



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

October 8, 2010 Minutes

A meeting of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board was held in Washington, D.C. on Friday, October 8, 2010, at 1:30 p.m. and continued until 2:30 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 Levinson, Inspector General, Social Security Administration
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 (Non-Voting):

Benjamin Mehlmann, ARRA Audits Program Director, U.S. Department of Defense Office of Inspector General
Cynthia Schnedar, Deputy Inspector General, U.S. Department of Justice

Board Staff:

Ed Pound, Director, Communications
Michael Wood, Director, Recovery.gov
John Higgins, Director, Accountability
Jennifer Dure, General Counsel
Douglas Hassebrock, Assistant Director, Investigations
Alan Boehm, Assistant Director, Special Programs Unit
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 September 10, 2010 minutes were approved.

Mr. George, Chair, Recovery.gov Committee, updated the Board members on the latest developments and key Recovery.gov issues. Mr. George reported on the number of recipient reports submitted to www.federalreporting.gov, and informed the members of the October 10th reporting deadline. Mr. George briefed the Board members on the committee's consideration of "at will" reporting, which would provide recipients the ability to report at the time of project completion. Mr. Devaney commented that consultation with the Office of Management and Budget is needed along with consideration for the implications such a decision would have on other systems. Mr. Wood briefed the Board members on the status of the technical reporting solution for the Education Jobs Fund. Mr. Devaney added that the Board is planning to create a new site, to display the jobs fund data. Mr. Wood also reported on the scheduled Recovery.gov enhancements and the results of the Mitre Quality Assurance Report. The latter will be published on Recovery.gov.

Mr. Scovel, Chair, Recovery Funds Working Group Committee, provided an update of the Single Audit Metrics, Jobs Estimate, and ARRA Suspension and Debarment initiatives. Mr. Scovel reported that a review of the Single Audit reports of various 1512 reporting recipients has been conducted. The findings were outlined in a letter to OMB. Also, at the Board's request, the Committee is pursuing a statistical sample of 1512 jobs data. A statistician from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is working with the Board to determine an adequate sample of recipient reports. The scope of the sample will include reports from Quarter 3, 2010. Additionally, the Committee has accepted a proposal from the Office of Inspector General, National Science Foundation, to pursue an ARRA-focused Suspension and Debarment (S&D) initiative. The initiative will employ a survey mechanism to develop baseline information of S&D practices, identify weaknesses, and share best practices. Mr. Scovel also discussed the impact of the Frank-Dodd amendment to ARRA Section 1603 on OIG Recovery Act budgets. Mr. Devaney agreed to work with the appropriate congressional committees to seek resolution for the OIGs. Ms. Fong offered the assistance of the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency to work with the Board on this issue.

Mr. Hassebrock, on behalf of Mr. Skinner who was absent, provided an Accountability Committee update. Mr. Hassebrock presented the current investigative statistics, and provided an update on the Board's proposal for additional capabilities for the Recovery Operations Center. Mr. Hassebrock introduced the Board's GSA contractors who provided the Board with an overview of a contract proposal for the Recovery Operations Center. Members of the Board discussed the pros and cons of the proposal. A motion to approve the contract was presented and unanimously adopted. Mr. Hassebrock and Ms. Dure discussed the Board's latest attempt to collect complaint information from the Department of Labor (DOL). Ms. Dure reported on the positive outcome of a recent meeting. The Board members discussed benefits of pursuing the complaint issue with DOL. Members agreed that the progress made thus far justifies continued discussion.

Mr. Devaney informed the group of a recently held conference call with the Department of Justice regarding the proposal to combine the operations of the Recovery Act Grant Fraud and the National Grant Fraud Working Groups. Mr. Devaney informed the Board that more than 480 people are registered for the National Fraud Conference in Philadelphia, and that Vice President Biden is expected to participate. Mr. Devaney discussed the importance of providing the Board advance notification on oversight issues. Mr. Devaney also discussed the Board's responsibility for providing oversight of Recovery funds allocated to entitlement programs, tax benefits, as well as programs subject to section 1512 of the Recovery Act reporting requirements. Several methods for identifying current oversight activities of the entitlement and tax benefit funds were discussed by the group.

Mr. Friedman initiated a discussion of appropriate recognition for members of the IG community at the forefront of Recovery activities. Several suggestions were discussed. Mr. Devaney asked the Board to discuss the issue with members of their staff and send proposals forward for review at the next Board meeting. The Board also discussed the total spending projection for Recovery Board operations.

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for November 5, 2010

Cynthia Williams
Secretary