MEETING SUMMARY

Bookkeeping to Advisory Services Transition

Date: August 17, 2026

Quick Recap

The session focused on how firms move from compliance-driven bookkeeping toward higher-value advisory work. Discussion covered the three service tiers that mark that progression, how firms with different client profiles are approaching the shift, pricing and process models that support it, and a forecasting cadence firms can pilot with existing clients before offering it more broadly.

Summary

Bookkeeping to Advisory Services Transition

The session opened with an overview of how firms evolve from compliance work toward higher-value advisory services. Three service tiers were outlined: basic compliance at the foundation, CAS 1.0 (client accounting services) in the middle, and CAS 2.0 (advisory services) at the top. The presenting firm walked through how its virtual CFO offering is structured, including a pricing model set as a percentage of client revenue. A client example illustrated the underlying point — the client placed considerably more value on advisory input than on the bookkeeping itself. Forecasting and budgeting were presented as the practical bridge into advisory work, since both create a forward-looking conversation to have with the client.

Advisory Services Strategy Discussion

Client size shapes how realistic the shift is. One firm described a client base made up largely of small businesses averaging roughly $1 million in revenue, and explained that it concentrates on bookkeeping today because of client size and limited appetite for advisory work. Another firm typically serves clients at $3 million in revenue and above. The benefits of moving toward advisory were laid out as growth opportunity, recurring revenue, and the capacity to serve larger clients. Just as important was how the change is handled internally: humanizing the process, involving team members in building the new approach rather than handing it down, and aligning the shift with what the market and clients are actually asking for.

Bookkeeping Pricing and Process Models

On pricing, one firm moved away from hourly billing about seven years ago in favor of a flat monthly fee that bundles bookkeeping, payroll, and tax preparation. Fees are revisited quarterly and adjusted for changes in transaction volume, number of accounts, and overall complexity. Another firm applies an annual increase in the range of 2–7%, scaled to client profitability. The conversation then turned to building repeatable processes and packaged services. A six-step process was outlined covering automation, standardization, forecasting, and advisory services, with particular emphasis on documenting each step so the work can scale beyond the expertise of any one person on the team.

Client Forecasting Process Implementation

The forecasting and planning cadence was described in detail: weekly cash flow meetings involving senior accountants, monthly forecast meetings, and annual planning in September and October. Onboarding a client onto the service runs roughly eight weeks, during which financial data is gathered and the initial forecasts are built; clients are billed at double the standard rate through that period to reflect the setup work. For firms not yet offering the service, the suggested starting point was to pilot it with a small number of existing clients at no charge, using those engagements to develop and test the approach before introducing it as a monthly offering.