LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Friday, April 30, 2004
5:00 P.M.

University of Baltimore
Law Center
Moot Court Room
1420 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Robert J. Dieter, Chair
Frank B. Strickland
Lillian R. BeVier
David Hall
Herbert S. Garten
Thomas R. Meites
Michael D. McKay
Maria Luisa Mercado
Florentino Subia
Thomas A. Fuentes
Ernestine Watlington

STAFF AND PUBLIC PRESENT:
Helaine M. Barnett, President
Victor M. Fortuno, Vice-President for Legal Affairs
John Eidleman, Acting Vice-President for Compliance
and Administration
Lynn A. Bulan, Senior Assistant General Counsel
Leonard Koczur, Acting Inspector General
Laurie Tarantowicz, Counsel & Assistant Inspector General
David Maddox, Assistant Inspector General for Resource
Management
Karen Dozier, Executive Assistant to the President
Patricia Batie, Manager of Board Operations
David Richardson, Treasurer/Comptroller
Lisa Rosenberg, Congressional Liaison
Bernice Phillips (Nominee)
William Whitehurst, Jr. (Advisory Member)
Don Saunders, National Legal Aid & Defender Association
Hannah Lieberman, Legal Aid Bureau

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. DIETER: Okay. I think we should probably get started. This is the -- I'm going to call to order the meeting of the Finance Committee and take the roll call of the Committee Members. Herb Garten is present. And Thomas Fuentes by telephone, correct?

MR. FUENTES: Yeah.

MR. DIETER: You can hear us all right?

MR. FUENTES: Very well.

MR. DIETER: All right. The first item on the agenda is the approval of the agenda. And unless there's an objection, I'll assume that it's unanimously approved.

The second item is approval of the minutes of the meeting of January 30th, and it is a Motion to Approve the Minutes.

M O T I O N

. MR. GARTEN: We have one typo here on Page 13 under the Motions. The third line from the bottom during which *with the Board* should be *which the Board*.

MR. DIETER: 'Kay.

MR. FUENTES: Second the approval of the corrections.

MR. DIETER: 'Kay. All in favor vote aye.

(A chorus of ayes.)

MR. DIETER: Passes unanimously.

Let me turn back to the Agenda. Item Three, then, is the Inspector General's Presentation of Fiscal Year 2003 Financial Audit by Len Koczur.

MR. KOCZUR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On Monday, the 26th, we issued the Audit Report on the financial statements.

MR. FUENTES: I do not hear him.

MR. KOCZUR: On Monday, the 26th, we issued the Audit Report on the Financial Statement Audits. It was an unqualified opinion, which is the usual for our Statements which, it means that there was no material errors in this Statement.

MR. FUENTES: Excuse me. But I cannot hear.

MR. DIETER: He can't hear.

MR. GARTEN: Is your mike on?

MR. DIETER: Is your mike --

MR. DIETER: Just pull it closer.

MR. KOCZUR: I don't think so.

MR. DIETER: Try the other one.

MR. GARTEN: Just tap on it, see.

MR. KOCZUR: Can you hear this?

MR. DIETER: Can you ^4here ^ hear that, Tom?

MR. FUENTES: I -- let him speak, please.

MR. DIETER: Go ahead and speak.

MR. KOCZUR: Can you ^4here ^ hear this?

MR. FUENTES: It sounds very, very --

MR. DIETER: Faint.

MR. FUENTES: -- just barely hearable.

MR. DIETER: Just try to get a little closer to the mike.

MR. KOCZUR: Now, is, is that any better?

MR. FUENTES: That is that obviously coming through some other mike, but ^it's ^ its not coming through anything that I can ^5here ^ hear.

MR. DIETER: Can you hear me?

MR. FUENTES: I don't hear you very, very clearly.

MR. DIETER: Okay. Why don't you come up here and -- okay. Try that, try that microphone. We are going to switch to a different position, Tom.

MR. FUENTES: I'm sorry to trouble you that way.

MR. DIETER: That's fine.

MR. KOCZUR: Can you hear me now?

MR. FUENTES: Yes. Much better.

MR. KOCZUR: All right. Thank you. We issued the Audit Report on the Financial Statements on Monday. The opinion was not a qualified opinion, which means that the -- there were no material errors or misstatements in the Financial Statements. This is the normal statement opinion that we, we've received for the last, you know, many years.

The Auditor provided a management letter which is, by definition addresses issues that are not significant enough to be included in, as part of the Audit Report. And basically there's one issue, the, that being the, the delay that was caused by the trends, trends of legal services, financial statements not being prepared until sometime after the close of their fiscal year. And the recommendation was that LSC continue to work with the trends to see if this can be, if their statements can be prepared sooner so we can expedite the issuance of our report.

If you recall, Friends is considered a component of LSC, and, therefore, this has to be disclosed in a footnote. Basically a summary of their financial statements are provided in a footnotes, and that footnote can't be prepared until the Friends' Financial Statement is prepared. And that was delayed again this year and that, so the recommendation is that we work to improve that situation and get the statements done sooner. And that basically covers the issuance of the report. We're sending the report to all the Board's Members and the Members that are here have a copy.

MR. DIETER: And is that likely to be done more timely next year?

MR. KOCZUR: I hope it will be. We thought it would be done more timely this year, but it, if this is more timely than it was last year, we improved from June to April, so perhaps next year we can get back to January, which is our practice in the past.

MR. GARTEN: Let me -- who's the accountant for the --

MR. KOCZUR: I am sorry?

MR. GARTEN: Do we have the same, do they have the same accounting firm?

MR. KOCZUR: Yes, they do. They have the same Auditor which facilitates the preparation of the statements.

MR. GARTEN: Well, it seemed to be, then, that we would put some pressure on them.

MR. KOCZUR: The problem is that Friends data is not compiled in time for them to do the audit of Friends. They're not the accountant for Friends; they are the Auditor for Friends.

MR. DIETER: And the reason that we're, they're a component is because they're a landlord; is that --

MR. KOCZUR: Well, that's part of it. But it goes to the whole relationship with Friends: The fact that a lot of the work for Friends is done on a pro bono basis by LSC staff; the lease, which is a long-term lease with no escalation, no costs for, no increased costs for taxes or operating costs or anything like that. Those are two factors. The last time I talked to the Auditor she indicated they would need to look at the whole situation before making a decision on whether or not we could move away from Friends being a component of LSC. As did -- under the accounting standards that we operate under, they need to be considered a component.

MR. DIETER: Okay.

MR. FUENTES: You need a motion, Mr. Chairman?

MR. DIETER: I don't. This is just an agenda. Doesn't require any --

MR. FUENTES: We don't have to receive it formally?

MR. KOCZUK: ^no ^ know, I don't think so.

MR. DIETER: No.

MR. FUENTES: Not in the past we haven't.

MR. DIETER: Okay. Then we'll move on to Item Four, which is the Report of LSC's Temporary Operating Budget through March 31st, and David Richardson's going to do that. Or try to.

MR. RICHARDSON: Okay. For the record, my name is David Richardson, and I am the Treasurer-Comptroller, and I'll ask if Mr. Fuentes can hear me. If not, I'll move to another mike, also.

MR. FUENTES: If you could try to be louder, it would help, but I can barely hear you.

MR. RICHARDSON: Okay.

MR. DIETER: Something must be wrong with the microphone.

MS. MERCADO: Do you need to put him -- do you need to put the mike --

MR. DIETER: He's going to move to the other microphone, Tom. And do you have the updated schedules through March?

MR. FUENTES: I believe that I do.

MR. DIETER: 'Kay.

MR. DIETER: Yeah.

MR. RICHARDSON: Okay. Again, for the record, my name is David Richardson, and I'm the Treasurer and Comptroller of the Corporation. What is before you is a report in regards to our six-month ending for this fiscal year. You will note that there is a substantial change in the reporting format. It's been formatted into and area where I'm actually comparing our expenses to the budget for the period, and also comparing it to last year and trying to relate the information so that we could show that we are not spending money, the carry-over, as quickly as might be anticipated.

I hope this presentation will help you, provide you with sufficient information that we've remained diligent in our spending and in our monthly monitoring of expenses. And we are cognizant of the realities of the planning for the future and try to do that each year in planning, and for not only this year, but the next.

On Page 30 of the handout there's information in regards to the budget information. And what I'll do is try to open some of the columns just to quickly give you a review here.

Page 30 shows the delivery of legal assistance. And this is the actual expenses for the six-month period. The delivery of legal assistance, Column One, and the total shows that we have contracts and expenses to date of $318,775,000. I will round to thousands as I speak here.

The budget for the year -- and this is the annual budget for the consolidated operation budget -- is $325,145,000. That shows that we have a variance of $6,380,000. That means that we have that much money remaining to be contracted and expended per year, or 1.96 percent of the money remains available.

Last year at this time we had contracts and expenses of $313,078,000 or 79,000, so we have an increase in our spending. What Column Six shows you is the increase or decrease from the prior year. What we show here is we've actually contracted by $1,676,000 more in our column, in our grants, than we had at the same time last year for an increase of 1.81 percent. We have lines under that, shows the basic field of the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals and the grants from other funds available. The larger item there that you'll see where there's a big deficit, I would point out, is the technology. At this time last year we had actually had contracts of $4,260,000. This year we provided contracts and awards of $3,356,000 to date. So we're basically running 21 percent behind in the total funding for the technology at this point. The bigger component there is the basic field. And you see that we have $338 -- $348,000 remaining for the year. We have 1.6 percent of the funds that have, that are remaining. Those funds all referred to in the basic field are awarded on a formula basis, so that money, while it's not spent to date, is earmarked for specific areas of funding. These are Grantees that are short-term funded for one reason or another. Some are on one-month funding; some are on three-month funding at this point, but all that money will, is earmarked for those particular areas. The, the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals, you see that we have grants ^11their ^ there. We have a larger amount of money to be spent this year. The total grant was $1,175,000. That is the new money for this year. So that the amount that remains, the variance, the 50,000, is the carryover. And last year at this point we had new grants of $1,045,000, so that's the reason for the 12 percent increase in that particular line.

On Page 31, it shows a six-month review of the expenses. The actual expenses for each budget category show the actual expenses we have spent in management administration, $6,368,000. That's verse a half year budget of $7,180,000. 812 is the amount of money that is the amount of the variance, the amount of money that was not spent out of the first half of the budget, or 11.31 percent of the money remains available.

At this time last year, and I know it's a big concern that we don't spend into the carryover very much, but you'll see that we spent $6,167,000. There's an increase of $200,000, or 3.25 percent. And that is plainly just because of salary increases, a rent increase. So we do have those funds that will continue that we're spending.

The one area that I will note is the credit that stands out in Column Three, and it shows that there is one area that is overspent. When you look at this, when we look at the Board of Directors and just show you that we are, we're -- $91,000 have been spent for the first six months, the budget's 181,000 for this six-month period, so there's $90,000 variance money of that not spent. So we've only spent 49 percent of the money at this point.

You see that in Column Four -- you see the percentages in Column Three -- you see the actual dollar amount. And everybody is under budget at this point, with the exception of one office, and that is the Office of Human Resources. And they had some initial costs this year due to the hiring of the consultant to help on an employee issue. And that's coming quickly to a close, so there should be very little expense through the remainder of the year which would either bring this into line, or we might move the little additional money if the Director feels that there's additional expense there.

When you compare that to Columns Six and Seven, when we're looking at the total spent -- and you see the increase and decrease from year to year -- we have spent a little bit more money in the base, in the Board of Directors budget, the 9,400 that is compared to last year's spending of 81,000, so we spent $9,000 more. Again, when you look at the ^differences ^ difference is, ^it's ^ its because we have done some re-allocation of expenses within the Executive Office. Last year we had eight personnel, I think it was, that was budgeted there. This year we've moved three of those into the Office of Program Performance and, actually, two other staff members, the

Vice-President for Compliance and Administration and the Administrative Assistant there. We've moved one-third of their salary into the Compliance and Enforcement area. So that's the reason for part of the increase that you see in spending and program performance. And same thing for the compliance, because we've re-aligned those expenses.

The document that was presented to you shows, that goes into a bit of detail as to the reasons for the changes and details the major ones. Another one was that -- so just change in, change the funding for an organizational decision that was made.

The decisions for telephone service has been handled by the Office of Information and Technology for quite sometime, and that money was in the Office of Financial Administrative Services budget. We, to align the budget with the decision maker, have moved the budget and the expenses into the Office of Information and Technology. So you'll see that there's a, an increase in the Office of Information and Technology, and that's the reason for that. Otherwise, the increase in the financial administrative services is a little bit higher because of the increased rent that we're paying.

Of note, also -- this is going to be, turn to Page 32 -- you'll see that your, in particular, with the variance for the budget versus the actual expenses, there's one area where it appears that we have overspent and that is in the temporary employee pay. We've had a number of positions that have turned over this year. We continue to have one employee who's on a medical leave of absence without pay, so we've used some temporary employees to go in and help the offices take care of those circumstances and work and help them through this time. We have a new employee, I understand, coming on in a couple of weeks in the Office of Program Performance. And they're actually advertising for additional staff in other offices so that we'll hopefully be at good staffing sometime this summer. That will help and alleviate this problem. If there is a need -- and each Director is looking at their budget at this point -- each year we do a mid-year review of the expenses, and each Director is now reviewing their expenses through March. They will present objections of future spending and any corrections to the spending that needs to be included here, and we'll present that at the June meeting.

One other item just to mention here where I mentioned that we were a little bit overbudget and temporary employees. If you carry that to the full-year budget, they're spending at about a rate of 69 percent. So if we compare that to the full-year budget we're still under budget as far as it says, with the adjustments of spending in the future six months. That's my report on the spending through March. I know that is the quick capsulization there, but if there's any questions I'd be glad to answer any questions for you.

MR. DIETER: I have a couple questions. The search for Presidential Search Expenses have already been reflected in ^here ^ hear; is that right?

MR. RICHARDSON: That is correct.

MR. DIETER: And that's under the Board of Directors?

MR. RICHARDSON: That's under the Board of Directors.

MR. DIETER: Okay. And then the other question is, on Page 31 where the $200,000 difference in spending this year versus last year. Is that likely to continue the next half year so that that 800,000 in Column Three is worked out to 600,000, or do you know?

MR. RICHARDSON: No. We give raises in January. And part of the next presentation with the budget we've explained how we've handled that. We did a 2 percent raise in January, and there's an additional 2 percent payment that is also included in this budget. Just sort of try to match what Federal Government is doing in Washington. So their employees are, we try to match U.S. Government in making our employee decisions so that we will try to work that in. And I'll explain that when we go through the consolidated operating budget. But expenses through the summer would formally increase with the capability assessments for the competition initiative. We have the compliance. And going out, our President had mentioned at the last meeting that she's instituted a trial with the Compliance and Program Performance Office, a combined visit. So we anticipate a cost with continued increase during the year.

MR. DIETER: And then a report, somewhere it's mentioned that there are 94 employees.

MR. RICHARDSON: Yes, sir.

MR. DIETER: Before it was only 110 or something.

MR. RICHARDSON: I've, I split out the management and the Inspector General. There's 94 --

MR. DIETER: Oh.

MR. RICHARDSON: -- in management; there's an additional 17 in the Inspector General's Office. And I was going to mention here, also, when you're looking at this report -- I sort of skimmed over -- the Inspector General didn't mention there the budget that is on 30. Page 31 shows that is $1.965 million and was six, $6 million for a half year, and they've spent $1,261,000. So there are 704,000, almost 705,000 that is, has not been spent, a variance that is, indeed, shown there for the first six months. But that compares to last year of the budget where, for expenses, they've spent $970,000. So the IG's Office has actually spent $290,000 more, also, than their operations this year had for a 30 percent increase.

MR. DIETER: Okay. Tom, any questions?

MR. FUENTES: No, thank you. That was clear. And I do have all of the updates, so --

MR. DIETER: Herb?

MR. GARTEN: Would you refresh us on -- me, in particular -- on the budget for the Board of Directors which increased substantially over the prior year?

MR. RICHARDSON: Mainly, as I recall, there was increased costs due to, you know, the IG search that will be undertaken completed, and the completion of the President's search. What we're comparing here is the actual money that was spent last year.

MR. GARTEN: All right.

MR. RICHARDSON: The, the actual budget last year for the Board is $377,000, so that could come down. It's likely to come down a little bit.

MR. GARTEN: Thank you.

MR. DIETER: Does that conclude your report, David?

MR. RICHARDSON: Yes, sir, that concludes the report on the March spending.

MR. DIETER: Okay. Then on the consolidated operating budget, do you want to make any comments before we consider an act on the recommendations?

MR. RICHARDSON: No, sir.

MR. DIETER: No. 5.

MR. RICHARDSON: I think the memo, itself, speaks to the changes and highlights the different components of the changes we made. You had a very similar memorandum at the January meeting that detailed the temporary operating budget, and then just made a few changes since that point that are highlighted in your word book on Pages, actually 17, 18 and 19.

MR. DIETER: Okay. Herb, any questions?

MR. GARTEN: ^no ^ know further questions.

MR. DIETER: Tom, any questions?

MR. FUENTES: No, none at this point.

MR. DIETER: Okay. Then I guess the Committee's next order of business is to -- on Page 26 there's a resolution -- I guess we move to present that resolution to the full Board at tomorrow's meeting

M O T I O N

. MR. FUENTES: You entertain that movement?

MR. DIETER: Okay. Let's vote. All in favor say aye.

(A chorus of ayes.)

MR. DIETER: Okay. Passes unanimously. And then, Item Six is to consider and act on whether to submit a, what's referred to here as a supplemental request, but I believe that terminology is probably inaccurate at this point, to Congress with respect to a pilot project for student loan repayment assistance for LSC Grantees. And I think the, Mr. Koczur is going to make that presentation. Everybody should have copy of his letter to me dated April 27th.

All right. Go ahead.

MR. KOCZUR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the last Finance Committee I was asked to prepare a plan for our carryover, for how we plan to reduce our carryover. And going into this year we had approximately $1 million in carryover. And what ^we've ^ weave ^ we've done, devised two plans. The first one is the preferable one and it came up with all the recent talk about loan repayment programs. And I talked to the President, and she talked about the pilot project for the Loan Repayment Program. And my staff and I concluded that a good way of approaching this would be for us to go to the Legislature, the Congress, and have them transfer our $1 million carryover to the corporation for this program. That, that's our Plan One.

Our Plan Two would be, is a three-year plan that's articulated here that would spend the money over a three-year period on good solid projects.

But we think the first plan is better because, that the Loan Repayment Plan is so important, there's so much interest in it, it precludes the corporation having to request a supplemental. And I think that that's, there's a much better chance of us being able to get the money transferred from our account to the Corporation's account, the M&A account, than there is to get a supplemental, and that's why this is -- or the Plan One, the Plan One that we came up with.

MR. DIETER: 'Kay. The only question I have, and just want to be sure that, you know, if we did adopt Plan One that it wouldn't materially affect your ability to carry that out.

MR. KOCZUR: We need about $2.6 million year to operate with and we have a million dollars more than that coming in this year, so it was not that we would have to make some economy because of the pay increases that come along each year. We'd have to cut back on some of the projects we have. Like we have some build-out that needs to be done in our in our suite but, yet, that's not something that's vital that we do now; it's something that's inconvenient that we can live with. But we can make up the difference of $350 between the two plans. We have the economies to make that difference up.

MR. DIETER: Herb?

MR. GARTEN: Have you made any preliminary inquiries of this?

MR. KOCZUR: No, I haven't. I've talked to the President about it. I've talked to several Board members; I've talked to our Congressional -- to Lisa Rosenberg about the feasibility of it just to see if this was something that could work. I -- there's general agreement that something that could work. She and I planned, Lisa and I planned to go up and talk to their staff at the Appropriations Committee and present this plan to them to see if they're receptive to it, but I didn't want to do anything before presenting it to and talking with the Board.

MR. GARTEN: Is there any precedent for this being done?

MR. KOCZUR: Huh?

MR. GARTEN: Any precedent for doing it?

MR. KOCZUR: Not that I'm aware. Not in the LSC anywhere. I'm sure in the Federal environment it happens not infrequently.

MR. FUENTES: Mr. Chairman?

MR. DIETER: Yes.

MR. FUENTES: I would like to move, I would move the approval of the first recommended action by the Inspector General. I would move that, and I would like to speak to it in a second.

MR. KOCZUR: Mr. Fuentes, if I could, there's really no need for an approval of this; ^it's ^ its more a presentation to inform the Board. If the Finance Committee would include this in its report, Tom, that would be sufficient. There's no need for a board resolution.

MR. FUENTES: In that case, then, I would just like to commend the act of the Inspector General for his work on this project. I appreciate his courtesy in discussing it. Myself, as a Board member, as the Chairman of the Law School who has the opportunity on a regular basis to talk to students as they go out the door and after they've gone out the door. This is certainly an area of critical impact. And, certainly for young professionals who wish to serve the community that we're attempting to serve, they face an even more grave situation, and this may be a practical utilization of our resources to outreach to them and help. I don't know that they have means in Washington to return money to the taxpayers, but there's extra money in a budget; understanding that I think this is a fine approach and I will be supportive of it.

MR. DIETER: 'Kay. I second those comments.

And I have just one other question. You don't anticipate, then, that your budget request for next year would be any higher?

MR. KOCZUR: ^no ^ know. But, certainly, we would look at the level of funding of $2.6 million.

MR. DIETER: So instead of a supplemental request, what is this thing called?

MS. BARNETT: I think that's, as the Acting Inspector General indicated, that he would go along with Lisa Rosenberg as a professional liaison to seek legislative permission to get this passed. And, if I could just say on behalf of LSC management, we think this is a wonderful opportunity for LSC to take a leadership role in designing a program of significance on loan forgiveness, so we were most excited about the suggestion made by the Inspector General.

MR. DIETER: Okay. I -- at this point, then, we'd bring it to the Board for discussion tomorrow, or --

MR. KOCZUR: Yeah. I think if you just include it as part of your report as a proposal --

MR. DIETER: Okay.

MR. KOCZUR: -- by the IG to reduce the carryover, or eliminate the carryover, that would be sufficient.

MR. DIETER: Okay. And then would we talk about the implementation of the pilot project, or the --

MS. BARNETT: And as soon as we got permission on it, I would like set up an Advisory Board right away to help us design.

MR. DIETER: Okay. 'Cause I, the only discussion I have , you know, what is the hypothesis that we're testing, and what is the model used to test the results in terms of what are -- how it affects retention recruitment.

MS. BARNETT: I, certainly, my input of, on this Board and our concept would be that we would get one of the Grantees who -- on a successful program of law school, convene immediately a task force that would help give us the guidance of what amount we should offer, who should make the selection, over what period of time and how can we measure the success and retention both for applicants and for staff.

MR. DIETER: Yeah. Okay. Maria Luisa?

MS. MERCADO: Yes. I know I'm not a member of the Committee, but it also would be an appropriate task or agenda item for the Provisions Committee to look at and, in fact, have the kind of people that we assist in putting the project together, along with staff, obviously, and other members in the community.

But as far as looking at, you know, how many

Committees you want to agree or do -- that's, sort of would be natural to be under that Committee to work on.

MR. DIETER: Well, we could take up that, I guess, maybe at the Board Meeting tomorrow, discuss where it should go. I mean, I'm happy with the President's suggestion. And, you know, I think in terms of testing the hypothesis, that's all I'm concerned about in terms of whether or not it's, you know, it can be demonstrated that it is a, you know, a measurable step for people to choose these jobs and retain people and the number of years that we allow people to reply. Because, you know, looking at some of the data, some of our problems really are the retention side about three to five years out. And that the real problem is, you know, the salary levels, I think, you know, rather than the student debt. This seems to be a good step in the direction of trying to be sure that we get good quality people drawn to the program.

MR. KOCZUR: Mr. Chairman?

MR. DIETER: Yeah?

MR. KOCZUR: One thing to make it clear. This will be effective witht the passage of the 2005 appropriation, whenever that occurs.

MR. DIETER: So --

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MR. DIETER: Right. Well, that gives us enough time to think it out, I guess.

Tom, do you have anything else?

MR. FUENTES: No.

MR. DIETER: Okay. Are there any other comments on that proposal?

All right. Is there any other business that the Committee Members have, any other Board members want to bring up?

Okay. Is there any other comment from the public about any of the agenda items?

No comment. Okay. Well, then, I guess we can --

MR. SAUNDERS: We like it.

MR. DIETER: Sorry. It's Bill Whitehurst.

MR. WHITEHURST: I want to do this personally, but I want to do it publicly. I want to commend our thanks on behalf of the State and the ABA for a copious offer. It's such a wonderful offer, and it's a wonderful way to start this program off. It's something that I think all of us who are working in this area realize that we need to do something about. ^it's ^ its on all of our agendas, and you really -- if this works, it would be a great quick start to that. So I want to say thank you.

MR. DIETER: Yeah, just add to that, I did talk to Ken, or Len on the phone about it to make sure it wouldn't affect his ability to -- you know, with his budget going forward or create a problem for him in terms of raising or showing that he had this money carrying forward. And it is a significant amount of money which is in a place with a really good look at this, because --

MR. WHITEHURST: Yeah.

MR. DIETER: -- some of the previous ideas were ambitious, but small I think in terms of fiscally, so this -- you know, you look at the numbers, we should have enough money to really make a good study of how this affects.

MR. WHITEHURST: Well, I agree. And I hope we'll have somebody not just to study it, but to actually implement it.

MR. DIETER: Yeah. No. We're going to try to keep the administrative costs as low as possible.

All right. Okay. Well, there being no other people coming forward to the microphone, we'll adjourn the meeting.

MR. FUENTES: Thank you, gentlemen, ladies.

MR. DIETER: Thanks, Tom.

MS. BARNETT: Thank you, Tom. Hope you're feeling better.

MR. FUENTES: I'll see you tomorrow; I'll be with you tomorrow.

(At 5:35 p.m., the Finance Committee was adjourned.)