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Deputy Registrar Sub-committee Minutes **August 24, 2009**

The Assistant Registrar called the meeting to order at 3:05pm and stated this sub-committee meeting is being tape recorded so everyone must speak up when they are talking. Nancy Crespo began with the roll call of the attending members.

Jeffrey Coleman, Assistant Registrar, Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles; John Guldin, Associate Legal Counsel, Department of Public Safety; Aldo Filippelli, President, Ohio Deputy Registrars Association; Noreen Saunders, President, Ohio Clerk of Courts Association; Elise Spriggs, Attorney at Law; Senator Tom Patton's aide Tim Lynch, 128th Ohio General Assembly, Ohio Senate, 24th District

Mr. Coleman opened the floor for introductions of the attending audience. Justin Long, BMV, Nancy Crespo, Office of Policy & Legislative Affairs, Cheryl Brickman, Ohio Department of Public Safety, Fiscal Officer and Bridgette McCall. Mr. Coleman then explained that HB 2 did not specify a chairperson for this sub-committee so Director Guzmán recommended Tony Leo to chair as an interested but impartial party. He asked if there were any objections to Mr. Leo chairing this committee; there were none and the meeting was turned over to Mr. Leo.

Mr. Leo stated that there will be three sub-committee meetings instead of four. Mr. Long said the master schedule was emailed out last week. The last sub-committee meeting will be in October to approve recommendations to the large Study Group. The general format for the three sub-committee meetings:

1st Meeting: Introductions, overview of mission and Guiding Principals, approval of sub-committee topics & assignment of action items

2nd Meeting: Report & review 1st meeting's action items, determine if additional information is needed, informally agree upon recommendations & assign final action items

3rd Meeting: Review of final action items & agree on recommendations to BMV Study Group

Mr. Leo briefly went over the mission and sub-topics. He also stated that the guiding principles are the same as previously mentioned.

Mr. Leo opened the floor for discussions. The first suggestion was for combining the BMV stakeholder sub-committee meetings with this meeting.

Mission Statement

"to save lives, reduce injuries and economic loss, to administer Ohio's motor vehicle laws and to preserve the safety and well being of all citizens with the most cost-effective and service-oriented methods available."

Ms. Saunders said she would appreciate combining the meetings because it would help to reduce her travel.

Mr. Filippelli said it depends because there are a lot of topics to discuss. He does not want to take away from the other stakeholders and so forth. This way there is more time to discuss and focus on each issue.

Mr. Leo stated we can keep this in mind and toward the end of the meeting, we can make a decision.

Mr. Filippelli continued with the importance of time and just wanted to make sure we have enough time because the whole purpose of the sub-committee is to focus on the Deputy Registrars.

For the record, Mr. Leo pointed out that Mr. Barga had joined the sub-committee.

Mr. Lynch said he believes Senator Patton would agree with Mr. Filippelli, and he would like to keep the meetings separate as well.

Mr. Filippelli continued with some of the recommendations of topics. His suggestions focus on four different areas:

1. Rules and administrative changes;
2. New services provided to the public;
3. New fee structure; and
4. Political balance.

He stated those are the four areas he would like to focus on and to keep an open discussion and have an open mind and gather everyone's thoughts and ideas in order to make the Deputy Registrar system better. What he means by the Deputy Registrar system is the way they operate, the way they deal with the day-to-day operations.

Mr. Coleman asked Mr. Filippelli to elaborate a little more on that.

Mr. Filippelli feels the Deputy Registrar system was set up to be a neutral type system where no politics are involved and contributions were limited to \$100 per year. They want to make sure that the process still maintains that same type of integrity. Anyone that wishes to provide this type of service should be evaluated the exact same way. This would mean that the political disclosures, the contribution rules, and the business tasks must be in line with the original intent to setting up the Deputy Registrar system. He would like the Deputy Registrar system to continue to operate with its original intent.

Mr. Leo asked if anyone had anything to add to Mr. Filippelli's list.

Mr. Filippelli stated the first one he would like to discuss is the opportunity to have uniform hours throughout the state. For example, on Monday or Tuesday there are different hours for different services offered. He wants to make sure there are uniform hours across the board. He suggests looking into allowing each Deputy to offer the same types of services, such as allowing each Deputy Registrar location to offer driving testing, or allowing deputies to collect reinstatement fees.

He continued with the topic of kiosks. He feels having a kiosk at each of the agencies is more convenient for residents who live in different parts of the areas. They can test in a local community versus driving half hour or forty-five minutes to a different location. He stated he always tries to put himself in the place of the customer, when he goes to a license bureau he expects to be serviced in many different areas.

He says the reinstatement office is closed on Monday and that's what makes it hard because when a customer comes from a different state they expect to do all these services at once. This is a big inconvenience to customers.

Another topic is in regards to the late night hours. They are open until 6:30 p.m. once a week but from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., there is no support service. His recommendations are to either consider expanding the support level from the back office to 6:30 p.m. or the driver license side and the vehicle registration side should consider changing the hours from 6:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The reason he picked 5:30 p.m. is because there is still support until 6:00 p.m. so if they shut the agency down at 5:30 p.m. they can still provide services to customers within the agency.

Mr. Coleman explained if a customer goes to a Deputy Registrar and needs information from the back office, they will call License Control. License Control is able to pull up the screen on that individual based on that information and then will tell the Deputy what to do next. That office is not staffed past 5:45 p.m. So presently, there is no support for those services. Every Deputy Registrar has the hours of 5:00 p.m. or 5:30 p.m. throughout the week and one late night until 6:30 p.m. Some agencies have hours approved for 8:00 p.m. trying to bring in a little more business during these economic times. He confirmed the BMV does not have staff to run the back office past 5:30 p.m.

Ms. Spriggs clarified the department statutorily requires the Deputy Registrars to stay open late, due to staff they cannot stay open to help. So the BMV theoretically has the public coming in to get help but there is no help and they get frustrated at the Deputy Registrar.

Mr. Coleman restated there is not enough staff to cover the hours. He asked Ms. Brickman if lack of staff directly relates to the budget and lack of money.

Ms. Brickman replied that BMV has hiring restrictions and all positions must be approved by OBM, DAS, and the Director.

Another topic of discussion was that Mr. Filippelli is very concerned with the list of questions deputies have to ask, especially on the driver license side. They are hoping to reduce the number of questions asked. He feels some of the questions asked are not as important and discussing some of the questions with the customers is a private matter.

Ms. Saunders added that they are required, for certain transactions, to ask if a customer would like to donate and when processing another transaction they also have to ask if they want to donate to another organization. Often times when the first questions are asked, the customer says no because they can't afford it. She feels asking a second question regarding donating is rude and her customers get embarrassed and feel uncomfortable. She thinks that is very difficult to deal with in a room full of people.

Mr. Guldin clarified when Mr. Filippelli refers to rules, in many cases it's statutes he should be referring to. They require a statutory change or in some cases, it may be a rule change. He thinks it's a good idea, but this group can't solve the statutory changes. He suggested Senator Patton or Representative Domenick carrying that to the General Assembly.

Ms. Spriggs suggested when going through topics, Mr. Guldin note which are administrative rules and statute changes so she can sort them out.

Mr. Leo suggested that more time should be spent on brainstorming and less on solution development. That gives more time to do some research and bring some answers to questions at the next meeting. He asked everyone to document their points and ideas.

Mr. Coleman asked Mr. Filippelli to clarify the reason why he would want to reduce the number of questions asked, if it is to cut down on transaction time, or because it would reduce a person's discomfort level.

Mr. Filippelli answered it is a combination of the two. When customers have medical conditions, it's uncomfortable for them to address invasive medical questions. There are some people who do not want that information to be overheard by other individuals in the room.

Ms. Saunders reiterated how uncomfortable it is to ask a person if they would like to donate to a fund, after they already said they cannot afford to donate in a previous question.

Mr. Coleman said looking at the statistics for monies collected for the "save our sight fund," the donations are broken down by zip code. The economically deprived areas had higher numbers as far as contributions.

Mr. Filippelli reiterated they do not feel some questions are necessary for certain transactions. Also for the driver license questions, there are several that should not be asked. Military questions could be dangerous which also take more time and they do not know the meaning behind the question or why they are asking them. He suggested by adjusting some questions they may be able to eliminate asking further questions. That is something he would like the sub-committee to review. For each transaction, there are different questions. For example, for vehicle registrations, the Deputy is required to ask if your license is suspended. If the answer is yes, then they must ask what caused the suspension. Again, that is a tough position to be in just asking the first question if the answer is yes then asking what happened is very serious and personal. He thinks there should be a focus on the elimination or modifying of the 16 questions they are required to ask.

Mr. Coleman suggested with the help of Mr. Guldin, they will take a look at the questions and see which are statutorily required.

Mr. Filippelli started another discussion about workers compensation. The Deputy Registrars are technically considered a clerical type staff but Worker's Compensation has changed them to a retail type operation. That's a major change in fees that are paid from a couple hundred dollars per year to three or four-thousand dollars per year, those are estimates. He stated that that they're seeing them as a regional chain. They would like to have some type of clarification that we are a government operation, and he believes they should be defined as clerical vs. regional. If they have that clear cut, they wouldn't have to worry about any type of changes, or any type of interpretation.

Another topic relates to purchasing supplies for the office. Mr. Filippelli asked if there is a way for the Deputy Registrars to be tax exempt for purchasing supplies for their office. Right now they are not therefore they are paying taxes for the office supplies.

For the Deputy Registrar request for bid process, Mr. Filippelli requested some type of face-to-face interview. He thinks the problem with the current bidding process is that there are many individuals who duplicate their information. He suggested adding another step sitting down and meeting with that person face-to-face and to conduct an interview.

Mr. Filippelli also suggests the opportunity of extending the current contract's three-year time frame to five years. One of the areas they want to focus on is keeping good, solid Deputy Registrars in this business. He stated the way the economy is now, three years is really hard to re-coop an investment, but with five years, it will give them a chance to continue better money management.

Another area Mr. Filippelli brought up to focus on is when a person applies to be a Deputy Registrar, they are required to set aside a certain amount of money in an escrow account. So the person has their current business account, and now they have to establish another business account to put their money into during the process.

Mr. Guldin clarified this was not the case, and all of the money can be in the same account.

Mr. Filippelli continued with improving the protection of Deputy Registrars' personal information. Within the RFP process the contracts are subject to public records. They include driver license numbers, home address, employee names, personnel policy, and security policy for the agencies, among others. If someone requests these contracts, then they would have all of this information.

Mr. Guldin referenced the RFP process, saying most of that is within the rules which can be changed within the Department except for the length of the contract, because that is statutory.

Ms. Crespo said when there is a public record request personal information is redacted. Mr. Guldin clarified some things are redacted but some of the things Mr. Filippelli mentioned are not redacted.

Mr. Filippelli addressed a BMV signage concern which came up a few years ago. He would like the BMV to reconsider the mandatory signage requirement. Many agencies are not viable, and requiring them to buy new signage in a short period of time is very costly at \$2,000 to \$5,000. He suggested making the signage requirements optional.

He also mentioned he would like to find an avenue for providing better benefits to the employees, like the benefits for State of Ohio employees. He wants the Deputy Registrar employees to be included under the same coverage as State employees.

Mr. Filippelli began discussing other ways deputies could earn income. He said advertising for specific Deputy Registrar locations would help get people to the businesses. Included in the advertisement should also be a disclaimer stating that these services do not reflect the Ohio Bureau Motor Vehicles. He also mentioned allowing deputies to participate in online, mail-in, and IVR transactions.

He mentioned offering new services, such as providing self-service kiosks in each agency for customers to do transactions on. Other services he suggested included allowing deputies to provide professional IDs, such as physicians, corporations, nurses, lawyers, teachers, etc. He also proposed allowing deputies to collect reinstatement fees, selling duplicate e-check forms, check cashing, and collecting state income taxes.

Due to time restraints, Mr. Leo asked Mr. Filippelli to send out all of his thoughts to the group via email so they can review them before the next meeting. Mr. Filippelli reviewed some points to go over in the next meeting:

1. Where do we see the Deputy Registrar system in three, four, and five years, and what type of services will the deputies be providing;
2. What additional services can the BMV provide to make their services more viable;
3. The Deputy Registrar fee structure change (“cost of living adjustments”), deputy fees should change with other fees.

He enjoys what he does and he enjoys working with the public. His goal is to maintain strong customer service. He feels the need to add some services to each Deputy Registrar location to make it more convenient to the customers.

Mr. Coleman said the next meeting will be very important focusing on the fee structure. Ms. Crespo explained the economy is sensitive now and the Deputies need to focus these discussions on other ways to get money other than fee increases. Fee increases are a very sensitive topic during these economic times especially to the General Assembly.

Ms. Saunders requested a chart for the distribution of fees. Ms. Brickman agreed to provide the chart to the committee.

Ms. Spriggs asked why there are reinstatement centers in separate buildings, if that is the only function they provide.

Action items include:

1. Separation of administrative and legislative changes
2. A chart for the distribution of fees
3. The history of why there are reinstatement centers
4. List of Deputy Registrar recommendations
5. List questions asked during transactions

Mr. Leo closed the meeting stating the next BMV Study Group meeting is on Tuesday, September 1st, Room South B & C (same room as the first one), from 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Next BMV Stakeholder Sub-Committee meeting is on Monday September 21, in this room (South A) from 3:00-5:00 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.