



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

January 7, 2011 Minutes

A meeting of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board was held in Washington, D.C. on Friday, January 7, 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
Gordon S. Heddell, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Defense
Kathleen S. Tighe, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Education
Daniel R. Levinson, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Calvin L. Scovel III, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Transportation
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

Proxy Attendee:

John Hartman, Deputy Inspector General, U.S. Department of Energy

Board Staff:

H. Glen Walker, Executive Director
Ed Pound, Director, Communications
Michael Wood, Director, Recovery.gov
John Higgins, Director, Accountability
A.J. Benavidez, Assistant Director, Accountability
Jennifer Dure, General Counsel
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 December 3, 2010 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. It was noted that the process for the 6th reporting cycle – Quarter 4, Calendar Year 2010 – has progressed smoothly. Mr. Wood informed the group that to date 27,000 prime recipient reports have been submitted to FederalReporting.gov and approximately 114,000 jobs have been reported. Mr. Wood noted that based on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Award List for the period, the Board anticipates nearly 70,000 prime recipient reports. Mr. George advised the group of an enhanced mapping feature on Recovery.gov. Mr. Wood described the comparison mapping technology that affords users a side by side comparison of key statistical data. Mr. Devaney commented on the movement of the industry away from top-down analysis and toward this new cutting-edge approach. Mr. Wood commented that a committee demonstration of the mapping technology is scheduled for January 30th and extended an invitation to the full Board.

The Board's current effort to capture historical point in time statistics and other information from the website was also discussed. Mr. Wood reported on a proposed collaborative effort with the U.S. Census Bureau to design and develop an archive of Recovery.gov recipient data. Mr. Wood commented that the Census Bureau would add its considerable expertise in the field to the Board's technology capabilities. He noted that cost negotiations would reflect the Board's fiscal

conscientiousness. Mr. Devaney added that key data produced by the new comparison mapping feature would be added to the archive for a holistic product. Mr. Wood provided members a copy of the Recovery.gov Data Summary Desk Reference, which provides recipient reported data for the first five reporting cycles. Quarterly updates of the Desk Reference are planned.

Mr. Scovel Chair, Recovery Funds Working Committee, provided the members with an update of key committee activity. Mr. Scovel informed the group that the three key projects underway are the Statistical Job Sample Audit, development of an ARRA-focused Suspension and Debarment (S&D) Survey Instrument, and development of a universal Grant Fraud Guide. All milestones have been achieved and preliminary prototypes of the S&D Survey Tool and the Grant Fraud Guide are expected in late January and February respectively. On behalf of the Committee, Mr. Scovel presented the Recovery Board's 2010 Annual Report to the full Board for review and feedback. The Board was asked to provide comment by Wednesday, January 12, 2011. The report is scheduled for publication shortly thereafter.

Mr. Benavidez, on behalf of Mr. Skinner who was absent, provided an update of key Accountability Committee issues. Mr. Benavidez discussed the status of the ROC Information Sharing Pilot. Staff members from the four participating OIGs have been identified and ROC-IG connectivity has been established. Mr. Benavidez informed the group that training for Department of Homeland Security OIG personnel is scheduled for January 10th. OIG personnel at the Department of Education, Department of Justice, and Department of the Interior are scheduled for training beginning January 24, 2011. While the pilot project provides the OIGs remote access to open-source data, Mr. Benavidez noted that future collaborative efforts could involve sharing specific investigative data. Mr. Benavidez discussed the ROC's current use of the Object Explorer tool. Mr. Benavidez also informed the group of the solicitation for a more robust fraud risk modeling tool. He reported that interviews with potential vendors are scheduled for January 27-28, 2011. Mr. Devaney added that through this effort the Board hopes to obtain a product that will strengthen the statistical validity of the ROC's predictive capabilities.

Mr. Walker informed the group that the Independent Advisory Panel will hold its next open meeting on January 25, 2011 at the Maryland State Capitol Building. The Panel will hold a preparatory and administrative planning session at the Board Office on January 26th. Advance copies of the meeting agendas will be disseminated electronically to the Board. Mr. Devaney encouraged Board members to attend the open session.

The members discussed the solicitation of articles for the upcoming edition of the Journal of Public Inquiry, noting that relevant articles should be submitted. Mr. Devaney informed the group of the Department of Justice effort to publicly mark the second anniversary of the Recovery Act. Mr. Devaney noted his desire for the group to focus on the benefits of fraud prevention as a key theme rather than assembling an array of small Recovery Act investigations.

The members engaged in a discussion of the current Board meeting schedule. It was generally agreed that in an effort to maintain the substantive quality of the meetings and allow time for committee project results, the meetings should be held bi-monthly. A motion to change the frequency of the meetings from monthly to bi-monthly was made and adopted. The Chairman retains the ability to hold interim meetings as necessary.

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for March 4, 2011.

Cynthia Williams
Secretary