



STATE OF MAINE CHAPTER INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ASSESSING OFFICERS

Executive Board Meeting
April 17, 2025 - 10:00 a.m.
Lithgow Public Library, Augusta, Maine

MINUTES

Members Present: Vice President Joe St. Peter; Secretary Barbara Brewer; Treasurer Clinton Swett; Past President Karen Scammon; Executive Board Members Lauren Asselin (remote), Terri Duff, Brent Martin, and Amber Poulin (remote). Bill Brunelle and Bonnie Baker were also in attendance.

Members Absent: Natalie Andrews, Kerry Leichtman and Darryl McKenney

Vice President Joe St. Peter called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Secretary's Report: Clint moved to accept the minutes of the March 20, 2025 meeting as written. Terri seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed. Amber abstained from the vote as she was unable to attend the March meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Clint reported a current balance of \$10,599.42, which is the same balance as the last meeting as there have been no transactions in the last month. Barbara moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Terri seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed. Clint also reported that the Chapter is now tax exempt from sales tax courtesy of the State of Maine. He provided copies of the Exemption Certificate to the Board for use in qualified purchases. Joe recommended that a primary copy be filed in the Google Shared drive for safekeeping.

Standing Committee Reports

- **Education:** Karen stated that the Education Committee (Lauren, Amber, Natalie, and Karen) has been busy planning the May 22nd meeting. Karen handed out the preliminary agenda. The speakers have been firmed up, but topics for both Dan Stevenson and Knud Hermansen have not yet been finalized. Natalie has been the contact for Dan Stevenson and Karen hopes that the topic of his presentation will be available shortly. Karen spoke with Knud Hermansen, who is well versed in deeds and surveys (he is a lawyer, a surveyor, an author, and teacher at the University of Maine), and asked him to speak on a topic of his choosing. She will be in contact with him to determine if he has decided on his topic. Three people from the Dunham Group will provide a market update on commercial and residential properties and Nichole Stenberg will discuss abatements/supplementals and the concept of "manifestly wrong."

Karen was wondering if the Board should provide name tags for those in attendance at the meeting to encourage members to get to know one another by name and by sight. Though participants are asked to introduce themselves at the beginning of each meeting, names and affiliations can become lost over the course of the day. The Board agreed that preprinting labels with attendants' names and affiliations would be useful. The May meeting registration form could be edited so that the name and preferred

affiliation (as some assessors support more than one town) could be provided for the name tags. Barbara will look in the supply closet in Standish to see if there are extra printable name tags on hand and Amber offered to print name tags from her Dymo label maker if needed.

Karen discussed that Just Ask the Assessor (JATA) could be mentioned during one of the May meeting's activity breaks. Joe agreed. Clinton verified the number of gift cards needed for the speakers at the meeting and for the giveaway drawing. Barbara asked if the Board could spice up the giveaways to include one or two of the ME Chapter mugs and a Dunkin' Donuts gift card. Clinton offered that the winner of the Amazon gift card could talk a little bit about themselves, how they landed their job(s) in assessing, etc. Barbara offered that one Amazon gift card could still be drawn, but that offering something different might be nice, too, and letting members choose which "bucket" their ticket would go towards might mix things up a bit. Barbara also offered to do the work on the giveaway mugs and Dunkin' Donuts gift cards. Amber also offered to help with the tickets and the drawings.

Karen then asked if the Board could revisit the cost of attendance at the May meeting. While at the March meeting the Board agreed to \$55 for members, and \$70 for nonmembers, which would cover the costs associated with the meeting, Karen believes the increase should be more modestly applied to avoid lack of attendance for those at the end of their budget year. The Board agreed to \$50 for members, and \$65 for nonmembers, which was the same cost as the ME Chapter meeting on March 7, 2024. Board members are asked to contribute one half the cost, \$25 each, to balance out the total cost of the meeting.

Terri asked if there would be a remote component to the May meeting. Her inquiry stems from a conversation she had with Lewis Cousins, President of the Maine Association of Assessing Officers, who reported that their Northern Conference (scheduled for April 18th) has an equal number of those attending remote as those attending live. Some assessors do not have the time/resources to travel and remote options can be particularly useful in terms of providing education. While Joe agrees, providing a remote option can be time consuming to arrange, and technology difficulties can interrupt the day's events. That said, he does hope to provide intermittent remote options as the Maine Chapter is able.

- **Legislative:** As Kerry was absent from the meeting, Bill Brunelle offered that the bills are still being printed (1,728 of the 2,050 have been printed to date). Eighty-four of these bills pertain to property tax. He further mentioned that there are many bills containing constitutional amendments as well this year. As amendments to the State Constitution require a two-thirds majority to pass, it is a challenging process to enact an amendment.
- **Membership:** Barbara asked if the Board would consider purchasing Maine Chapter promotional items for future meetings and events to give away. Barbara comprised a list of somewhat useful, reasonably priced items that are currently available from 4Imprint.com. The Board consensus was that "swag" is nice and a good idea for Chapter promotion if the cost was within Chapter means. Barbara also wanted the Board to consider how it might be able to purchase nicer items in 2028 in recognition of the Chapter's 50th anniversary. Terri suggested that a 50/50 raffle might be a quick way to earn extra money for the purpose. The lowest cost item on the prepared list was for pens, namely, 250 pens for approximately \$140. Terri moved that the Board approves the purchase of the promotional pens. Amber seconded the motion. All were in favor. Barbara will place the order with 4imprint.com, hopefully in time for the May meeting and for distribution at Property Tax School in June.

- **Audit:** None
- **Nominating:** None
- **Communications:** Joe distributed the latest edition of the newsletter earlier this week. He is now looking ahead at proofing the Maine Chapter website pages. He plans to reach out to the communications committee and ask for their help with proof-reading. Amber also volunteered to help. If anyone on the Board could look at our website content, that would also be helpful. Joe also welcomes non-Board members to review the website and offer feedback on any changes needed.

Joe has also updated the Just Ask the Assessor (JATA) list. He has adjusted the list based on JATA members' willingness to continue to participate. He has not yet heard back from either Nichole Stenberg or Rob Sutherland. However, Judy Mathiau has graciously agreed to stay on the list despite her impending retirement. Joe suggested that the Board create a standing committee to keep the JATA list updated and current. He also suggested that JATA members could find ways to be more involved, such as offering "office hours" on a periodic basis, or creating periodic Zoom meetings with those interested in getting real time answers to their questions. Joe envisions an open forum where seasoned assessors could impart their knowledge to newer assessors needing help and guidance on specific topics. Karen would like to see three or so JATA members rotate their presence at the periodic meetings so that the commitment for those willing to mentor is not overwhelming. Brent also suggested that a JATA designation could be added to the Assessor's information on their corresponding town's website (provided that the town allows it).

Joe also discussed a new application from a Chapter member, Becky Logan, Kennebunk assessor, who is willing to serve as a JATA mentor. The Board agreed to add Becky to the JATA list. The application form will be added to the Maine Chapter website if there are other seasoned assessors who would also like to be on the JATA list.

- **IAAO:** Karen reminded the Board that the IAAO conference is in Orlando this year. Barbara added that the dates of the conference are scheduled for September 21-24th.

Ad Hoc Committee Report

- **History:** Brent found an old copy of the IAAO cookbook online at E-bay which he purchased for \$21.21. Joe is hoping that the Maine Chapter can add recipes (from both Board and Chapter members) to the website as a fun way to network. The Board is interested to see what the IAAO was cooking up when their book was published.

Old Business

- **2025 Annual Meeting & Planning:** Karen hasn't had time to research possible venues for the annual meeting yet but was wondering if we shouldn't poll the members about where their priorities are regarding our meetings. Lauren expressed concern regarding the correlation between cost and attendance. Joe will add language to the exit survey for our next meeting to determine what affect cost has on attendance. Joe also offered to geographically plot where the Chapter members are located to determine a central meeting point for Chapter members. While the Augusta Civic Center has been a good venue, the Board wants to make certain that Chapter members who live further away are

accommodated. Jeff's Catering in Bangor was good to work with at the last annual meeting and it might be a viable venue in the future. Clint offered that once every 3 to 5 years the Chapter meeting could be held in Presque Isle. The date of the annual meeting is currently planned for November 20th.

- **Property Tax School, Evening Program Volunteering/Co-sponsoring (Update).** Joe stated the event planning for the evening activities has been going well. Kerry has selected an "assessing" movie for movie night. There will also be games, such as corn hole and Kubb, and a "seasoned" assessor presentation to celebrate a retiring assessor who has been a great asset to the Board (this celebratory event is planned for Tuesday night in the Summit Room of Thomas College). Kerry and Darryl will give speeches, but one more speaker is needed. Karen inquired if there were any archived photos of the retiree being celebrated. Bill Brunelle has a couple of photos he will share; Joe has looked in the Chapter records but has only found a couple of photos so far. Lauren volunteered to help; Joe will add her to the list but added that he will assign tasks as the date approaches. Lauren took charge of purchasing a retirement jersey/shirt on behalf of the Board.

New Business

- Per Bill, the 2025 tree growth values are now posted on the State's website. However, farmland values are not available yet.

Terri moved to adjourn the meeting, and Brent seconded. All were in favor. The motion passed and the Board adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 15th.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Brewer, Secretary