



**Seattle Tax Advisory Group
Meeting Minutes
September 8, 10:00 AM-11:00 AM
Seattle Municipal Tower Conference Room 4070**

Members:

Glen Lee
City of Seattle

Jamie Carnell
City of Seattle

Joseph Cunha
City of Seattle

Mark Watterson
City of Seattle

Paula Borhauer
Starbucks

Jeff Cahalan
Russell Investments

Sarai Childs
Greater Seattle
Chamber of Commerce

Craig Goodrich
Virginia Mason

Damian Hunt
Amazon

Rachel Le Mieux
Peterson Sullivan LLP

Ingrid Suydam
Starbucks

Participants:

Jeff Cahalan, Jamie Carnell, Glen Lee, Rachel Le Mieux, Ingrid Suydam, Mark Watterson.

Updates:

Glen Lee updated the group on the appointment of Joseph Cunha to Tax Administrator over License and Tax Administration.

Mark Watterson updated the group on the Rules meetings held in August. There were few changes from the rules the Seattle Tax Advisory Group reviewed in June. ***The Rules will be finalized and filed the week of September 16.***

The FileLocal Project is actively in development and the team has finalized the integrated test plan which has testing of the system scheduled between November and January. There was discussion around the security testing occurring as well as the timing for the business community to get in and test the system. ***Jamie Carnell will let the Seattle Tax Advisory Group know when the scheduled dates for businesses to see a demo of the system will be.***

Discussion:

There was a lot of discussion around apportionment, the discussion centered on the calculation formulas and the need from the business community for the City of Seattle to consider something that is much more taxpayer-friendly. The way the data is asked for in an audit isn't the way the data is stored by the taxpayer - especially in regards to customer contacts. The taxpayer community is asking the City to look into ways to make it easier to comply without having to invest in additional data systems or enhancements to data systems to store the information the City asks for in an audit. The City understands this frustration and will begin internal conversations within the City and with the Association of Washington Cities tax managers group to see if there is something that can be done without a legislative process. ***The City of Seattle is committed to reporting back to the Seattle Tax Advisory Group at the December meeting.***

New Items:

The City of Seattle is looking for new members to join the advisory group. The discussion focused around specific industries to target for representation. All in the group reiterated the purpose of this Seattle Tax Advisory Group which is to have members from the taxpayer community who register and file business licenses and file Business and Occupation taxes. Specific industries the group would like to recruit from include biotech/hi-tech, nonprofit, financial, trucking and restaurant/food service. ***Jamie Carnell will reach out to the Seattle Chamber for potential members and the attending members at the meeting indicated they would reach out to their colleagues as well.***

Rachel Le Mieux brought up an additional area of concern for the City of Seattle and other B&O cities to consider around voluntary disclosure, amnesty programs and settlements. She indicated this is not a well-defined process and the City of Seattle needs a better definition of settlements.

Next Meeting:

December 2, 2014