

MEETING of the ADVISORY COUNCIL
of the CONNECTICUT SOCIETY of CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS
MINUTES, January 14, 2009

1. Call to Order

CSCPA Advisory Council Chair Michael Novosel called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM at The Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cromwell, Connecticut. Mr. Novosel asked everyone present to provide a brief self-introduction, as there were also representatives of the CSCPA Young Professionals Group in attendance. Mr. Novosel thanked these individuals for participating, and also thanked CSCPA Student and New Professional Outreach Specialist Alicia McCain for her work with the group.

2. Update on CSCPA Office Facilities – 2010 and Beyond

Society Executive Director Art Renner and Mr. Novosel (who is also a member of the Facilities Task Force) provided an update on the CSCPA office facilities.

The current CSCPA lease at 845 Brook Street, Rocky Hill will expire in one year. The Facilities Task Force has toured available leases in Meriden, Rocky Hill, and Wethersfield. As a result of the tour, the CSCPA has issued RFPs (Request for Proposals) to Winbrook Business Park, 712-716 Brook Street, Rocky Hill; Meriden Executive Park II, 538 Preston Avenue, Meriden; and the present landlord, New Boston, at 845 Brook Street. Elements for negotiation with each facility include tenant improvements (build out) and allowance for same. Proposals are due by the end of January, with discussion February.

[Note: Subsequent to the January Advisory Council Meeting, the RFPs had been received, considered, and returned to the submitters for refinement. All three facilities resubmitted their proposals to the CSCPA, and, acting at their May 12, 2009 meeting, the CSCPA Board of Director voted unanimously to accept the lease proposal from Winbrook Business Park, with some minor concessions asked of the landlord. A “handshake agreement” has been reached with a lease signing pending.]

3. Report from the 2008-2009 CSCPA Nominating Committee

Nominating Committee representative Wendy Cisowski distributed the proposed slate for the 2009-2010 CSCPA Leadership. The slate comprises the following nominations: Marcia L. Marien, president-elect; Thomas M. Wood, Treasurer; Ralph A. Volpe III, Secretary; and Michael T. Novosel and Stephen

A. Pedneault for members-at-large. President-elect Ann D. Jevne will assume the presidency, and the Advisory Council will elect its chair at its first meeting of the 2009-2010 year.

In addition, 25 individuals were appointed to the 2009-2010 Advisory Council as indicated in a leadership slate distributed to the group.

President Turgeon mentioned that at some point the Board might ask to meet with the Nominating Committee to discuss its approach to its charge as the administrative procedures of the new governance structure are, to a degree, still evolving.

4. Table Discussions on Leadership Selection Process

The Advisory Council members and representatives of the CSCPA Young Professionals Group were seated in groups at tables to facilitate discussion of the Society's leadership selection process. All groups were presented with four questions posed to elicit information that would ultimately enhance the CSCPA leadership recruitment process.

The first question asked participants to discuss a leadership position they have held and describe how they came to be involved.

Answers varied. Some reported being asked (personal contact) to get involved, others volunteered out of personal interest (self nomination). Others were assigned to participate by their firms. Still others became involved tangentially, e.g., made a presentation or taught a course, and became further interested.

The second question asked participants to describe why they would accept or reject a leadership position upon its offer.

Responses to accept included personal or professional interest in the issue, cause, project, or subject material; seeing a need for change; to contribute/give back; to build a resume; learning opportunities; relationship building/networking; the "desire to belong"; and perhaps even an ego boost – "someone saw something in me and asked me to belong."

Reasons for declining included the time commitment; having other obligations such as family, work, other interests; lack of perceived benefit to participation; lack of interest in group's mission; and lack of employer's support for the individual's participation.

Question three asked for suggestions on how to the CSCPA might create more interest among members to serve in CSCPA leadership positions.

Suggestions included personally inviting individuals to events (“the buddy system”); peers recruiting peers, especially among the young and new professionals; changing the (negative) perception of the time requirement; involving newcomers in their specific areas of interest within the overall organization; creating/enhancing the awareness of a committee’s mission; creating more of a structure where current members recruit future members; refining definitions of the various roles and positions for a clearer understanding so individuals can more easily see what’s involved or required; educating firms on the benefits of supporting employee involvement; encouraging members who transition from public to private to champion CSCPA involvement among the members of their new organization; keeping things “fresh” by introducing additional programs such as “Courting Success with Jen Rizzotti” and “The Essential Event”; and letting volunteers know the high level of administrative and executive support the CSCPA staff provides to its volunteer leadership.

Question four asked for suggestions on how to implement the solutions proposed in the responses to question three.

Responses here included identifying potential leaders and making one-on-one contact with them to recruit them; enlisting the assistance of firm human resources personnel to “make CSCPA involvement part of the firm culture”; learn what other state CPA societies are doing; locate more events closer to CPA population centers; enlighten members that they do not have to join a committee to get involved; and strive to make a holding CSCPA leadership position more prestigious and desirable, so that more individuals strive to attain the presidency.

5. Table Discussions on Recent Bylaws Proposal and Vote

A recent bylaws proposal asked the membership to decide whether to allow “the CSCPA Board of Directors to define membership classes, i.e., opening membership classes to include other financial professionals,” and to also decide whether to allow “Use of electronic ballots for future bylaws votes.”

The second proposal, “...electronic ballots...” was adopted with an 88 percent favorable vote. The first proposal, “...opening membership classes...” was defeated by a 53 percent to 47 percent tally.

Roughly 1,000 of some 6,000 eligible CSCPA members voted.

The table discussions addressed how a greater voter turnout might have been achieved, and how the benefits of allowing non-CPA membership might have been better explained.

A summary of the table discussions comprises the following observations and suggestions: the CSCPA has to “get out the vote, work the vote, have firm leaders and managing partners strongly encourage employees to vote – not tell them how to vote, but tell them to vote.”

Members thought there wasn't as much emphasis placed on this bylaws ballot as there was on that to restructure the CSCPA's governance. Other thought the timing of the vote was less than optimal, as it fell between Thanksgiving and Tax Season. One member thought the ballot seemed to raise three or four issues (not two), and should have been kept simple, e.g., having separate questions for “who can define membership” versus “opening the membership to non-CPAs.”

Other suggestions included offering more explanation and even debate of the issue in *Connecticut CPA* magazine. Another observation was that there is confusion between the roles of the state board of accountancy and the CSCPA (so that some individuals might've thought the ballot might've suggested allowing non-CPAs to become certified without meeting the rigorous requirements set forth in state law, as there is confusion between state licensing versus membership in the CSCPA.

Consensus was that should a subsequent similar bylaws vote take place, it would require a “long, deliberate member education program as to the benefits of non-CPA affiliation with the CSCPA.”

6. Adjournment and Reception

Executive Director Renner briefly described a new program the CSCPA will offer in May 2009 entitled “The Essential Event: Destination Future,” a program intended to supplant the Annual Meeting format so as to appeal to a greater percentage of Society membership.

The next meeting of the Advisory Council will be set when the 2009-2010 CSCPA leadership assumes office and will likely take place in June 2009.

With no additional business declared, the Advisory Council meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM, and was followed by a reception with the Board of Directors, Advisory Council, representatives of the CSCPA Young Professionals Group, and CSCPA staff in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Zampino, Recording Secretary