



Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington DC 20006-4614

May 6, 2011 Minutes

A meeting of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board was held in Washington, D.C. on Friday, May 6, 2011, at 1:30 p.m. and continued until 2:10 p.m.

ATTENDEES

Board Members:

Earl E. Devaney, Chairman, Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board
Phyllis K. Fong, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Todd J. Zinser, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Commerce
Kathleen S. Tighe, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Education
Gregory H. Friedman, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Energy
Daniel R. Levinson, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Eric M. Thorson, Inspector General, U.S. Department of the Treasury
J. Russell George, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration
Mary Kendall, Acting Inspector General, U.S. Department of the Interior
Charles Edwards, Acting Inspector General, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Non Proxy Attendee:

William Blier, General Counsel, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General

Board Staff:

Michael Wood, Executive Director
Jennifer Dure, General Counsel
Ed Pound, Director, Communications
Alan Boehm, Assistant Director, Accountability
A.J. Benavidez, Deputy Assistant Director, Operations
Cynthia Williams, Board Secretary

DISCUSSION

Mr. Devaney called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. By unanimous vote of the Board members present the March 4, 2011 minutes were approved.

Mr. George, Chair, Recovery.gov Committee, briefed the Board members on the most recent reporting statistics and updates for Recovery.gov and FederalReporting.gov. Mr. George commended the technical team for its proactive engineering of Recovery.gov which kept the site running despite problems with the Amazon Cloud computing software.

The members were provided with recipient reporting statistics submitted to FederalReporting.gov during the most recent reporting period and Inspector General audit reports published on Recovery.gov. Mr. Wood also discussed the automated data change request feature recently incorporated on FederalReporting.gov. He noted that the enhancement will assist the effort to maintain the accuracy of the ARRA recipient data base.

Mr. Wood provided a general overview of the Independent Advisory Panel conference call that occurred on April 20. He discussed the changes planned for the Recovery.gov website as a result of implementing the Panel recommendations. These include additional information on ARRA entitlement and tax benefit programs, and improper payment rates for ARRA programs greater than one billion dollars.

There was a brief discussion on the difficulty of categorizing ARRA programs. Mr. Wood informed the group of the joint effort underway between the Board staff and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to correctly classify the programs. The group was also

informed of the status of the staff's review of all Panel recommendations and follow-up actions.

Mr. Thorson, on behalf of Mr. Scovel who was absent, provided an update on three Recovery Working Group projects underway. He reported that 18 of the 28 ARRA agencies responded to the ARRA S&D Survey. Preliminary survey results are being analyzed and a draft report of the findings and implications is expected to be issued in the next few weeks. Mr. Thorson also informed the group that the Board staff and members of five IG offices are working to finalize the ARRA Grant Fraud Guide. A final product is expected shortly. Additionally, Mr. Thorson reported that a compliance review of the policies and procedures for gathering and reporting jobs created or retained for all nine pilot recipients has yielded preliminary results. All nine respondents provided policies and procedures that demonstrated compliance with current OMB guidance on method of calculation. The amount of under/overstatement of jobs appears to be minimal. A draft report is being prepared and will be forwarded to the RFWG Committee.

Ms. Tighe, Chair of the Accountability Committee, briefed the group on current committee activities. These include the committee's actions to resolve data discrepancy issues and maintain data accuracy of IG oversight statistics, a status of the ROC-IG pilot project, pilot projects with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and ROC platform enhancements. Ms. Tighe reported that two of the four IG offices involved in the ROC-IG pilot have provided positive feedback. Each reported that access to the ROC platform has added value to their analytical capabilities. The two remaining IGs are assessing how best to leverage the data. The Board discussed the selection criteria for the future pilot participants. Mr. Devaney noted that the pilot would be beneficial for both agencies and OIGs. Additionally, it was noted that analysts, investigators, and procurement staff are well suited for the pilot program. The Board was reminded that an earlier decision will allow future participants access to more of the available ROC data.

Ms. Tighe also informed the Board that an analysis of the VA benefit data is underway and results should be available in the next few weeks. Additionally, she reported that the project with VA regarding the eligibility verification of veteran owned businesses is also underway. Mr. Benavidez reported on the ROC platform enhancements, which include the addition of Dunn and Bradstreet data, Accurint relational database web services, and enhanced fraud risk modeling.

Mr. Devaney discussed the new organizational structure and the selection of Mr. Wood to the vacant position of Executive Director. He commented on the retirement of John Higgins, noting his significant contributions to the Board.

Mr. Devaney informed the group that Mr. Scovel will testify on his behalf before a Senate subcommittee on May 25, 2011. Mr. Devaney also mentioned his upcoming testimony before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Mr. Devaney commented that the White Paper on the Recovery lessons learned has been positively received by the Office of the Vice President. He expects ongoing discussions by all applicable stakeholders.

The members engaged in a discussion of a capstone report by the Board members on the broader lessons learned and new ways of looking at fraud.

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for July 1, 2011.

Cynthia Williams
Secretary