

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC PURCHASING OFFICIALS (MAPPO)

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 16, 2014

Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School, 215 Fitchburg Street, Marlborough

Officers Present

Mary Delaney, President
Tom Watkins, Vice President
David Gelineau & Sarah Stanton, Co-Treasurers
Whitney Haskell & Sandra Marquis, Co-Secretaries

New Members Attending

Alex, XXXXXX, Bill Pappas, Brookline

Guests Attending

None

Lunch

A buffet lunch was served at 11:30 a.m. The food was excellent.

Welcome

Mary Delaney began the meeting by thanking Beverly Sleeper, City of Marlborough, for arranging the meeting, unfortunately Beverly was unable to attend.

Mary introduced John Ghiloni, DPW Commissioner of Marlborough. John said a few words then introduced the Mayor of Marlborough, Arthur Vigeant. The Mayor welcomed the MAPPO members and began his speech by stating that he did not understand the role of the Purchasing Agent until he took office. He now knows that the folks in these positions keep the “us” honest, on track and out of trouble.

Speaker

Angela Allen, introduced Tammy Rimes, of Tammy Rimes Consulting, as a fellow procurement professional. Tammy talk was entitled “Why Government Purchasing Should be the Center of the Universe”.

PURCHASING RESPONSIBILITIES

Tammy started her talk by describing the responsibilities of the Municipal Purchasing Official(s) as one which: serves the welfare of the community, serves as the representative, helps carry out the operations, institutes policies to support governmental social goals (SDO), insures budget integrity and compliance with public laws. In addition to that long list there are many unwritten responsibilities, including: referee, problem solver, and liaison for emergency first response team. Regarding the duties of the emergency liaison, Tammy spoke of a time when her staff was responsible for procuring the equipment needed to respond to a landslide and subsequent fires. Oftentimes, the purchasing official takes on the responsibilities no one else wants or they did not know where to assign. One of the more difficult duties is the roll out of political ideas and/or policies. Usually the ideas are good but difficult to implement. An example was given of the desire to award the contract to the lowest bidder while needing to meet the governmental goals of awarding more contracts to local vendors (who are not always the lowest bidder). Another difficult duty is keeping the municipality out of the news and out of trouble. Tammy remarked that the media tends to highlight the things that go wrong, which is usually only 1% of the things accomplished.

PURCHASING IMPORTANCE

Why is purchasing such a big deal? Tammy emphasized that national and local governmental purchases make up 1—30% of Gross Domestic Product.

PURCHASING TRENDS

Tammy continued her speech point out a few trends that have emerged since the recession began.

- More cooperative purchasing – groups are sharing specifications
- E-procurement – more purchasing is being done on-line
- More collaborative and innovative solutions – bidding increased during the recession
- Community outreach – local governments began using more local products and services
- Conflicting directions

MARKETING THE PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

As a seasoned purchasing official Tammy emphasized the need to market the services the purchasing official performs for both the municipality (and its departments) and the community.

- Show that the functions that the department performs are crucial to the operations of the municipality or purchasing could be the first place cuts are made
- Requests for resources will be taken seriously
- The department's opinions will be considered during high level discussions
- To show that not everyone knows how to do purchasing and that you can do it better and more efficiently
- To get the recognition that the department deserves for saving the tax payer money and making government more efficient

WHAT'S YOUR BRAND

Tammy stated the importance of building you and your department's brand. We all know that if we don't create a brand that someone else we will create one for us.

Your brand should elevate the profession:

- Accountability
- Impartiality
- Professionalism
- Service
- Transparency

Your brand should:

- Prioritize what you do right
- Accolades or awards you received
- Use search words that apply to your department/profession
- Simplify

Choose words to describe your department:

- Integrity
- Can do
- Emergencies are us
- Friendly but firm

Establish your value – you want other people to help you establish your brand

- Who have you dazzled lately – pick one person
- Participate at meeting – don't be a spectator
- If you have a new idea - do something with it
- Leave your comfort zone
- Detail the revenues you brought into the town or the savings you achieved
- Be specific - how much did you save

MANAGE YOUR OWN REPUTATION

- Despite demands and pressures always demonstrate ethical responsibility
- Easier to tell the truth
- Give solid reasons for the “no” and the effort to find a reasonable solution
- Keep “perception” issues in mind when meeting with vendors and customers
- Keep your promises
- Keep your department clean and clutter free

DEVELOP YOUR NETWORK

- Make friends outside the department
- Return telephone calls and e-mails - it's your job
- Remember one bad remark from a vendor or customer at a city council meeting or in the newspaper can hurt – the squeaky wheel is often listened to
- Be active in municipal organizations
- Take a leadership role in the organization

ACTIVELY MARKET

- Offer fun and informative internal training
- Publish ways that you saved money or brought in revenues
- Build a rapport with your customers - go to their site, introduce yourself, and sit in their staff meetings to hear their issues
- Toot your own horn
 - e-mails
 - Press Conferences
 - Articles through the public information office
- Brag about people around you to management
- Write an article or newsletter – something you did in one paragraph
- Celebrate your achievements

NEW WAYS OF DOING BUSINESS

Tammy gave examples of how she implemented new ways of doing business which saved money and made processes more efficient.

FINAL NOTE

ARE YOU WORLD FAMOUS – ACT WORLD FAMOUS

In summary, Tammy told many interesting and informative stories of her work as a public purchasing official. The stories not only entertained the members but gave real world examples of how they could better their standing with vendors, customers and government officials. The members enjoined her speech.

Business Meeting

Mary Delaney, MAPPO President, opened the meeting at 1:20 p.m., following lunch and the speakers. Mary thanked Tammy.

Co-Secretaries Report

Mary asked for approval of the March, 2014 meeting minutes. A motion was made, seconded and motion was approved.

Co-Treasurers Report

Dave Gelineau reported that the month's beginning balance was \$34,498.42 and after additional dues and expenses the ending balance is \$30,586.29. There were no questions or comments on the treasurer's report. A motion was made to accept the report and duly seconded. Motion passed.

Web-site Committee Report

Nothing to report

Legislative Affairs Committee Report

Nothing to report.

Speaker Committee Report

Angela stated that if any member wanted Tammy's business card or presentation to call.

Deb Anderson, Attorney General's office, will be discussing "Bid Protest Issues" at the June meeting.

Members have asked that "collaborative purchasing" be a topic for next year.

Angela is looking for more ideas for next years meetings.

Working Group Committee

No Report

Good & Welfare Committee

No Report.

Seminar Committee

Cheryl Levinson and Tom Watkins announced that the Conference agenda is finalized and on-line. They are working on registering process. Members can register for either one or two days.

One member commented that the Managers conference is the same day.

There will be a social held on Thursday night – more information will be coming.

Announcements

MAPPO, will have a booth at MassBuys, May 1st. Anyone wishing to volunteer for even 30 minutes can contact Tom or Mary.

The June meeting will be held in Boston's North End on June 18th, location TBA.

Recognitions

None

Old Business

None

New Business and Member's Agenda Items

CommBuys – Update from OSD's, Nancy XXXXXXXX

MassBuys will have two training for municipalities, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. There will also be a demonstration area.

OSD met with Mary, Dave and Tom to talk about the implementation process. They were pleased with the discussion. A link needs to be added to the web page and the packet needs to be distributed. Mary will follow-up with OSD. Dave thanked everyone who participated in the meeting.

The July 1st is no longer the drop dead date for implementation. Gary Lambert, will continue to work with MAPPO to transition to from Comm-PASS to CommBuys. CommBuys will not replace the municipalities financial systems. It will take time for everyone to transition. In the meantime, the first order of business is to get trained.

Dave will be attending another meeting about the municipalities participation on April 17th at 11:00 a.m. The meeting should last an hour to ninety minutes. Members wishing to participate in person or through tele-conferencing should call or e-mail Dave know.

Andrea Woods requested the meeting topic of "Sharing strategies for managing workload, sharing checklists,etc." for a future meeting. It was noticed that MAPPO is using the website to share some of this information.

Heidi Bauer – Bid Protests – did not attend. This topic will be postponed until June.

Maureen Doherty – Social media in procurement or networking through LinkedIn. The question was, How can we promote ourselves better? This topic will be postponed until June.

A question was asked regarding whether or not the architect of an energy conservation project may take the tax deduction or tax credit. It was stated that the City needs to sign-off in order for the architect to take the deduction.

Meeting Adjourned

President Mary Delaney closed the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra L. Marquis, MAPPO Co-Secretary