

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

Minutes (Draft)

A meeting of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board was held in Washington, D.C, on Friday, December 4, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. and continued until 2:30 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
Calvin L. Scovel III, Inspector General U.S. Department of Transportation
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
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
John Higgins, Assistant Director, Audits, Inspections and Evaluations
Mike Wood, Director, Recovery.gov

Mr. Skinner called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

By unanimous vote of the members present, Board members approved the November 20, 2009 minutes.

Mr. George, Recovery.gov Committee Chair, briefed Board members on recommended improvements to the service desk to provide better customer service including a better phone message with wait time announcement. Mr. Wood then provided an overview of technical enhancements designed to improve recipient reporting and data quality on FederalReporting.gov including the following:

- Additional internal logic checks to include Congressional District checks and corrections, jobs calculation improvements to flag unusually large or small entries, and checks to ensure spending does not exceed award amount
- Improvements to service desk operations to include an increased number of operators, better training and enhanced reference materials for operators, and a simplified PIN number retrieval process
- Enhancements to enable OMB to more easily review all reports for all federal agencies, and to produce standard reports for OMB to assist agencies with identifying possible outliers and quality issues to include, for example, mapping

- anomalies where the zip code and state do not match, and unusually large or small job calculations
- Encourage agencies to provide recipients an award summary to include key fields (e.g., DUNS, TAFs, etc.) to assist recipients with reporting
- Open QA period and extend the agencies' ability to view and comment on recipient reports and extend the recipients' ability to correct the errors and identified mistakes on an ongoing basis

Mr. Scovel, Recovery Funds Working Group Committee Chair, led a discussion on the status of the contract and grants staffing qualifications survey and the data quality initiative. The draft report on the contract and grants staffing qualifications survey was completed on November 30, 2009 and distributed to the IG community for comment. All comments were asked to be provided to Department of Commerce OIG by December 11, 2009.

Mr. Scovel recapped Board members November 20 discussion on the preliminary results of the data quality initiative where Board members stressed the need for additional work in the data quality area. Mr. Friedman expressed concerns over the initial report, and Mr. Devaney proceeded to lead a discussion on the data quality initiative. Mr. Skinner summarized that the report should clearly communicate that the first phase focused on process and not data quality, and that the Board should communicate how data quality will be examined in the future.

Mr. Devaney then led a discussion on what additional data quality work should be performed, and suggested the Board continue with a phased approach resulting in a series of reports from the OIG community. Board members agreed to move forward with the phase approach with no objection.

Mr. Skinner, Accountability Committee Chair, informed Board members that the hotline posters will be available for download on Recovery.gov, and that 16 Recovery Act IG Offices have toured the Recovery Operations Center. Mr. Skinner then provided Board members with an update on Recovery Act complaints and referrals, and briefed members on the meeting with the FBI.

Mr. Devaney concluded the meeting following a discussion on non-reporters.

Eric M. Lippold
Secretary