



STATE ACADEMY FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

SAPA Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday October 7, 2025

Hybrid Meeting (Zoom/In-Person)

A. Attendance

o **Members Present:**

- Aaron
- Geza
- Molly
- Daniel
- Brian
- Kara
- Roz

o **Members Absent**

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o **Guests Present**

- o

B. Call to Order:

- o 6:01pm

C. Board Meeting Minutes and recap:

- o Approval of September Meeting Minutes
 - Unanimous approval of the minutes.
- o Action Item:

D. Membership: (Molly)

- o New Member Applicants: Dr. Alfred Titus Jr.
 - Pursuant to changes – membership is no longer selective. Molly did notify that he should take part and encouraged participating in following the organization on social media, and attending the next event.

- a. Kara will check to see if he paid his dues.
 - b. Dan notes he paid his dues prior to being invited in.
 - c. As of today, there are 34 registered for the event.
- o Member Reinstatement Application: Not Applicable
- o Presenters did a great job at the sharp skills training
- o October 20th, we are lucky to be hosting the Secretary of State for a talk on building mentorship. It's an opportunity for us to have an in-person event.
 - Related to that event, related to introducing the remarks – Molly will get the introduction approved, Dan is planning to be there.
 - In terms of run of show, Molly will suggest membership to those in attendance and those talking points will be shared.
 - Molly will then run the Q&A.
 - Molly notes that recipients will need help – there is a working farm – Latham location can help serve as an annual service opportunity.
 - a. Motion for Molly to fill out the form – Motion Approved.
 - b. Roz suggests that we invite members to join us as a networking opportunity and programming event.
 - c. Molly suggests inviting the essentials program participants.
 - d. In November Dan will be overseas from the 8th-15th.
 - e. Do we need a flier for “toys for tots” events? Yes, Molly will work on that to circulate to the usuals.

E. Chair Update: (Dan)

- o Is there value in meeting in person?
 - Sometimes to be sure, perhaps a few intentional times per year – for the May event, it could be the March meeting in case we need to tweak things.
 - A couple in person events will make it more likely that people can attend via zoom
 - December meeting will be same date as our event – brief meeting in person – brief overview of next year's schedule – we will plan the march meeting to be in Person at OSC.
 - This is the schedule we will keep moving forward unless there is reason to shift.

F. Treasurers Report/Communications Report (Kara)

- o We have not spent any money, so we are hovering around \$4,000.
- o For communications there has not been a ton of material this month
- o Post and website updates on project management. Photos was screenshots. We did an advertisement for the event on the 20th.
- o We will be closing the registration on October 16th.

G. Program Committee Report (Mila)

- o **October 2 Kick-Off Meeting Summary**

H. Essentials Update

- o Roz was great in spite of technical challenges!
- o Building the brand has resulted in great feedback that participants really enjoyed the experience.
- o We may wish to consider that as a SHARP skill session.
- o Critical role that middle managers play in an organization as they are essential to day to day functioning but can be great proponents of supporting action with organizational alignment.
- o When there is a disconnect, your agency has a hard time accomplishing things.
- o Responsibility of the middle manager to have efforts align with executive and organizational values and efforts
- o This is being put together quickly for senior leaders at DHR for November. Its critical layer for the organization
- o Anecdotally, the frustrations were that the executive team didn't have clarity on their goals. There was no strategic plan, no clarity in message which created problems with managers who were managing up and down.
- o How to raise dissent and with what audience?
- o Succession planning –
- o Is there a cross agency plan for matters related to mass retirements?
- o Some agencies are doing a good job with succession planning; others are not doing so.
- o Middle tier of management is scheduled to be decimated in the next few years.
- o There doesn't seem to be a concerted effort across agencies related to managing the pending retirements.
 - if agencies have forward thought leadership with a strategic plan with a people component, you may find successful efforts

- OGS didn't just focus on top leadership, we were down to the deputy director (number 2 people at plant utilities)
- o Academics would like to learn about this! There is place for a discussion that perhaps Rockefeller hosts – how public orgs do succession planning?
- o Keeping middle managers in and working.
- o No one has a cross-agency plan, what's happening is that middle managers – 20% of agencies are expecting their staff to retire in the next 3-4 years and seeing high percentage of middle managers and leaders to be departing – agencies want to be able to promote from within, but those who have that knowledge are also leaving.
- o Executive level – those who are still around are good, but looking to leave, others aren't so good, and so we are bringing people in from outside the state and managing up.
- o We are training middle managers to train how to be middle managers, but there is a critical component missing from teaching middle managers to move up to the higher level.
- o This may be a great practitioner, but not a great administrator. This admin is a key component – this is important – unique standpoint – purposeful succession planning is vital
 - Emergency succession planning is even more essential when you're cleaning house
 - There are natural risks associated with that.
 - You will have to connect with the people who have that level of expertise – knowing that you need to bring people in a number of different ways.
 - Strategic process is the best way to do it.
 - You don't want to be caught short footed, but when the need is called for sweeping change, it's noteworthy.
 - How we manage the knowledge transfer to ensure that institutional knowledge isn't walking out the door and then gone forever.
 - We did a decent job of it, but not a great job – the best we could at that point.
- o For us to consider as an organization – one of the things that SAPA had done years ago was to write policy papers and share policy papers with state leadership. Our website discusses that we have worked to provide research and policy suggestions and recommendations to state leaders on specific areas
 - We also used to through SHARP skills, essentials, etc. We had “Candid Conversations” down at the plaza and have people talk about a topic – it would be open to everyone in state government.
 - a. Ethics
 - b. Personnel

- c. Personnel Management was a big topic in state management – there is likely a roll we can play with state leaders in government
- Executive Chamber had folks go out to essential program and they talked to Dan about onboarding new appointees to state government.
 - a. We can work with HR Office and their new people – take bits and pieces of the essentials program and additional components for a 1-year onboarding for new people.
 - b. When you're bringing in people from the outside – onboarding them – the first year is critical.
- Remind people of the value that this organization has with membership across organizations – variety of orgs with different points of view for the common folks. We want to guard against this being absorbed by one org to do – there is a goal to engage when you have more than 1 agency involved in this.
- Aaron proposes acquiring succession planning model information from state agencies that may be interested in it.
 - a. Roadblocks are being perceived down the road.
 - b. Case studies that would be effective in ways would be something that Rockefeller would be glad to host.
 - i. That is very much the kind of thing that Luis would be excited to host as it has a cool potential for people to learn things they don't know.
 - c. **Action item** – Brian will discuss the possibility of such an event with Luis.
- Next Session is November 15th Wednesday – Henrick Westin board member will be presenting at OSC and starts at 5:30pm. All board members will be welcome and, on the list,
 - o Dan – confirmed with Rockefeller the catering for the 20th – Dan thanks the board for getting back to him on expenses approval.
 - o Service Opportunity with the Canals Corp – entire footprint of the Erie canal – satellite opportunities in western and northern NY – Molly has confirmed that they would be happy to have us do that
 - o June & August – social event – music event – Schenectady music haven – they do incredible global music features. Great opportunities for the Community college and other nonprofits
 - o August of this summer – SAPA night at the Joe for Tri-city ValleyCats game – Molly will propose in the spring for budget for 20 ballcaps with our logo as a giveaway for the first 20 registered.
 - o Opportunity in November for the regional food bank

- o Mila is interested in revisiting the book club – she will be reaching out to Brian regarding titles that he has recommended.
- o In person and virtual will be considered.
 - o Discussion turned to what possible topics may be for other professional development sessions like Sharp skills
- o Human centered design
- o Plain language and tying it into a session on recruitment
- o Session planning – lots of different plannings were discussed, but Mila would like to hear from other topics and for whom they would have as a speaker to serve on the panel.
 - o Social Media programming there are big upticks in SAPA’s website visits. Hopefully we will see as we approach the impact year how that is going
 - o Position to put that out by December meeting to rollout the schedule, even if dates are not yet available
- o May was recommended to be avoided due to awards
- o July was recommended as a month off
- o Social and other events added as tradition – considering being available for breaks and turning off heat, etc. to ensure that we are learning

I. Secretary Report (Aaron)

- o Idle time that Aaron has will be preparing the differences for MailChimp vs constant contact for November meeting.

J. Schedule of Upcoming Meetings

o **Next Board Meetings:**

- Tuesday November 4th, 2025 - 6pm
- Tuesday December 4th, 2025 - 6pm
- Tuesday, January 6, 2026 – 6pm

K. Adjourn Meeting:

- o Motion to adjourn – Molly, seconded by Brian
- o Meeting Adjourned at 6:52pm