

**Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency  
Rural/Urban Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes for November 24, 2020  
Virtual Meeting held through Microsoft Teams**

**Urban Advisory Committee**

**Members Present:**

Al Heron, Committee Chair, SAMA Board Member, Urban Sector  
Myron Knafelc (ex officio), SAMA Board Chair  
Dawn Luhnig, SAMA Board Member, City Sector  
Audrey Trombley, SAMA Board Member  
Kevin Tooley, City of Warman  
Bruce Fidler, Town of Buffalo Narrows  
Mike Strachan, Village of Torquay  
Doug Allan, Provincial Association of Resort Communities of Saskatchewan

**Members Absent**

Walter Strelasky, City of Melville  
Barry Elderkin, Town of Maple Creek  
Dale Domeij, Village of Mortlach  
Lee Finishen (no longer elected), Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association  
Marla Walton, Saskatchewan School Boards Association  
Mindy Olm, Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers' Association

**Rural Advisory Committee**

**Members Present:**

John Wagner, Committee Chair, SAMA Board Member, Rural Sector  
Myron Knafelc (ex officio), SAMA Board Chair  
Murray Purcell, SAMA Board Member, Rural Sector  
Jim Angus, SAMA Board Member  
Roman Charko, Division 4, R.M. of Moose Range No. 486  
Kim Herbst, Division 6, R.M. of Progress No. 351  
Judy Harwood, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

**Members Absent:**

Jeannie DeRochers, Division 1, R.M. of South Qu'Appelle No. 157  
Delbert Schmidt, Division 2, R.M. of Longlaketon No.219  
Troy Heggstad, Division 3, R.M. of Frontier No. 19  
Wade Sira (no longer elected), Division 5, R.M. of Rosedale No. 283  
Garry Dixon, Provincial Association of Resort Communities of Saskatchewan  
Tim Weinbender, Saskatchewan School Boards Association  
Vacant, Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers' Association

**Observers Present:**

Irwin Blank, SAMA CEO  
Brian Hicke, Saskatchewan School Boards Association  
Rodney Audette, Urban Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan  
Kelly Munce, Ministry of Government Relations

**Observers Absent:**

Jean-Marc Nadeau, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association

**SAMA Administration Present:**

Kevin Groat, Committee Secretary, SAMA  
Shaun Cooney, SAMA Administration  
Betty Rogers, SAMA Administration  
Gord Senz, SAMA QAD

**Observers Present:**

Irwin Blank, SAMA CEO  
Mike Wirges, Rural Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan  
Allan Laird, Ministry of Government Relations  
Abayomi Akintola, Ministry of Government Relations  
Nataliia Karpiuk, Ministry of Government Relations  
Veniesha Thompson, Ministry of Government Relations

**Observers Absent:**

Melissa Mcloy, Ministry of Government Relations  
Jay Meyer, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities  
Scott Sander, Saskatchewan School Boards Association

**SAMA Administration:**

Kim Hardy, Committee Secretary, SAMA  
Todd Treslan, SAMA ASD  
Andrew Workman, SAMA TS&P

**SAMA Administration Absent:**

Karlo Simonson, SAMA QAD

**Guests:**

Jason Penner, Ministry of Sask Ag and Food

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Decision/Resolution:</b>
1. Call to order	John Wagner, Chair of the Rural Advisory Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.
2. Opening remarks	John welcomed everyone to the meeting. John indicated that to ease the process of voting during this virtual meeting, voting will be done on the premise of asking those opposed to indicate a response.
3. Introductions	Irwin introduced individuals present in the virtual meeting.
4. Approval of meeting agenda	Board Member: Agenda Item 7c is to be removed.  MOTION by Judy Harwood that the agenda be approved.
	<b>Carried</b>
5. Minutes from the previous meeting held November 19, 2019	MOTION by Bruce Fiddler that the minutes of the November 19, 2019 joint Rural and Urban Advisory committee's business meeting be adopted as circulated.
	<b>Carried</b>
6. Business arising from the Joint Minutes	SAMA CEO: There was an error in the previous minutes with regards to Agenda Item. 5. The motion to accept the minutes was from Gordon Meyer not Gordon Hubbard.
7. <u>SAMA Update</u>	
Item 7a: CEO Report	Power point presentation by Irwin Blank, SAMA's CEO.
	<u>Committee Comments</u> No comments from the Committees.
	MOTION by Kim Herbst that the Committees receive the CEO presentation.
	<b>Carried</b>
Item 7b: Assessment Services Division Report	Power point presentation by Todd Treslan.
	<u>Committee Comments</u> No comments from the Committees.
	MOTION by Jim Angus that the Committees receive the presentation.
	<b>Carried</b>
	<i>Break for coffee at 9:58 AM, resumed at 10:08 AM.</i>

8. Current Developments

Item 8a: Update on Oil and Gas Tank Regulations and Assessments for 2020 and 2021

Power point presentation by Andrew Workman.

Committee Comments

No comments from the Committees.

Item 8b: 2021 Revaluation – 2019 Manual – Oil and Gas Amendments

Verbal report by Andrew Workman.

Committee Comments

Board Member: Can you comment on the consultation that has been done with Alberta assessment regarding their Oil & Gas models?

SAMA Administration: Consultations with Alberta assessment have been ongoing. SAMA staff from TS&P met with the Alberta team early in the project.

MOTION by Judy Harwood that the Committees receive both the presentation and report.

**Carried**

Item 8c: 2021 Revaluation Implementation

Power point presentation by Shaun Cooney.

Committee Comments

Rural Member: In talking to people from smaller towns and from my experience with property in Saskatoon, the number of sales of residential properties is considerably up. I'm surprised the trend is down because of the volume of sales that are occurring is indicating a strong market.

SAMA Administration: The trend for residential properties (of 0.96) reflects the base date of January 1, 2019 which represents market conditions prior to the impact of the COVID pandemic. More recent sales are therefore not reflected in this trend. The trends are at an overall provincial level so there certainly can be locations where the markets are stronger, and assessments are increasing by more than this. When we finalize our 2021 assessments, we will be able to get a better sense of what is happening jurisdiction by jurisdiction.

MOTION by Kim Herbst that the Committees receive the presentation.

**Carried**

Item 8d: 2025 Revaluation Preparations – Publications and Policy Considerations

- i. U of S Arable Land Model Review
- ii. Oil and Gas Well Model Review
- iii. Pipeline Model Review

Power point presentation by Shaun Cooney and Andrew Workman.

Committee Comments

Board Member: The Oil and Gas Well review is long overdue. Standardization took place in the late 1980's and early 1990's. When the original committee met there were about 30,000 oil wells in the province. At that time, it was becoming hard for industry to complete reporting by the December 31 reporting date so SAMA could prepare assessments for municipalities. A committee was formed and representatives from industry, SAMA, and municipalities worked together to agree on the standardization process. SAMA and municipalities agreed that anything that was not in production as of September 1 (the former reporting date) in that year would not be assessed in the following year. The trade-off for that was if a well was in production for 30 days in a year, it would continue to be fully assessed in the following year, even if the well had moved to a shut-in well status in that following year. There was a lot of communication and understanding between the parties involved in this process and I look forward to the same with this new review.

SAMA Administration: Thanks for the comments and we appreciate what you're bringing to the table in terms of understanding the history behind our current standardized valuation models. The framework for standardization is still working and now we are focusing on the areas that need to be updated. Since standardization was implemented, we've seen a tripling of wells. There are now approximately 90,000 wells in the province.

MOTION by Kevin Tooley that the Committees receive the presentation.

**Carried**

*Break for coffee at 11:00 AM, resumed at 11:10 AM.*

9. Government Relations Update – Legislation / Boards of Revision

Power point presentation by Allan Laird on Municipal Act Amendments.

The presentation was a review of the Municipal Act amendments (including The Cities Act, The Municipalities Act, and the Northern Municipalities Act) that were completed in 2019-2021. The amendments received Royal Assent on July 3, 2020 and the majority of them will go into force January 1, 2021. Focus on amendments related to assessment and taxation.

Assessment related amendments:

- Providing more flexibility regarding publishing notices by allowing electronic delivery. Alternative methods include, but are not limited to, email, webpage, social media, etc. can be used.

- Municipality retention of tax rolls is changing to a minimum of 10 years. Municipalities can retain them longer if they choose. Records are then destroyed in accordance to the records retention schedule. This is in force right now.
- Notifying property owners of agreements to adjust and appeal decisions, if they are not a part of the agreement or appeal.
- Revising the reporting date for shut-in wells from September 1 to July 1.
- Adding provisions for railway companies to provide the assessor with certified statements when requested.
- Contact information (municipal & Board of Revision [BoR]) and fee info on notices of appeal.
- Requiring BoR to be appointed when the assessment roll is prepared.
- Disallowing municipal employees from sitting on BoR.
- Deficiencies in an appeal must be explained in notice back to appellant.
- BoR to provide all materials within 14 days when requested by Assessment Appeals Committee (AAC).
- BoR may be sent by ordinary mail (same as AAC decisions).
- If transcript is requested from a BoR, it must be a written transcript provided.
- Notifying property owners of assessment agreements and appeal decisions.
- Ability to clarify assessment of travel trailers used as living quarters.
- Providing for provincially established BoR and/or registrar.

Taxation related amendments:

- Clarifying application of partial tax payments and apportionment of payments.
- Ensuring regulation-making authority is applied to minimum tax and base tax.
- Regulation-making authority for amounts and costs to be added to the tax roll.
- Allowing single trailers to be licensed as an alternative to assessment.
- Regulation making authority in several areas for future improvements:
  - Definitions: building, travel trailer, resource production equipment.
  - BoR member training and qualifications, secretaries, timelines.
  - Application of appeal decisions on roll when further appealed.

Threshold for simplified appeals is the same threshold that is currently in the Act. Assessment and resource production rules, definitions are unchanged from what is currently in the Acts and will be in the Regulations.

Power point presentation by Nataliia Karpiak on Board of Revision Renewal Project.

- Problem statement: the current first-level property assessment appeal system is complex, which creates inconsistency and impacts the quality of service received by property owners. The number of assessment appeals increases in a Revaluation year and decreases for the following three years. Recent data shows an increase in complexity and number of assessment appeals every year. Most appeals are complex commercial or industrial appeals with large values associated with them.
- Stakeholder consultations in 2019 led to a conceptual model for a renewed first level property assessment appeals.
- A steering committee was established to advise the government on implementation. It included members from SARM, SUMA, administrators from Urban, Rural, and Northern municipalities, and staff from ministerial Government Relations.
- Target date to implement new Board of Revision model is the 2023 tax year.
- Four major components:
  - 1) Certification and training requirements: Available for all board members and ensures a fair, consistent, and timely appeal process.
  - 2) Provincial BoR: This first level appeal board can be used by any municipality that chooses not to appoint or is unable to form their own certified BoR.
  - 3) Provincial Registrar: The single and first point of contact for all property assessment appeals and ensures that all citizens receive the same information and assistance concerning their appeal. Will also administer and coordinate appeals across the province.
  - 4) Maintenance of Standards/Oversight: A system/body with both provincial and municipal participation to establish and maintain standards and provide oversight to the first level of assessment appeals.
- Short-term training: GR partnered with the Dispute Resolution Office to deliver essential training to support municipal boards of revision.
- Long-term training: SUMA, on behalf of the BoR Steering Committee, is in the process of procuring an online training program. The new training program will also include a training module on Property Tax and Property

Assessment in Saskatchewan and is planned to be launched in 2021.

- Project guided by steering committee as well as government decision makers.
- Government Relations to consult with stakeholders and subject area experts (SAMA, city assessors, SMB, current BoR members and secretaries, other provincial tribunal offices) on regular basis as the project progresses.
- In November-December 2020, Government Relations will consult with municipalities to strengthen mutual understanding on the structure and funding model of the registrar.
- In order to have the new system in place for the 2023 property tax year, the registrar office will need to be established and staffed by 2021-2022.
- Ministry will consider municipal engagement and expert consultation results to finalize the structure of anew registrar's office and ways to be funded.
- The work on other components of the new model continues.

MOTION by Kevin Tooley that the Committees receive the presentations.

**Carried**

10. Quality Assurance Standards Order Power point presentation by Shaun Cooney.

SAMA CEO: This is generally supported by other assessment providers as a way to increase the transparency of the assessment system. Our position is to move forward with this unless we hear opposition from stakeholders. If there are suggestions, we are open to feedback. With the Board's approval we are looking to move forward with this as an internal policy starting in 2021 to be followed by a formal amendment to the Order at a later date.

MOTION by Audrey Trombley that the Committees proceed with quality assurance standards initiative.

**Carried**

11. Other Business. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 23-24, 2021.

MOTION by Jim Angus to adjourn the meeting at 11:50 am.

**Carried.**