussion**

Some of the submitters are reluctant to give contact information making it impossible for us to respond. As issues are received via Improveirs.org, they are responded to. Post updates on the improveirs.org

Submitters receive already receive a response thanking them for submitting their issue.

2 – Should we decide to have status updates on issues that the public can see on-line?

### **Discussion**

This may be an issue for Communication Committee  
It isn't a bad idea to post updates on improveirs.org but there may be some programming issues that need to be discussed with the programmer.  
Last year members of the Screening Committee responded to submitters.

### **Decision**

Colleen will see what the Outreach Committee can do with this issue.

3. For possible liability purposes, we felt that the TAP should not be doing the meeting minutes and this is a role for the TAP staff.

Decision:

Louis spoke with Tiffany at the time of the Annual meeting and she decided that staff will continue to take the minutes and in the event staff is not present a member will then be asked to take them.

### **AUR – Experience**

Ken stated that the committee did not think this was an issue for that fit the scope of the committee and that the issue should be returned to the JC for reassignment.

### **Decision**

JC agreed by consensus

### **Update: Internal Committees (Communications & Outreach)**

Communication – Mark

The committee has begun efforts towards the TAP annual report. Sections of the report have been assigned and a draft is scheduled to be ready by March. Staff will be reaching out to you for narratives.

Deadline for feedback on the bylaws is February 22, 2013

Committee is also working on effective communication with the group and updating Facebook frequently

Outreach – Colleen

Many members are not handing in their outreach reports. Please encourage them to do so.

The committee is also looking at updating and improving the Outreach Toolkit on Tap Space for effectiveness.

Project Activities

Toll Free – The committee is happy with their assignments and subcommittees have already been assigned. One subcommittee is already conducting test calls. The Screening committee drilled down all the issues into one major issue.

Notice and Correspondence – Annie

Committee provided Pete Riley IRS PO suggestions on 3 notices. Program office is very limited in what they can do due to budgetary constraints; therefore some of the changes



suggested may not be possible. Committee will continue to forward suggestions and monitor the implementation.

Tax Forms and Pubs – Bob

The committee has a backlog of parking lot issues which they want to go through and tackle aggressively.

TAC – Ed

The committee has two subcommittees and 1 screening committee. The screening committee met and was also tackling the issue of someone contacting submitters.

TAP Communication – Seth

Committee has a good start and will be moving forward and will be coming up with something good.

### **Public Comment**

Jackie Rollins assisted with the explanation of Issue 25051– Additional Line on Form 1040.

### **Closing**

Rich mentioned that he was very thankful to Patti Robb for sending him NTAs MSP list. He asked that everyone take time to read them. TAP has the opportunity to assist the NTA with the issues that she thinks are most serious. Everyone is charged to review the list and keep it in the back of your mind when you are working your project assignments.

**Next Meeting: February 27, 2013 at 2 p.m. ET**



**Joint Committee  
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
Teleconference Meeting Minutes  
December 13, 2012**

**Designated Federal Official**

- Tiffany Todaro                      Acting TAP Director

**Members Present**

- Rich Bilancia                      TAP Chair
- Colleen Hitchcock                TAP Vice-Chair
- Annie Fishman                    Chair, Notice & Correspondence
- Robert “Bob” Hayden            Chair, Tax, Forms and Pub
- Edward “Ed” Sykes               Chair, Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC)
- Kenneth “Ken” Armstrong       Chair, Toll-Free Phone Improvement
- Mark Marshalek                   Chair, Communication Committee

**Members Absent**

- Seth Flanders                      Chair, Taxpayer Communications

**Guests:**

- Lois Lombardo                    Acting Executive Director Systemic Advocacy
- Pat Dosdall                        TAP Panel Member

**Staff Present**

- Louis Morizio                      TAP East Manager
- Susan Jimerson                    TAP West Manager
- Steve Berkey                      Senior Program Analyst
- Linda Rivera                       Senior Program Analyst
- Susan Gilbert                      Senior Program Analyst
- Russ Pool                          Database Analyst
- Nina Pang                          Program Analyst
- Donna Powers                      Program Analyst
- Marianne Dominquez              Program Analyst
- Ellen Smiley                       Program Analyst
- Patti Robb                          Program Analyst



- |                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| • Marisa Knispel | Program Analyst      |
| • Meredith Odom  | Program Analyst      |
| • Kymberly Maine | Management Assistant |

### **Members of the Public**

None

### **Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda – Rich Bilancia/Tiffany Todaro**

Tiffany Todaro thanked the 2013 Joint Committee (JC) members for accepting the responsibilities of being the chair for their project committees. She said she heard nothing but good things about the Face-to-Face meetings held during the week of December 3-7.

### **Roll Call – Kymberly Maine**

Kymberly took roll call and quorum was met.

### **Review and Approval Minutes – Rich Bilancia**

There are no prior committees minutes to approve.

### **National Office Report – Tiffany Todaro**

Tiffany congratulated all of the chairs for being elected committee chairs. She said she heard nothing but good things about the face-to-face meetings and the training was a success. She mentioned she felt TAP was headed in a good direction and this is going to be a good year.

### **TAP Chair Report – Rich Bilancia**

Rich Bilancia congratulated the chairs as well for being elected. He provided the committee with how he planned to run the JC and the monthly calls. He said the JC dealt with both individual and collaborative issues as a leadership body and that he would like to keep all the calls on schedule. He requested everyone call into the calls prepared and if there was a subject that required an additional call then the JC would plan accordingly. He also requested that everyone read the pre-reads and if they had any concerns or questions to contact everyone prior to the JC call as to keep the JC call for new issues or to approve projects. He asked that if any of the project committee chairs were going to miss the JC meeting to have the vice-chair attend the JC meetings.

### **Project Committee Review – All**

Each Project Committee Chair introduced themselves and provided a brief breakdown of how the face-to-face meetings went and how the members felt about the face-to-face meetings.

Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC's) Project – Ed Sykes provided a brief description about his background. He stated the members feelings were they felt good about where



the TAP was headed this year. He mentioned the group had started working on their project and had broken up into different subcommittees, which were given leads to guide them.

Taxpayer Communications Project – Rich spoke on behalf of Seth Flanders, stating Seth ran a really good meeting at the face-to-face, even having the group split into two separate groups. Rich said four subcommittees were formed and they all were already working hard.

Toll-Free Improvement Project – Ken Armstrong provided a brief description about his background. He mentioned the group had started working a few issues that TAP had received issues on and all of the members enjoyed the meetings and the training.

Tax Forms and Pubs Project – Bob Hayden provided a brief description about his background. He mentioned the group was hard at work with three focus groups that Patty Wagner had provided at the face-to-face. He also said the group would be writing up several project referrals to be approved by the JC. He said the group had also looked at several issues that were still in the parking lot relating to Tax Forms and Pubs.

Notice and Correspondence Project – Annie Fishman provided a brief description about her background. She mentioned the group had broken up into three subcommittees and were looking at three different notices. She said the group was a little unclear about the overall goal that the IRS wanted out of the group, but they were gathering more information from the program owners and would have more information soon.

Internal Communications – Mark Marshalek provided a brief description about his background. He said he appreciated being elected to run the internal communications for the second year in a row. He looked forward to working on the Annual Report and the monthly newsletter.

Outreach – Colleen Hitchcock provided a brief description about her background. She said the outreach training at the face-to-face meetings was well received and she thought it helped people not be afraid of outreach. She said the Outreach Committee would consist of all the vice-chairs and would meet semi-monthly.

### **Chair Training – Steve Berkey**

Steve stated traditionally at the Annual Face-to-Face meetings, there was chair training, which provided information on responsibilities and how to run their committees appropriately. He said this year the Executive Director of Systemic Advocacy has requested staff and committee chairs to receive project management training. He said the training was still being developed by Susan Gilbert and someone from Systemic Advocacy. He said he would keep everyone up to date on the progress and when it would be scheduled.



### **Conference Call Meeting Dates and Time – Rich Bilancia**

Rich recommended that the JC continue to have their meetings on the fourth Wednesday at 2 p.m. ET.

The JC decided, by consensus, to continue meeting the fourth Wednesday at 2 p.m. ET.

**Action Item:** Susan Gilbert to send out the calendar note to schedule the JC calls for the year.

### **2013 Face-to-Face Meetings – Tiffany Todaro/Rich Bilancia**

Tiffany reported later in the year there would be a Joint Committee Face-to-Face meeting, location and date to be determined at a later date. She said the National Taxpayer Advocate was happy to hear that the face-to-face meetings were a success and went over so well with the committees. She said the budget has been increased up to \$24K per face-to-face meetings.

### **By-Laws – Steve**

Steve provided some background on the by-law topic, stating that on the November JC call, the topic was discussed and the JC decided to allow the new JC committee approve the by-laws. He said when TAP had gone through the TIGTA audit; TIGTA had recommended by-laws as a set of guidelines to follow. He said staff had started working on them in 2007, and then sent them to the internal communications committee to finalize. He said they have not been approved because TAP has been going through several changes over the years and now the by-laws are ready to be approved.

He said from the JC November call, several members had voiced a concern to review the draft and make changes if needed.

Rich recommended having Mark Marshalek from the internal communications committee, lead Kirk Chartier and Seth Flanders to develop an accelerated process to review and share with the entire Panel then to get approved by the JC.

### **Closing Codes – Tiffany Todaro**

Louis spoke on behalf of Tiffany regarding this topic. He explained the reason behind the reason for a new closing code, stating a project committee recommendations were not accepted because the IRS was working on the project at the same time as the project committee and had already completed the project prior to elevation. He explained they had reinstated a closing code that wasn't being used and would like to get JC approval. Rich explained agreed that using the new closing codes would give credit to those project committees who work hard on a project and then find out the IRS has been also working on the same project.

The JC decided, by consensus, to approve the closing code for use on project referral forms.

**Inappropriate recommendation in Project Referral #23763 – Tiffany Todaro**

Rich spoke on behalf of Tiffany regarding this topic. He explained the background on this document and said between JC approval and final Quality Review; someone added a whole new section which was not approved by the JC. He said the issue was pulled from the IRS and corrected, then resubmitted. He stressed the importance of reviewing pre-reads and that he would be monitoring who made changes on referral forms when he received them.

**Survey Update – Louis Morizio**

Louis mentioned he had made a minor change to one question and had emailed the corrected version out to all members. He said he had received several confirmations from members who had received the invitation to take the survey. He said most of the retirees who had taken the survey had good comments to say.

**Committee Recommendations within 30-60 days – Rich Bilancia**

Not discussed.

**New Adhoc Committees – Rich Bilancia**

Rich inquired how the JC membership felt about forming a December Face-to-Face Adhoc Committee to develop and design the Annual Face-to-Face Meetings.

The JC decided, by consensus, to develop an Adhoc committee specifically tasked with designing the Face-to-Face meetings for next year.

**Action item:** this committee needs volunteers.

**Improvements to Joint Committee calls – Seth Flanders**

Not discussed.

**New member refresher training – Rich Bilancia**

Rich spoke to the group about deciding a way to ensure the new members retained the information they received at the Face-to-Face. He said they received a lot of information and they need a way to reinforce the information they learned.

**Public Comment**

None

**Closing**

Rich closed the meeting and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

**Next Meeting: January 23, 2013 at 2 p.m. ET**