



## 2002 Meeting Minutes W&I /Reducing Taxpayer Burden/Notices Issue Committee Meetings

- December 18, 2002
  - November 27, 2002
  - October 29, 2002
  - October 7, 2002
- 

### **Wage & Investment Reduce Taxpayer Burden (Notices) Meeting Minutes**

December 18, 2002  
Teleconference  
Noontime - EST

#### **Participants**

##### **Panel Members -**

- Phil Bryant, Chairperson
- Sallie Chavez (Designated Federal Official)
- Anthony DiMartino
- C. Morgan Edwards, Vice-Chair
- Charles (Skip) Eshelman
- Curtis Feese
- Robin Gausebeck
- Glenn Hall
- William (Dick) Murphy
- David Robinson
- Thomas Seuntjens
- Eileen Shuman
- George Sullivan
- Virginia Symonds
- R. Jeana Warren

##### **Staff Members -**

- Inez E. De Jesus (Recorder)
- Nancy L. Ferree

##### **Guests -**

- James (Jim) A. Cesarano, Program Analyst, W&I, Single Point of Contact
- Lisa Neuder, CCH (Commerce Clearance House) Incorporated
- Amy Hamilton, Tax Notes



### **Welcome and Announcements/Roll Call**

Chairperson Phil Bryant began meeting timely by welcoming all participants, and guests, and by wishing all a "Merry Christmas"!

Also, Chairperson Bryant welcomed Vice-Chair C. Morgan Edwards back since he recently underwent surgery. Mr. Edwards provided an update on his current health condition and thanked everyone for their concerns.

Note taker De Jesus took the roll call; quorum of at least 10 committee members present was met, and Committee Member Tom Seuntjens reminded all that according to parliamentary procedures, quorum was mostly important during decision-making meetings.

**Review/Approve Minutes of November 27, 2002** Motion to accept minutes was made by Committee Member George Sullivan, and motion was second by Dick Murphy; no objections, these minutes were accepted by consensus.

### **Topic of Meeting**

Location for face-to-face-meetings: after a brief discussion and input provided by Analyst Jim Cesarano and Designated Federal Official (DFO) on the top 5 locations (Jacksonville, FL., Austin, TX., Kansas City, Dallas and Atlanta, GA,) the committee agreed by consensus that Austin, Texas would be the location for their first face-to-face meeting.

Dates: February 21 & 22, 2003. (Travel day Feb 20th, & afternoon of Feb 22nd 2003)

Structure of Meeting:

- Friday, Feb 21, 2003-whole day
- Saturday, Feb 22, 2003-half a day

**Action Item:** Arrangements will be made so that the committee may visit the Austin Service Center with the purpose of observing the processing of notices. The committee expressed a desire to tour a facility even if they do not produce notices.

**Action Item:** DFO Chavez is to contact Area 5 Local Taxpayer Advocate Diane Glass and arrange conference call for Chair/Vice-Chair, in order to begin the planning stages.

**Action Item:** Create an agenda for Face-to-face meeting in Austin, Texas. (DFO, Chair, Vice-Chair, & Tom Seuntjens.)

**Action Item:** Arrangements will be made with the hotel where committee will be lodging to hold "public meetings" at their location, if possible.

**Action Item:** A sub-committee will be created with the purpose of reviewing the process of what goes on regarding Notices at the Atlanta Service Center.

**Action Item:** The committee requested data regarding "high volume notices" prior to the February 21/22, 2003 meeting.

Invitation to attend face-to-face meeting in Austin, Texas was extended to Program Analyst Jim Cesarano and he accepted.



## Sub-committee Report

Program Analyst Jim Cesarano shared with the committee what was currently being worked on regarding Notices. He emphasized the following:

1. How can we market notices?
2. Tax statements are still not clear.
3. \*\*The Interest and Penalty Attachment to Notices sent still needs work on.
4. Little areas still remain being major issues.

The Plain language website was shared with all again: [www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov)

\*\*Item #3, listed above, Interest and Penalty Attachment to notices sent, needs to be reviewed and redesigned with "plain language" in mind.

## Creation of Additional Sub-committees

Suggestion was made to engage 2 to 3 members in subcommittees by no later than February 2003 with the purpose of conducting research, and having reports available for all to review.

"Top 10 Notices"- review those that have already been redesigned. (Highest volume)

The following were briefly discussed during conference call:

CP 12-Math Error- Overpayment of \$1.00 or more- 3½ Million distribution

CP 14-No Math Error- Balance due of \$5.00 or more-

CP 11-Math Error- Balance due- 1 million distribution

**Action Item:** Program Analyst Jim Cesarano will email the Top 10 Notices that the IRS is currently working on to DFO Chavez who will share this information with the committee.

Committee will identify Top 5 Notices that the committee would like to be engaged in.

Summary:

1. The committee is to classify notices: a) overpayment, b) balance due, c) refund transcript and create 3 subcommittees to work on each one.
2. These 3 subcommittees need to review the notices that have already been redesigned and also to ensure that there is no overlapping of efforts.
3. The emphasis should be on reviewing the next ones that are waiting to be redesigned. The committee is to decide on First and Second choice.
4. By next meeting, January 22, 2003, these will be agenda item topics.

## Meeting Closing Remarks

Guest Participant Lisa Neuder from CCH, requested that she be sent copies of previous minutes today, and she was promised that these would be sent to her.

Chairperson thanked all participants and wished all a Great Holiday.

Next teleconference call is scheduled for January 22, 2003 at Noontime, EST. The dial-in number and Participant's code remains the same.



## **Wage & Investment Reduce Taxpayer Burden (Notices) Meeting Minutes**

Teleconference Meeting  
November 27, 2002 - 12:00PM EST

### **Participants**

#### **Panel Members -**

- Phil Bryant, Chairperson
- Anthony Di Martino
- C. Morgan Edwards, Vice-Chair
- Curtis Feese
- William (Dick) Murphy
- David Robinson
- Thomas Seuntjens
- George Sullivan
- Virginia Symonds
- R. Jeana Warren
- Sallie Chavez (Designated Federal Official)

#### **Staff Members -**

- Inez E. De Jesus (Recorder)
- Nancy L. Ferree

#### **Guest(s) -**

- James A. Cesarano, Program Analyst, Wage & Investment, Single Point of Contact Office

#### **Welcome and Announcements/Roll Call**

Chairperson Phil Bryant began meeting timely by welcoming all participants, and a special welcome was extended to guest, Program Analyst James A. Cesarano, who has an extensive background on IRS Notices.

Note taker De Jesus took the roll call; quorum as per "Notices Operating Procedures Guidelines" of 10 were met. (2/3rds of committee members)

#### **Review & Approve Minutes of October 29, 2002 Meeting**

After note taker gave a brief review of the "draft" minutes from the previous meeting, and there were no objections; these minutes were accepted by consensus.

#### **Topic of Meeting**

##### **Location of face-to-face meetings-**

Committee agreed to hold their first face-to-face meeting February 21-22, 2003. Designated Federal Official (DFO) Chavez shared that she has been researching what the cost of these meetings will be if held at the following locations:

- Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- Jacksonville, Florida



- Los Angeles, California
- Dallas, Texas
- Houston, Texas
- San Antonio, Texas
- Portland, Oregon

DFO Chavez shared with the committee that the least expensive location is Jacksonville, Florida. There is a \$1,300.00 difference between Jacksonville and Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Also, the TAP Staff office in Fort Lauderdale, Florida is available for consideration. Since there still is no information on the Internal Revenue Service budget, these plans are not finalized yet.

The current goal is to obtain the lowest cost and at the best location for all participants. It was suggested that the location of the face-to-face meeting be where one of the committee members resides. Also, preference was made towards choosing San Antonio, Texas.

**Action item:** DFO Chavez will update cost projections by including additional two members, and email to everyone this information prior to the next meeting.

No decisions were made concerning the June 2003 face-to-face meeting.

#### **Overview of meeting in Washington with W&I Notice Unit-**

Vice-Chair C. Morgan Edwards and DFO Chavez shared their recent experiences when they both were invited on November 19, 2002 to an IRS meeting in New Carrollton, Maryland regarding "Notices". The meeting's primary objective was to prioritize which IRS Notices will be changed/modified for 2004. The committee agreed that one of their primary goals is to learn the Notice process. It was suggested that a flow chart be created. Second goal is to remove information from Notices that is not essential. All agreed that "Simplicity" is the key; notices should be 1-2 pages only. The committee also agreed that there is a need to obtain information from the "catalog of standard notices" and share list of notices and have subcommittee(s) review.

**Action item:** DFO Chavez is to provide Notice Process Flowchart to all with background information, e.g. how many notices currently exist and what category do they fall under?

**Action item:** DFO Chavez is to send out to this committee a list of approximately 300 computer-generated notices. What is the percentage of taxpayers that receive notices and what are the top 10 notices that go out?

**Objective by next meetings:** Chairperson and DFO want to be ready to share what the top 10 notices are and subcommittees will be created. By the February 2003 face-to-face meeting, subcommittee will report back their findings.

Volunteers to serve on subcommittee as of today are:

Phil Bryant, C. Morgan Edwards, Dave Robinson, Tony Di Martino and Sallie Chavez; C. Morgan Edwards will be Chair on the subcommittee.

#### **New Business**

Guest/Program Analyst James Cesarano explained that the IRS' primary goal, since the Service has undergone reorganization, is to obtain notice clarity. Mr. Cesarano shared that the style of writing currently being used is the "Reader Focus Writing" style, also known as "plain language"; he also shared that the process of changing notices takes a long time. He foresees that current changes may not be seen until 2005.



Mr. Cesarano emphasized the importance in obtaining external input and he also felt that by testing or marketing a way to see how taxpayers understand modified notices is vital to the Notice Program. The committee can act as a conduit in obtaining input from taxpayers via focus group meetings. (Consideration towards professional groups was discussed)

Mr. Cesarano referenced: [www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov).

All committee members agreed to be engaged with the process of reviewing notices. The committee requested to see samples of "exceptionally good notices"- e.g. CP 32, 37A. "Letter(s)" or "communication to the taxpayer" should replace the word notice.

### **Meeting Closing Remarks**

Mr. Cesarano expressed gratitude for being allowed to participate on this teleconference meeting And looked forward to be working with this committee. The committee also thanked Mr. Cesarano for sharing his expertise with them.

Chairperson ended timely at 1:00pm EST, and the next teleconference meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 18, 2002, at Noontime, EST.



## **Wage & Investment Reduce Taxpayer Burden (Notices) Meeting Minutes**

*"Administrative Meeting"*

October 29, 2002 -1:00PM EST

### **Participants -**

- Panel Members
- Phil Bryant
- Anthony DiMartino
- C. Morgan Edwards
- Curtis Feese
- Robin Gausebeck
- Thomas Seuntjens (Temporary Chair)
- Eileen Shuman
- George Sullivan
- Virginia Symonds
- R. Jeana Warren
- Sallie Chavez (Designated Federal Official)

### **Staff Members -**

- Inez E. De Jesus (Recorder)
- Nancy L. Ferree

\*Since Area 4 was holding their first meeting during this same time period, Panel Member Glenn Hall excused himself from participating on this call. (Panel members Hall and Gausebeck will be exchanging information with each other.)

### **Welcome and Announcement**

Temporary Chairperson Seuntjens began meeting timely by welcoming everyone. Note taker De Jesus took the roll call, which was followed by the Chairperson's review of agenda items and emphasis was made that this is an "administrative meeting" and future meetings will be "open meetings" as directed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

Emphasis was made on the importance of beginning and ending meetings timely. Reminder was made to all participants to identify themselves before speaking.

Minutes from October 7, 2002 were reviewed, and accepted by consensus.

Since Mr. Seuntjens is the Chair on the TAP Joint Committee, elections for New Chair and Vice-Chair for this committee were conducted. A few minutes were taken for review of biographies and candidates Phil Bryant and C. Morgan Edwards each gave a 2-minute presentation. Temporary Chair suggested that candidates leave the teleconference for a few minutes while the voting process was exercised. Upon their return Recorder announced the results, which was:

### **Chair, Phil Bryant**

A discussion took place about the vice-chair. Several panel members were nominated but declined. Mr. Edwards was asked if he would accept vice-chair. He said he would accept. The panel elected C. Morgan Edwards as vice-chair (by consensus).



At this point, meeting was turned over to Chair Phil Bryant.

**Schedule Meetings for next 12 months**

The following was reached by consensus: to meet by teleconference once a month (Noontime-Eastern common time) 4th Wednesday of every month (with some exceptions) and to schedule 2 face to face meetings depending on the budget.

Teleconference	Face-to-Face	Location
November 27, 2002		
December 18, 2002		
January 22, 2003		
February 19, 2003**	**February 21-22, 2003	to be determined
March 26, 2003		
April 23, 2003		
May 28, 2003		
June 25, 2003**	**June 27-28, 2003	to be determined
July 23, 2003		
August 27, 2003		
September 24, 2003		

\*\*Travel dates February 20th and 22, 2003 and June 26th and 28th, 2003  
Tentative plan is to hold face-to-face "public meetings" all day Friday and all day on Saturday.

**Review of time zones:**

Eastern Noon  
 Central 11:00am  
 Mountain 10:00am  
 Pacific 09:00am

Designated Federal Official Chavez will be conducting cost comparisons of various venues to hold the future face-to-face meetings, and will share results with the committee.

**Review TAP Issue Committee Charter & Operating Procedures**

These were amended and adopted in place; for the record, change was made Page 5, under "Decision Making"- regarding quorum. "A quorum for decision-making purposes will consist of at least 2/3 of the total Committee members, including the Designated Federal Official." (See Attached)

**Review Ground Rules**

All participating committee members agreed that they "can live with" the Ground Rules received during Orientation, "Behaviors During Meetings" and "Behaviors Between Meetings" as written; these will be re-addressed if there is a need to in the future. Accepted as is. (See Attached)





### **Self-assessment Procedure**

Tom Seuntjens made reference to the "TAP Guidance" document dated September 12, 2002, Section 5, page 8, specifically "k" which addresses "each issue committee will conduct an annual self-assessment of its committee climate and performance". He suggested that all panel members read the responsibilities of panel and guidelines.

Mr. Seuntjens will be sending format to all Chairs, since he is expecting that every Chair will provide a monthly report to the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee meets 3rd Tuesday of every month.

### **Future Agenda Items**

Survey on Notices- will be addressed in the near future Venue for future face-to-face meetings (Action Item for S. Chavez)

\*\*\*\* The dial in number and participant's pass code will remain the same for all future conference calls.

### **Attachments**

- [TAP Issue Committee Charter & Operating Procedures](#)
- [Behavior During Meetings](#)
- [Behavior Between Meetings](#)



## **W&I /Reducing Taxpayer Burden/ Notices Issue Committee Meeting Notes**

October 7, 2002

The TAP members met for the first meeting of the Issue Committee on Monday, October 7, 2002 in Alexandria, VA at the Hilton Mark Center. The purposes of the meeting was to receive an orientation on the TAP Guidance, the Reducing Taxpayer Burden For Individual Return Filers (Notices) organization and begin to lay the foundation for the development for their Committee.

### **Members in Attendance:**

- Phil Bryant
- Anthony DiMartino
- C. Morgan Edwards
- Curtis Feese
- Robin Gausebeck
- Glenn Hall
- Thomas Seuntjens
- Eileen Shuman
- George Sullivan
- Virginia Symonds
- R. Jeana Warren
  
- Sallie Chavez, DFO
  
- Facilitator: Hinda Sterling

Committee Members expressed their goals and expectations of the first meeting and for the Committee:

### **Organization and Program Overview**

Program Owner(s) provided a detailed overview of the W&I Reducing Burden/Notices.

### **Development of the Operating Procedures**

The Committee agreed to review the operating procedures and arrive at agreement during their first conference call scheduled for 10/29 @ 1:00 PM EST.

### **Issue Committee Meeting Dates for 2002/2003**

The Committee agreed to set their meeting dates during their first conference call scheduled for 10/29 @1:00 PM EST.

## **Possible Agenda topics for Future Meetings**

### **Agenda Topics**

1. How we will approach and summarize issues
2. Overview of the systems
3. This Panel's budget allocation
4. How to get the information out- - Marketing our efforts
5. How do we get issues on Nina's list
6. Legislative process (idea to law)
7. Redesign of notices



8. Process to deal with customers
9. Perceptions generated by terminology (e.g. "notice")
10. Create & simplify (communication)
11. Focus groups (what potential topics and when)
12. Ad Hoc groups (how is it decided and how do we find out)

**Next Meeting's (10/29 1:00 PM EST) Agenda**

- Finish operating agreement
- Ground rules
- Answer guideline questions
- 1hour - Conference call

**TO DO:**

<b>What</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>By</b>
Return Comments on Survey to Sallie Chavez <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete survey</li> <li>• Compare two versions</li> <li>• How to market it</li> </ul>	All	10/21
Send sample of redesigned notices to panel members	DFO	Next Meeting
Send Operating Procedures and Questions via E-mail for review and editing by all members	Sallie	
Next Meeting	All	10/29 1:00 PM EST

**Needs:**

- Charts of Responsibilities
- Names of program owners
- Budget information
- List of this panels issues to prioritize
- Last year's Taxpayer Advocate's Report to Congress
- To know what other Committees are working on