

Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board
1717 Pennsylvania Ave, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20006

Minutes

A meeting of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board was held in Washington, D.C, on Friday, October 09, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. and continued until 3:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Board Members:

Earl E. Devaney, Chairman, Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board
Richard Skinner, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Phyllis Fong, Inspector General U.S. Department of Agriculture
Todd J. Zinser, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Commerce
Mary Mitchelson, Acting Inspector General, U.S. Department of Education
J. Russell George, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration
Glenn A. Fine, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Justice
Eric M. Thorson, Inspector General, U.S. Department of the Treasury
Gregory H. Friedman, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Energy
Mary Kendall, Acting Inspector General, U.S. Department of the Interior

Board Staff:

Glen Walker, Executive Director
Eric M. Lippold, Assistant Director, Finance and Budget
Jennifer Dure, General Counsel
Ed Pound, Director, Communications
Michael Wood, Director, Recovery.gov
Douglas Hassebrock, Assistant Director, Investigations
John Higgins, Assistant Director, Audits, Inspections and Evaluations
Don Salo, Assistant Director, Procurement and Grant Compliance

Presenters:

Todd Richards, Contracting Officer, General Services Administration

Mr. Devaney called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Ms. Mitchelson and Ms. Kendall recommended changes to the minutes and the Board, by unanimous vote of the members present, approved the September 25, 2009 minutes, as amended.

Mr. Wood briefed Board members on the status of Recovery.gov and FederalReporting.gov, and reported that both websites were functioning as designed. Mr. Wood informed members that the help desk had already received more than 2,800 calls, chats or emails from users needing help with registering, submitting a report, reviewing a report, or other website functions.

Mr. Wood then reviewed the reporting timeline and summarized that federal agencies would begin reviewing recipient data on October 11, 2009. Mr. Wood reminded Board members that recipient contract data would be made available for public download on October 15, 2009 and that recipient grant and loan data available for public download on October 30, 2009.

Mr. Devaney informed Board members that some states will release their data to non-governmental organizations and they may make their data available to the public before the data is available on Recovery.gov. Mr. Devaney explained that this could be attributed to state Freedom of Information Act and related legislation. However, Mr. Devaney reminded Board members that Board was allowing federal agencies an opportunity to review the data and request changes before posting the data on Recovery.gov.

Mr. Higgins informed Board members that all 29 OIGs represented on the Recovery Funds Working Group were provided a demonstration of the redesigned Recovery.gov, and then proceeded to provide Board members with an update on the status of the grant and contract survey. Mr. Higgins informed members that the survey data is currently being analyzed, and the committee expects to deliver the consolidated draft report to the full Board for review in November. Mr. Higgins then briefed members on the data quality initiative and summarized that participating OIGs will complete individual reports no later than October 30, 2009, and the committee expects to deliver the consolidated draft report to the full Board for review in January. Mr. Higgins concluded by highlighting the training and outreach activity of the IG community, and stated that an analysis of the most recent reporting period determined that over 50 percent of the training provided by the IG community focused on fraud prevention and awareness.

Mr. Skinner, Accountability Committee Chair, offered an example of the new Fraud, Waste and Abuse hotline poster for acceptance by the Board. The poster contained the original Recovery.gov seal and was accepted due to wide familiarization of the logo. Mr. Skinner also provided the Board a new version of an online [complaint form](#). The new form was accepted by the Board for use on Recovery.gov.

Mr. Hassebrock briefed members on the status of the Accountability Module. Mr. Hassebrock reiterated comments made during the July 31, 2009 meeting, and informed members that the accountability module would accomplish the following:

- Provide the Board and the IG community with a predictive analysis capability in order to focus limited government oversight resources (i.e., auditors, investigators, or inspectors) on “areas of concern” of covered funds. These areas of concern would be determined by predictive variables to include factors like high-risk programs, high-dollar-value projects, past criminal history, and tips from citizens. The accountability module will provide Board staff with the tools to research, analyze, and evaluate areas of concern and to prepare a referral to the respective IG for further investigation, inspection, evaluation or audit.
- Provide the Board and the IG community with an in-depth fraud analysis capability in order to identify non-obvious relationships between legal entities utilizing the vast amount of public information about companies receiving Recovery Act funds. These relationships will unveil facts that may not have been transparent to government officials at the time of contract or grant award. The accountability module will provide Board staff with the tools to research, analyze, and evaluate these relationships and to prepare a referral to the respective IG for further investigation, inspection, evaluation or audit.

Mr. Richards briefed Board members on the source selection process for the Accountability Module.

By unanimous vote of the members present, the Board approved the recommendation of the Accountability Committee to accept the source selection made by the evaluation team and to instruct GSA to proceed with the procurement.

Mr. Devaney distributed the Board’s draft annual report to members and requested that comments be provided by Friday, October 16, 2009.

Eric M. Lippold
Secretary