Connecticut Certified Municipal Assessors Committee

Draft Minutes of February 11, 2025, Meeting

The Tuesday, February 2025, meeting of the Connecticut Certified Municipal Assessors Committee was held at the Office of Policy and Management, 450 Capitol Ave, Hartford, CT.

Patrick J. Sullivan called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

Members present: Patrick J. Sullivan OPM Representative, Paige Walton, Richard Seman, Michael Bekech, Lauren Elliott, William Gaffney, and Pam Deziel.

Others in attendance: Undersecretary Martin L. Heft, CCMA Clerk Shawna Baron and Tim Hutvagner.

CCMA Membership update: Patrick reported the committee has four new members. OPM Secretary Beckham appointed Paige Walton, Mike Bekech, Bill Gaffney and Pam Deziel to the Committee. Everyone present at the meeting introduced themselves.

Election of Officers: Patrick called for elections for Chair and Secretary. He reviewed the duties of the Chair and Secretary. The Chair sets the agenda, runs the meeting and is the primary contact for the Committee. The Secretary is responsible for transmitting the agenda packet, meeting minutes and posting on the Secretary of State’s Public Meeting Calendar. Patrick then asked for nominations for Chair.

Lauren Elliott nominated Bill Gaffney for Chair. Pam Deziel seconded the nomination.

Mike Bekech nominated Rich Seman for Chair. No second was made.

Rich stated Bill is well qualified for the position. Rich stated that he is also qualified as he has instructed a few courses over the years and recently. Rich would like the Committee to review how the course materials ae being taught and how it relates to the CCMA exam, communication between the Committee and the CCMA Instructors, the Instructors should be able to correct their exams and ensure there is a better bridge between the Committee and CAAO.

Bill stated he agrees with a lot of what Rich said. Discussion ensued. Shawna stated there is a lot of history behind decisions that were made in the past and she will be able to provide background and the rationale behind decisions as items come up for review and discussion.

Patrick called for a vote on the nomination for Bill Gaffney to serve as Chair. All members voted in favor.

Bill called for nominations for Secretary.

Lauren Elliott nominated Pam Deziel for Secretary. Rich Seman seconded the nomination. Pam abstained. All others voted in favor. Motion carried.

Shawna noted that the Committee has had a Vice Chair at times in the past who acts as Chair if the Chair is absent from a meeting. Brief discussion ensued regarding the procedure if the Chair is absent from a meeting. If the Chair is absent the members present will elect a Temporary Chair for that meeting.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of November 20, 2024, and January 11, 2025, meetings were distributed by email prior to the meeting.

Lauren Elliott made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2024, meeting. Rich Seman seconded the motion. Rich and Lauren voted in favor. Mike, Paige, Patrick, Bill and Pam abstained. Motion carried.

Patrick Sullivan made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2025, meeting. Rich Seman seconded the motion. Rich, Patrick and Lauren voted in favor. Mike, Paige, Bill and Pam abstained. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report: The December 31, 2024, January 14, 2025, February 11, 2025, Treasurer's Reports and January 10, 2025, 2024 Year End Treasurer's Report were distributed by email prior to the meeting.

Lauren asked Shawna about the fraud charges on the bank account. Shawna reported that she has the checkbook for the Committee’s checking account. Mary Huda, a prior Chair had the debit card. Fraudulent charges were made on the debit card which Shawna discovered while balancing the account. The charges were subsequently reversed by the bank.

Lauren Elliott made a motion to approve the December 31, 2024, January 14, 2025, February 11, 2025, Treasurer’s Reports and the January 10, 2025, 2024 Year End Treasurer ‘s Report. Mike Bekech seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Shawna stated the January 31, 2025, account balance is $47,380.99.

The signers for the checking account need to be updated. Authorization documents for the new signers will need to be brought to TD Bank. Martin suggested there be two signers, the Chair and the Secretary, on the account in case the Chair is not available.

Mike Bekech made a motion to have two signers on the checking account with single signer authorization and that the signers be Committee Chair Bill Gaffney and Secretary Pam Deziel. Rich Seman seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Business:

Recertifications: Shawna reviewed the process the previous Committee Members had used to approve recertification applications. There is a list of approved courses on the CCMA website, all courses offered by the Appraisal Institute that are issued AAL numbers are automatically approved, recertification applications can only use a course once per recertification cycle and credit hour proofs must be listed on the recertification form. Any educational offering with an AAL number has been approved by the Appraisal Institute. If an applicant has more continuing education proofs than will fit on the form, they must use additional forms to list the proofs.

There is a full listing on the CCMA Website of approved educational vendors and courses. It does not list all courses offered by approved vendors such as the Appraisal Institute but the AAL number designates the course is eligible.

2024 Applications:

Rich Seman made a motion to approve Evelyn A. Spagnola’s (CCMA #1653) CCMA II recertification application. Lauren Elliott seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Lauren Elliott made a motion to approve Kenneth D Delohery’s (CCMA #1563) CCMA I recertification application. Rich Seman seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

2025 Applications:

Paige Walton made a motion to deny Thomas Caputi’s (CCMA #1412) CCMA II recertification application for the following reasons; the application included ceu’s earned in 2020, the 2025 recertification application is for credit hours earned in the 2021- 2025 time period, missing signatures on some of the proofs submitted, and not using the approved application form to list all of the credit hour proofs. Mike Bekech seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Motion carried unanimously. Shawna will send a notice to Thomas Caputi of the necessary corrections to his application.

Mike Bekech made a motion to approve Celeste Fisher’s (CCMA #1499) CCMA I recertification application. Rich Seman seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Rich Seman made a motion to approve Jessica Sypher’s (CCMA #1413) CCMA II recertification application. Paige Walton seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion ensued regarding recertification applications that include proofs for programs that have not been approved for ceu’s. The Committee will require that anyone requesting approval of credit hours for an educational program present an application for approval of credit hours for the program and receive approval of credit hours prior to submitting that program as a part of their recertification application.

Lauren Elliott made a motion to approve Pamela Deziel’s (CCMA #1481) CCMA II recertification application. Paige Walton seconded the motion. Pam Deziel abstained. All the other members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Discussion regarding committee records and the retention of recertification documentation, tests, certificates and other documentation. Patrick and Martin will obtain the record retention schedule so the committee can organize the records that need to be maintained and purge any documents that no longer need to be held. Rich asked if we could scan the original documents to store them electronically and destroy the originals. Martin stated the CCMC Committee creates a printout of each of the courses a tax collector takes so they have a database of every course a tax collector took and the amount of hours that were approved which is then compared to the recertification application the person submits. Shawna stated all documents are on the google drive but there have been problems in the past with receiving everything digitally. Shawna stated the CCMA exam applications must be mailed by the regulations which have caused issues in the past. Shawna has created a database to track students who have taken CCMA Courses which covers the last three years.

2025 Course Instructors:

The Committee reviewed the 2025 list of CCMA instructors from the CAAO Education Committee.

Discussion ensued regarding instructors on the list that aren’t currently being utilized. Rich Seman expressed that he would like to be assigned to a class.

Mike Bekech made a motion to assign Pam Deziel & Stuart Topliff to Course 1A, Tim Hutvagner & Jennifer Lineaweaver to Course 1B, Chandler Rose & Bill Gaffney to Course 2A, Diane Vitagliano & Melinda Kronfeld to Course 2B, Bill O’Brien to Course 3 and Paul Hopkins & Melissa Baer to Course 4. Rich Seman seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

It was discussed that Rich could audit Course 3 with Bill O’Brien to review the course.

Shawna noted the previous CCMA Committee Members were looking at making some changes to the Committee’s regulations including having the CCMA Committee approve the instructor list rather than CAAO. The committee is focusing on 2025 School at UConn at this time and will review the regulations for change in the future.

UConn Contract for Assessor School 2025:

Bill has spoken to Amy Erhart at UConn. Amy was able to negotiate down the cost of parking to $16/day. Parking will be included in the registration fee for students. Lodgings for instructors at the Graduate Hotel will be $134/night. Instructors will receive breakfast and lunch. Shawna stated that the Committee paid for the CCMA Chair to stay at the hotel during school.

Tim Hutvagner, CAAO Education Chair, reported they have a block of 70 rooms at the Graduate for students and workshop attendees. CAAO has also reserved a block of rooms at the Fairfield Suites in Manchester for $139/night including breakfast. Tim suggested that CCMA may wish to also reserve a block of rooms for CCMA Course students. Discussion ensued.

Bill suggested the cost for the courses at UConn be set at $550 for this year to include breakfast and lunch. The charge for breakfast is $8.80/person. We are only charged for those who eat breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria. The fee for the CAAO Handbook will be $60 for the students who order a handbook. Pam suggested if the handbooks cost more than $60, the CCMA Committee could cover the additional cost for this year. Tim Hutvagner stated he would like registrations for both schools to open on March 31st.

Lauren Elliott made a motion to charge $550 to attend the UConn 2025 Assessor School CCMA Course including breakfast and to charge $60 for the handbook to any student who wants to purchase a handbook. Mick Bekech seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Road Shows:

Course 1B: Tim Hutvagner stated the instructors planned to hold the Road Show April 1, 2, 8, 9 and 15th at the New Britain Hartford Healthcare Building.

Shawna stated the procedure for a roadshow has been that a registration with payment has a seat reserved in the class. A personal check can be used to hold a seat in the class until a municipal check is issued until the end of the registration period. Registrations have been handled on a first-come, first served basis. If the town’s check isn’t received by the deadline the student can opt to be reimbursed by their municipality or withdraw from the class. When the class is full, a waiting list is created in case a seat opens in the class. Shawna posts a notice on the CAAO website stating the date that registrations for a Road Show class will open so towns can plan ahead to assist with planning for the payment requirements. Shawna stated the Committee needs to be aware there are times when there is only one seat left open, but three registrations come in on the same day and they will need to decide how they will handle that. Last year Roadshow instructors were paid $2,250 plus mileage. The cost for a Roadshow was $350 last year.

Tim stated he would like to have registrations for the class open on February 24th and end on March 21st.

Discussion ensued regarding the cost for the Road Show and the CAAO Handbook and whether to have a 1B Roadshow this spring. Tim asked if they were required to teach both the new and the old methodology for the valuation of Motor Vehicles or just one of them. The Committee said both need to be taught because we will still be dealing with the old methodology on Grand Lists prior to October 1, 2024.

Mike Bekech made a motion to charge $350 to attend the 2025 CCMA Course 1B Road Show and charge $60 for the Handbook. Rich Seman seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Shawna will send a draft of the hotline notification announcing the Roadshow and of the registration form to the Chair and the instructors.

Shawna stated there was discussion of a Course 2B Roadshow in the spring of 2025, but nothing has been submitted.

Discussion ensued regarding the order in which students are required to take the courses.

Lauren Elliott made a motion that CCMA Courses 2A, 2B and 3 must be taken in that order. Patrick Sullivan seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion ensued regarding the time of year Roadshows should be offered. Several members of the Committee prefer Roadshows to be offered in the fall.

Discussion ensued regarding the correction of the Road Show and Assessor School CCMA Course exams. Shawna stated an issue in the past has been that on Course exams a student may have been given partial credit on a multiple part question and that is not done on the CCMA exams. Students may believe they have a better understanding of the materials than they do based on receiving partial credit for a problem. Pam suggested that with multi-part questions it be clearly denoted on an exam how many points are given for each part of the question. Lauren stated instructors should have the authority to correct their exams, but the Committee should have the authority if there are any questions or issues to step in and audit the exams.

Rich Seman made a motion to allow the instructors to correct their Course exams and report the results to the CCMA Committee with the Committee having oversight and the authority to audit the exam. Mike Bekech seconded the motion. Mike, Rich, Patrick, Paige, Bill and Pam voted in favor. Lauren opposed the motion. Motion carried.

The CCMA Clerk will notify students if they pass or fail the Course exam.

Instructors will be required to correct the Course exams, forward the students’ tests and answer pages to the CCMA Committee for review. If a student challenges their grade, the CCMA Committee will review the request and make the final decision regarding the grade. The CCMA Clerk will notify the students of passing or failing the exam. After students receive Course pass/fail notification from the CCMA Committee the instructors may give the student their Course exam grade. Instructors can direct students to areas in which they are weak but cannot give them information about specific questions and answers on the exams.

There was discussion regarding the decision of the previous Committee to remove the COD from Course 1B and add it to Course 4 Reval. Pam stated she disagreed with the removal of the COD from Course 1B as there is no requirement to take the Reval Course prior to Course 2B and Course 3 where knowledge of the COD is required. Tim stated he asked for it to be moved because of the changes to Motor Vehicle valuation. COD will have to be taught in Course 2A, so it is taught before Course 2B.

Credit Hour Approval:

NRAAO Conference: Conference materials have not yet been submitted for approval.

CCMA State Website and Public Meeting Calendar:

Shawna stated the State website is being moved to a new platform. Committee members need authorization to access the website. The Committee asked who can currently access the website and can maintain and update the pages. This item will be on the March Meeting Agenda for further discussion.

Bill stated our next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2025. Shawna stated if the date of a meeting on the calendar is changed it will be a Special Meeting instead of a Regular Meeting. Shawna will see if a room is available in the Cromwell Town Hall for the March Meeting.

Martin stated they had copied all the documents and information on the CAAO website under the CCMA tab and moved them to the new OPM CCMA Website page. Currently, Martin’s Executive Assistant Debra McCarthy can update the website. The Committee needs to review all the pages and forms for updates. Patrick and Shawna will have access to the website to update the pages as needed.

Mike Bekech made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Lauren Elliott seconded the motion. The motion was adjourned at 12:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela K. Deziel