

Kevin Minor: 0:03

Greetings and welcome to the NASPO Pulse, the podcast where we are monitoring issues in state procurement.

Josh Descoteaux: 0:08

We have our finger on the pulse. I'm your host, Kevin Minor, and I'm Josh Dakota and Kevin. I want the truth, the truth, you can't handle the truth. Oh the truth of the matter is that we have McCall Ginsberg, Deputy General Counsel for the Georgia Department of Administrative Services.

Kevin Minor: 0:26

Hence our witty counsel jokes that are not cliché at all. We also have special guest Megan Smith, who's the General Counsel for NASPO.

Josh Descoteaux: 0:35

Yeah, and we'll also discuss with McCall and Megan the ways the Procurement Office and the Procurement Attorneys can work together and collaborate, and we'll also talk about how the Pro office can better engage and utilize the attorneys.

Kevin Minor: 0:49

We'll also ask Megan and McCall about NASPO's annual Law Institute. It's going to be November 15th through the 17th this year and it promises to be a fun and interactive conference. It's going to be in Arizona, I think Very nice.

Josh Descoteaux: 1:05

Very nice for that time of the year.

Kevin Minor: 1:07

Yeah, McCall's going to give us just some background talk about who should attend and why, and then, of course, we'll play our beloved key takeaway game. It's round two, Kevin, Come on, Absolutely. You got questions, comments? We would love to hear from you. Email us podcast at naspo.org. If you haven't already, make sure you subscribe to us Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google or wherever you get them. Sweet listeners, Make sure you check out the NASPO blog, pulsenaspo.org, and catch up on some procurement articles written by by who? Josh? Your very own NASPO staff. Let's take the pulse, McCall. Thank you so much for joining us today. How are you?

McCall Ginsberg: 1:44

I'm well. Everything's going well in the great state of Georgia.

Kevin Minor: 1:46

Good. I'm glad to hear that. We really appreciate you joining us today. McCall Ginsberg is the Deputy General Counsel for the Georgia Department of Administrative Services in the great state of Georgia and we really appreciate you joining us today. We also have a special guest, Megan Smith, the General Counsel for NASPO, joining us today. We also have a special guest, Megan Smith the general counsel for NASPO joining us today. Megan, how are you?

Megan Smyth: 2:09

Hi, Kevin, I'm good. How are you?

Kevin Minor: 2:11

I'm doing well. We have Megan on today to make sure that Josh and I behave and stay in line and ask all of our questions correctly. So it's a big job for Megan, but I think she's up for it. We are legally protected. I think she's up for it. So, McCall, you are the Deputy General Counsel for the Georgia Department of Administrative Services for the great state of Georgia. Can you give the listeners just a brief background of what you do for the state of

Georgia?

McCall Ginsberg: 2:39

I have the best job in the world. I'll say my job is basically a jack of all trades—all trades. I provide support to the State Purchasing Division of the Georgia Department of Administrative Services and I assist in a number of different areas: Policy, protests, training, contracts, and I act as a problem solver, assisting our agency and agency customers with procurement-related issues.

Kevin Minor: 3:05

Excellent, yeah, and I think we'll unpack those procurement-related issues here in just a second. But first, Megan, since you're on, can you give us just a brief background of your responsibilities at NASPO?

Megan Smyth: 3:17

Sure, so I'm part of the legal team here at NASPO here at NASPO and I mostly work on the NASPO side of things with HR and law institute and risk management. So I was previously on the research team at NASPO. So I still have a love for that work and I'm excited to be planning Law Institute. It's our eighth Law Institute.

Kevin Minor: 3:45

All right, yay, woo, woo, yes. So if you, basically if you get a call to go into Megan's office, it's probably not good news.

Josh Descoteaux: 3:54

It's like the principal's office, yeah.

Kevin Minor: 3:56

Uh, oh yeah, McCall, before we really get into our interview today, I think it's important to establish a little bit of context. So in what ways is the work that you do pertinent to public procurement?

McCall Ginsberg: 4:18

I'd say day in and day out. The work I do impacts public procurement in Georgia. Everything from the policy issues that we discuss to the contracts that we enter into legal touches on all of those areas and we work closely with our procurement team in their work.

McCall Ginsberg: 4:34

So if there's going to be a purchase of something, for example copiers, we will assist them in the drafting of contracts. We'll work with our technology folks with regards to data security. We will assist them in the drafting of contracts. We'll work with our technology folks with regards to data security concerns that could happen. Nowadays copiers. They have computer components and transmit information. So the legal department at the Georgia Department of Administrative Services is very much involved in procurement on a daily basis.

Kevin Minor: 5:09

Sure, yeah. Yeah, I didn't really think about machinery sending information that could be sensitive.

McCall Ginsberg: 5:17

And what's interesting is, technology is now part of a great deal of goods and services procurements that it wasn't five years ago. Even when you're contracting for janitorial services, you're likely going to be using an online component to schedule those services. I read an article about how trash cans can now be smart trash cans, for example, coming up.

Josh Descoteaux: 5:41

I thought that was interesting. Wow, do they wheel themselves out to the road for you or something? That would be great.

McCall Ginsberg: 5:48

I think that they can tell when they need to be picked up, for example.

Kevin Minor: 5:51

There you go.

McCall Ginsberg: 5:52

I think that's where they were going with it, but I would love to have something like a cross between a Roomba and my trash can.

Megan Smyth: 5:58

That would be great, yeah, but I would definitely say for procurement folks. They see the legal department certainly as the good guys trying to keep them out of trouble.

Kevin Minor: 6:08

Okay.

Megan Smyth: 6:09

We want to say no, but here's another way you could do the thing you want to do instead of being no people.

Kevin Minor: 6:17

Right.

Megan Smyth: 6:18

We want to be yes, people, and I think that our attorneys really rise to that occasion. They volunteer for things. They want to be involved in the procurement process. They want to understand the law that they are giving advice on. Every time you have a new case, you have to immerse yourself in that subject, and I see these attorneys just love to learn about procurement, because when you understand what you're doing, you can have more passion for it and you do it better overall.

Josh Descoteaux: 6:52

Well, that segues right into really what I wanted to talk about. What we really wanted to hit on was the relationship piece of this. You mentioned, Megan, that there are attorneys that are embedded in the offices, the procurement offices, but also ones that are outside of the procurement offices, and those are the ones that might need a little bit more of a bridge for those relationships. And I know the common theme is that you know, procurement picks you out for your profession and not the other way around.

Josh Descoteaux: 7:18

We've also heard about, you know, it has been so big and a lot of IT procurement professionals don't have that IT background, so they've had to really get acclimated with that whole sector. But since we're talking to attorneys, that might be the same case. I know that when I came into procurement I did not know a lot of legalese, let's say, and then really had to learn about what was some of the aspects of the procurement that I had to look out for in terms of the legal factors that go into a contract. And so, McCall, I'll let you respond to that, just about bridging those relationships with procurement and the attorney's office.

McCall Ginsberg: 8:00

Well, I think that's a really important point to hit on Back in the day.

McCall Ginsberg: 8:07

I would say you walk the floors as an attorney to get to know the teams.

McCall Ginsberg: 8:12

Nowadays it may be hopping on a Zoom call with folks because we don't necessarily walk the floor so much their meetings, participating in training whenever possible, whenever you're asked, or offering opportunities for training to your training teams to say, hey, we're seeing some of this. Maybe we need to cover responsibility, do a deeper dive on responsibility and can we help you provide that training and then letting them know there's no such thing as a perfect procurement. I don't know where that idea came from, but we learned something from every single procurement at least I have in my 20 years, and that's what makes folks become great procurement officers is their experience picking these things up and saying how can we do it better. So procurement's constantly evolving and the biggest thing I think where Megan was going is, in the event that an issue or potential issues discovered, making procurement professionals comfortable as playing to legal as soon as feasible, because it's a lot easier to work through an issue before it snowballs. We love to be proactive and help to avoid issues.

Josh Descoteaux: 9:26

Yeah, and establishing that relationship. The communication needs to be there just to make sure that before that there's a fire, you're comfortable, the procurement specialist is comfortable coming to the attorney and discussing those issues. And, Megan, I wanted to ask you kind of the same thing best practices to follow. We heard McCall talk about the training when you're in a procurement and you had hit on just being immersed in it. You know the procurements could be a number of different products, services, goods that you kind of have to really immerse yourself in, and so it's almost kind of like a team between the procurement specialist and the attorney. So just some of those best practices that you can share, yeah.

Megan Smyth: 10:09

I have actually been able to participate in several meetings that we've had with NASIO and our IT partners who help with the IT procurement.

Megan Smyth: 10:22

A major thing that the attorneys can do is get involved in that IT RFP process up front, specifically when it comes to specifications, because a lot of protests come out of specifications that are written that only one vendor can fulfill or that are too specific to be appropriate in that context, and an attorney can give the procurement official a perspective on how to write those specifications so that you can avoid a protest but also get the best solution, because a lot of times they have in their mind what solution they want and they write their solicitation to get that thing and an attorney can say, well, but what problem are you trying to solve?

Megan Smyth: 11:13

That's what you should be putting in your specs in your RFP and let the vendors tell you what they can do. So keeping your RFPs a little broader and allowing a little room for the vendors to share alternative solutions I think about what California is doing with challenge-based RFPs All those things can help avoid protests, and attorneys being involved in that process can only lessen that. McCall deals with a lot of protests in Georgia, so I'm sure she could say more about that than I could.

Josh Descoteaux: 11:52

And McCall going with that theme, um, that theme of of the protests I know that it's kind of a touchy subject for everybody, but, um, I know that, uh, inspect development, there could be one or two specifications to uh ask, um, that might ruin the procurement. Uh, there, there could be a weak point in the specifications in the RFP, that uh that the bidders could go after and then that prolongs it, never getting awarded or have to be re-procured. So can you talk to that a little bit?

McCall Ginsberg: 12:24

With regards to specification protests, they're not terrible Because what happens is in the specifications protests.

McCall Ginsberg: 12:33

Typically they have until prior to close of the solicitation to protest those requirements and if we got something wrong, that's the time to fix it.

McCall Ginsberg: 12:42

So I think that protests are actually enlightening the procuring agency as to potential issues with their procurement and it's done so at a time that things can be fixed before everybody's bids are turned in, before records become public. So those are actually a helpful avenue for us to make sure that we get things right before a lot of efforts put into the evaluation negotiation. So those types of protests I think should be least concerning to procurement officers, with the exception of you know, we want to make sure that we're not just copying specs off of the supplier's website, for example, that provide an unfair competitive advantage. I mean that's definitely something that we would train to avoid. But if we have a specification that's incorrect something that we would train to avoid but if we have a specification that's incorrect and there's no way to meet that requirement, we want to know about that at that point in time prior to close so that we can fix that. And that's the wonderful opportunity about those pre-closed protests.

Josh Descoteaux: 13:49

Oh, that's great, yeah. And so you, you are kind of relying on those relationships and a good relationship with the procurement office so you guys can collaborate if you do get a spec, participating in trainings and even holding your own trainings.

Kevin Minor: 14:19

What is that like? Can you just kind of give me a brief synopsis of what that's like and how that's helpful?

McCall Ginsberg: 14:24

So Georgia hosts an annual procurement conference where we bring in two individuals from each agency and college and university that work in procurement. They're funded to attend and the agencies can then provide additional attendees if they would like to. That are funded at the agency level and college and university level. But what happens is we all get together for training for two to three days at Jekyll Island and this year we're going to actually have a legal track for all of our college and university and state agency legal support staff. So we're excited about that opportunity that's been in discussion. So we were going to have it the last year but due to the pandemic, our conference was postponed.

Kevin Minor: 15:20

Right in person right. So you'll go back to that this year.

McCall Ginsberg: 15:24

That's our intent. Of course we're still polling folks to make sure that we have attendance, but that's our intent is to try to go that way. So I think attorneys also appreciate the in-person training. Much like with Law Institute, we're able to get our continuing legal education credits. I can say that most continuing education for lawyers we're required in Georgia to have 12 units a year are not geared towards folks who do what we do. This is the one training I know I can go to that NASPA provides. That is completely applicable to my job. So it's very much appreciated, I think, by all states legal folks that are involved in procurement.

Kevin Minor: 16:06

McCall, what's an elevator pitch or a message that you have for the procurement office to better engage and utilize attorneys?

McCall Ginsberg: 16:19

It's much easier to engage with your legal folks on the front end of things when you have questions and you're able to provide timely solutions that hopefully will not slow down a procurement. You're able to engage at the front end. On the back end of things it's a lot more difficult, once you've gotten into a relationship with a specific supplier and things are not going well, to straighten things out and get things back on the track. So talking to your attorney ahead of time with questions is always a benefit and that's what we for. Uh, we're approachable and want to work with our procurement staff and I think our procurement staff actually have the same problem. Um, but it's with the end user and budgeting and finance side of things that they're usually the last person at the table.

Kevin Minor: 17:08

Right.

McCall Ginsberg: 17:09

So, by the time you're trying to provide your input, you're not seen as a partner necessarily, but, as you know, somebody who's trying to tell them why the approach they've considered isn't necessarily going to be the best approach. So if you're in at the table at the front end of things, it's a lot easier to be a constructive partner. We do add value to discussions and we want to. I think we all have the same objective in mind, which is obtaining the best value for the state and allowing folks to be able to meet the objectives of their various departments.

Kevin Minor: 17:46

Right.

McCall Ginsberg: 17:46

So, yeah, is that a good elevator pitch? Because I think we were on probably four.

Kevin Minor: 17:52

That's okay. I sit on the elevator the whole time. I did.

Megan Smyth: 17:56

I was just thinking you know something uh uh saying I've heard is uh, you know you can hammer a screw into the wall, but that's not the right tool for the job. And I think thinking about what is the right tool for this job is really important for the procurement officials as they're moving through the process. And if you see the attorney only as someone that you bring in when everything's on fire and or to scare or intimidate someone, that is not a good use of that tool. That is not a good use of that tool. So if you bring in the attorney from the beginning, they're involved in the process, they're with you every step of the way. Several things happen. You begin respecting their opinion more because you feel like they understand what you're actually doing. They become part of the team and then it's not weird that there's an attorney in the room all the time and everyone kind of chills out. And third, it ensures that you're getting consistent legal advice through the whole process.

Kevin Minor: 18:57

Yeah, I didn't think about just the timid factor, intimidation factor, right, I mean, do you guys deal with that often Just intimidation by being lawyers?

Megan Smyth: 19:09

Yeah, I mean in the private sector. You bring the attorney when you want someone to be afraid like, oh, my attorney's on the phone, or I'm bringing my attorney to this meeting, and then they bring their attorney, and then you bring another attorney, and I guess you know you just bring attorneys until we're all out of attorneys. But you know, in the public sector there's there shouldn't be that feeling, because we're all government employees, we're all working to help the state citizens the best we can. There's no enmity there.

Megan Smyth: 19:37

There's no reason to not work collaboratively and bringing in the IT folks. It's the same story with the CIOs and the CPOs, and so bringing our CPOs to Law Institute with their attorneys and we have many CPOs to Law Institute with their attorneys and we have many CPOs who are JDs and having them come together it really sends a good message to both of their staffs that we are here to work together and they're receiving the same education at the same time and they can then go back to their offices and discuss those issues and share it with the rest of the staff.

Josh Descoteaux: 20:13

That's great. That's great and I was one of those scared, timid procurement specialists that we had a decent amount of attorneys that were embedded in our procurement office and once that relationship really started to grow, the collaboration was there. They were basically like a, like a teammate Um, so the attorney label, the title, was there, Um, but we were together, working um basically every step of the way. They had, uh, an approval process that they did Um, but really it was a quick and efficient way because they were already involved in the procurement um from the beginning. So, Megan, uh, that really does resonate with me as more of a team than an adversarial relationship. One of the things that you know, sometimes it's not all roses. One of the questions that I wanted to ask you guys is you know, sometimes the legal review and the risk adverse practices slowed the procurement process down. What is your reaction to that and how do we change that sentiment?

Megan Smyth: 21:20

So I'm going to do the most lawyer thing imaginable and reject the premise of your question because it does not slow the process down. The lawyers are an integral part of the process and it may seem as though the process slows down when it gets to them for legal review, but that's just another step in the process, and if you don't do that step correctly, the rest of the procurement could fall apart. So we are trying to make sure that you have a contract that's going to be enforceable, You're not going to get protested out of out of being able to to actually contract, and that no one's going to jail or ending up on the front page of the newspaper, and so I don't think any of those things. I think all of those things are worth slowing down for, but I think our attorneys are just doing the best that they can with their workload.

Kevin Minor: 22:16

Megan, that was the most. That was the most interesting law and order daytime TV thing I'm going to see all day. So thank you for that. You're welcome. Objection your honor.

Megan Smyth: 22:27

Objection.

Kevin Minor: 22:29

I wanted to yell objection.

Megan Smyth: 22:32

It's not as fun as it looks like on TV.

Kevin Minor: 22:34

McCall, did you have anything to add to that?

McCall Ginsberg: 22:37

I think it. I think Megan said it all pretty much. I like your rejection of the premise, but I think that because we come in last a lot of times, if we're not brought in at the beginning, it can seem like we delay things, but it's just that we're last. So because it took an extra three weeks in the evaluation, folks want to make up the time somewhere and it just happens to be the last step that they want to, and it's not, I think, what Megan says spot on. It's not that you're saving time, you're just moving the issue down the road to somewhere else. So if you don't have a clear statement

of work, you're just moving the issue into when things go off the track, because people have different understandings of things. That could cost time and money at that point, exponentially more so than if we had just addressed it during the contract negotiation phase.

Megan Smyth: 23:29

Kick the can is not a viable legal strategy. No, what Prolonging?

Josh Descoteaux: 23:32

the inevitable is not a viable legal strategy.

Kevin Minor: 23:34

No what? Prolonging the inevitable is not not what you want to do.

Megan Smyth: 23:38

No.

Kevin Minor: 23:38

Huh.

Megan Smyth: 23:39

Ideally.

Kevin Minor: 23:40

Yeah, hold on. Let me add that to my notes here.

Megan Smyth: 23:44

Dear diary.

Josh Descoteaux: 23:45

McCall and Megan. We touched a lot on law Institute but we wanted to give the listeners the who, what, where, when, why. So some of the background of Law Institute who should attend and why is it important that they should attend and where is it this?

Megan Smyth: 24:04

year and how to register. So you can go to the NASPO website, naspo.org, and look at our events. You'll find Law Institute. Law Institute is an invite only event, so we would ask you to reach out to your cpo and your state for an invitation to law institute. This year we're having two attorneys from every state and we're also extending an invitation to the chief procurement officer in every state to come to law institute great we're up to about 200 registrants at this point.

Megan Smyth: 24:33

Wow, if you haven't registered and you still want to reach out to us. Officially, registration has closed, but we can get you in there. Squeeze you in there at the end if possible, and we will be in beautiful Tempe, arizona, which I'm not mad about being in Arizona in November at all. And we will be having some folks from Arizona State come over and talk to us about academic procurement. So that will be fun and I'm really looking forward to seeing everybody again. And, mccall, I'm sure you can say the why of everyone coming.

McCall Ginsberg: 25:10

Oh, the biggest benefit I think is the networking opportunity and learning from other states. Every year, I take something home with me from another state, if not more than one thing that we end up considering implementing,

and so the benefit is that we're talking with attorneys who do what we do, and there are very few of them few and far between, so being able to talk to folks from other states who've implemented different strategies. For example, California came and spoke about a financing arrangement that they've set up, and we found that very interesting. We're not sure if we can do that in Georgia, but we're looking at it. Colorado came and talked about some significant changes in their procurement law, and we actually implemented some of the changes that Colorado did with regards to contracting, because it was a great opportunity. And not just Georgia other states learned from them too. So I think there's just a lot to be learned from other lawyers talking to other attorneys who do what we do on a daily basis.

Kevin Minor: 26:13

And if that's not enough, I think Josh is going to be there too. Yeah.

Josh Descoteaux: 26:17

I'm coming, so this is going to be great, it's Arizona. Go say hi to him.

Kevin Minor: 26:21

Yeah, can't be bad.

Megan Smyth: 26:23

Oh yeah, I wanted to say one thing about our mental health focus.

Megan Smyth: 26:28

One thing I'm really proud of with Law Institute is, over the last few years we've started doing some mental health sessions for the attorneys and I was shocked at the response that we got the first year we did it I don't think that they're getting that anywhere else and acknowledging that we're all stressed and sometimes struggling with our workload and that that takes a toll on every attorney, especially those in the state who are overworked and underpaid and underappreciated. So I think that that focus has been really important for us and this year our keynote is about resiliency. Adam Markell will be our keynote and I'm very excited to have our keynote focus on mental health this year because I think we could all use that advice.

Kevin Minor: 27:16

Maybe, maybe, Megan, we'll have you come back on and report out to see how that went and see, tell us if you're more de-stressed, more stressed or de-stressed.

Megan Smyth: 27:25

I would love to do that, Kevin. I think we should normalize mental health.

Kevin Minor: 27:29

Absolutely.

Megan Smyth: 27:30

Talk about it more. Absolutely yeah.

Kevin Minor: 27:31

Absolutely. Talk about it more. Absolutely, yeah, okay. So now we are going to do our newer segment. It's key takeaway game. Key takeaways this is the game where we will present McCall with a key takeaway from the interview and McCall gets to decide whose takeaway is better, mine or Josh's. Now I will caution you it is 1-0 right now. I am winning, so I am the champion. So bear that in mind. If you give me another one, then there's absolutely no way that Josh can come back, so keep that in mind. I have to even this up, so all right. So, Josh, I will let you go first this time.

Josh Descoteaux: 28:09

Um, I felt that one of the key takeaways was definitely the partnership between the attorneys and the procurement office. I really think that working in step with each other not only creates a good procurement, a good product when it is awarded. But I think I was a little bit corrected in terms of the mitigation and the slowdown of the procurement process. It actually does mitigate the length that it might take, and so I definitely was kind of changed my opinion on that. So that is my takeaway.

Kevin Minor: 28:47

Megan, are you helping, josh? I think you guys are cheating.

Megan Smyth: 28:51

That was really good. I plead the fifth.

Kevin Minor: 28:54

Oh, more fancy lawyer talk. I see, I see how it is Judge Ginsburg.

Megan Smyth: 28:59

help me.

McCall Ginsberg: 28:59

Help me Judge.

Megan Smyth: 29:00

Ginsburg.

Kevin Minor: 29:03

So my takeaway is that attending meetings and participating in meetings and offering those trainings and being a part of those trainings is very, very helpful, but I think that the biggest takeaway for me is that what you said that there is no such thing as a perfect procurement and that's something that I don't think I ever realized until you said it. Oh, and I haven't seen one, so if there is, we haven't seen it yet. Please also send that. Email that to us, so we can see it.

Josh Descoteaux: 29:36

Kevin, it seems like we're competing attorneys right now and we're just waiting on a judgment.

McCall Ginsberg: 29:41

I think that, although being although I was quoting, I think that's actually quoting a GAO protest decision. Archie, I'm going to give it to Josh because, I think that the biggest focus of NASPO has been in strengthening the relationship between the procurement officers and CPOs and the legal division, bringing the legal division as a strategic partner at the beginning and when they can provide more effective proactive guidance, and being a partner at the beginning and when they can provide more effective proactive guidance and being a partner at the table.

Kevin Minor: 30:18

Can I?

McCall Ginsberg: 30:18

protest that.

Kevin Minor: 30:20

Is that am?

McCall Ginsberg: 30:22

I allowed to protest.

Josh Descoteaux: 30:23

Oh, now I can object.

Kevin Minor: 30:25

Okay, yeah.

Josh Descoteaux: 30:25

All right, all right, I mitigated all my risks with that response, so it's ironclad.

Kevin Minor: 30:30

McCall, before we we go, what's some advice you have for our listeners?

McCall Ginsberg: 30:36

I think the thing that I typically say repetitively is do what you said you're telfex was going to do and do then. Do what you said you were going to do, um, whether it's in a procurement, uh, setting out what the standards are that you're going to take for review and how the process is going to work, and making sure everybody knows at the beginning how the process is going to work. And then, following that process, that is probably the biggest piece of guidance I can provide to folks.

Kevin Minor: 31:06

Right, follow through and be reliable. That's what I'm hearing from you.

McCall Ginsberg: 31:11

And the same thing with regards to how you conduct yourself in the office. Sure, be reliable. Tell folks what you're going to do, give them expectations as to the time it will take, reasonable expectations as well as the things that could create a delay. You have to let folks know that that's out there and then do what you said you're going to do.

Kevin Minor: 31:36

McCall, thank you so much for joining us today.

McCall Ginsberg: 31:39

And thank you for having me. We really appreciate the law Institute and we appreciate NASPO and their resources and appreciate you having me on the podcast. This is my first podcast, hey, absolutely, and we we really appreciate you having me on the podcast.

Kevin Minor: 31:53

This is my first podcast. Hey, absolutely, and we really appreciate you taking the time to chair Law Institute this year. And good vibes. I'm sure you don't need it, but best of luck to you. Thank you Well, Josh. I object to the takeaway game. I really thought that mine was better.

Josh Descoteaux: 32:11

I got the score even now 1-1. Round two it is 1-1.

Kevin Minor: 32:15

It is 1-1.

Josh Descoteaux: 32:16

And I don't know if you could handle that truth.

Kevin Minor: 32:20

Good way to tie that back in there. Man, I plead the fifth. I plead the fifth In the spirit of my takeaway, though, josh, I really did like how she talked about attending meetings and holding trainings. It really does seem like they're putting an effort to make sure that the procurement office understands the attorney's role.

Josh Descoteaux: 32:39

The takeaway that I had where she talks about the collaboration between the procurement attorneys and the procurement staff and then mitigating that risk of taking too long, it really turned my opinion of it where, if it's an adversarial kind of relationship where you think they're slowing you down or slowing the procurement process down, it really kind of changed the perspective for me. They're there to help and if you have that collaboration and that relationship with them, it really would mitigate any further risk of it prolonging the procurement. So I really like that aspect of what McCall talked about.

Kevin Minor: 33:18

When you were working in the procurement office, Josh, did you find that you had similar?

Josh Descoteaux: 33:24

thoughts yes, absolutely, and really there was a good collaborative environment there, but we really were able to challenge each other and what McCall had touched on about being immersed in the procurement and really knowing a lot about it, that came with some really good benefits where we could talk at a very deep level about what were the risks, what were the benefits with the procurement as a whole, and so they were there to really guide you every step of the way with their legal advice, looking at terms and conditions and just making sure that it is the most quality RFP solicitation that you're going to put out there.

Kevin Minor: 34:05

Are you an attorney who has a story about the procurement office? Maybe you're a procurement staff or a procurement officer who has a question. Please give us an email podcast at naspoorg, or let us know your stories. We'd love to hear from you. If you haven't already, make sure you subscribe to us on Apple Podcasts, spotify, google or wherever you get your podcast needs. And Josh has promised us that he has a patented sign-off now. So, josh, what is your new patented sign-off?

Josh Descoteaux: 34:38

Well, there might be some announcements in the future, so I'm just going to say I hope we see each other again. Ooh, big announcements. I like that, thank you.