

Government Accountability and Transparency Board

October 27, 2011 Minutes

A meeting of the Government Accountability and Transparency Board (GAT Board) was held at the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board (Recovery Board) Office in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, October 27, 2011, at 9:00 a.m. and continued until 11:00 a.m.

ATTENDEES

Board Members:

W. Scott Gould, Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs
Allison C. Lerner, Inspector General, National Science Foundation
Daniel Levinson, Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services
Ellen Murray, Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources and Chief Financial Officer, Department of Health and Human Services
Calvin L. Scovel, III, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Transportation
Kathleen Tighe, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Education
Daniel I. Werfel, Controller, Office of Management and Budget

Proxy Attendees

Richard Ginman, Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, U.S. Department of Defense
Dan Tangherlini, Chief Financial Officer, Department of the Treasury

Agency Staff:

Ross Bezark, Executive Director, GAT Board, and Chief of Staff, Recovery Board
Jennifer Dure, General Counsel, Recovery Board
Peter Levin, Chief Technology Officer, Veterans Affairs
Robert F. Owens, Chief Information Officer, Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General
Joel C. Spangenberg, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary, Veterans Affairs
James Warren, Chief Innovation Officer, Recovery Board
Cynthia Williams, Board Secretary, Recovery Board
Michael Wood, Executive Director, Recovery Board

MITRE Personnel:¹

Shaun Brady
James Cook
Gary Ingben
Gordon Milbourn

Discussion:

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. Chairman Devaney joined the meeting via conference call. He thanked Mr. Gould for serving as ad-hoc chairman during both his scheduled absence and that of Vice Chairman Dave Williams. Chairman Devaney informed the members that Vice President Biden has requested a meeting with the GAT Board to discuss the Board's mission and its progress to date.

¹ Attended during the MITRE discussion only

The meeting date and location is being coordinated and will be communicated to the members shortly. Chairman Devaney thanked the members for their participation and turned the meeting over to Mr. Gould.

Mr. Gould reviewed the agenda topics and meeting materials. Mr. Gould offered an amendment to the minutes of the October 4, 2011 GAT Board meeting to include an acknowledgement of the member agreed-upon letter from Chairman Devaney to Chairman Issa expressing the GAT Board's views on the pending DATA Act legislation. By unanimous vote of the members present, the minutes were approved as amended.

Mr. Bezark reviewed the proposed calendar dates for upcoming GAT Board meetings and events, to include an extended meeting on November 15, 2011; a regular meeting on December 1, 2011; and the delivery of the final report to the President tentatively on December 15, 2011. Mr. Bezark asked the members to confirm their availability for the proposed meetings by Monday, October 31, 2011.

Mr. Warren provided the members a recap of the Inter-Agency Technology Advisory Panel (ITAP) meeting held on October 19, 2011. Mr. Warren reported that after the day-long review, the group concluded that the major risks and concerns with extending the Recovery Board proof of concept technologies across the federal government are in the areas of IT governance, data standards, data quality, and the movement of data across the federal spending universe. Questions regarding timing and costs were briefly addressed. Several members provided feedback from individual discussions with their agency ITAP representatives.

The members engaged in a discussion of the challenges imposed by the aggressive timeline for the development and delivery of the report to the President. Mr. Wood suggested that prioritizing actionable items to identify early opportunities might be helpful. After considerable discussion, a motion by Mr. Gould was adopted that, pending budgetary approval, the Recovery Board employ a contractor to identify the core technology needed for a government-wide technology solution, determine the potential value created as a result of implementation, and present the findings to the GAT Board. The members also determined that the contractor should incorporate into its study a representative set of systems that capture both contract and grant data.

The members discussed the importance of defining the larger government vision. A second motion offered by Mr. Gould was adopted to create a subgroup to define the long-term vision of federal financial data integration. Subgroup members identified during the meeting include Mr. Ginman, Ms. Lerner, Mr. Levinson, Ms. Murray, Mr. Tangherlini, Ms. Tighe, and Mr. Werfel.

Mr. Gould initiated a discussion on the future role of the GAT Board. He asked Mr. Bezark to brief the members on governance options. Mr. Bezark informed the group that the most feasible models for continued governance have been determined to be the independent Board model, consortium model, and a host agency/agencies model. He added that the criteria by which these should be judged include speed with which decisions can be made and initiatives can be implemented, efficiency, effectiveness, and cost. A motion, by Mr. Gould, was adopted to form a workgroup to evaluate, at a minimum, the three governance options using the criteria identified above and report back to the GAT Board on November 15, 2011. Workgroup members identified during the meeting include Ms. Lerner, Mr. Levinson, Mr. Scovel, Ms. Tighe, and Mr. Wood.

Representatives from MITRE joined the meeting to discuss their study on the feasibility of a government-wide Universal Award Identifier (UAID) and options for its implementation. Mr. Milbourn discussed three alternatives for implementation and the proposed formats for the UAID. Questions regarding each alternative were addressed. The members determined that additional information from MITRE is needed before a final recommendation can be made on the UAID concept. They agreed to assist MITRE with the collection of information on loan and grant awards from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, Department of Education, and the Small Business Administration to supplement the current study. The members also agreed to provide MITRE with the GAT Board's view of the long-term government vision for inclusion into the study. It was determined that MITRE will be invited to the December GAT Board meeting to continue the discussion and present an updated briefing.

Ms. Dure briefed the members on several key amendments to the DATA Act. She reported that Chairman Issa and staff are currently working on a Manager's Amendment to the pending legislation and is meeting with interested parties to gather input on the changes. Ms. Dure explained that the Manager's Amendment includes changes within three primary categories. These include reporting rules and guidance, FAST Board functions and powers, and structural type issues.

Mr. Werfel offered a new business item for the next meeting regarding state and local outreach. The members agreed to add it to the agenda.

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on November 15, 2011.

Cynthia Williams
Secretary