

Government Accountability and Transparency Board

November 17, 2011 Minutes

A meeting between Vice President Joseph R. Biden and the members of the Government Accountability and Transparency Board (GAT Board) was held at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB) in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, November 17, 2011, at 1:00 p.m. and continued until 2:00 p.m.

ATTENDEES

Joseph R. Biden, Vice President of the United States

Cynthia Hogan, Counsel to the Vice President, Office of the Vice President

Board Members:

Earl Devaney, Chairman, Recovery Board

W. Scott Gould, Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs

Allison C. Lerner, Inspector General, National Science Foundation

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

David C. Williams, Inspector General, U.S. Postal Service

Neal S. Wolin, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Treasury

Proxy Attendees

Richard Ginman, Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, U.S. Department of Defense

Daniel 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

Michael Wood, Executive Director, Recovery Board

Discussion:

The meeting was called to order at approximately 1:00 p.m. Vice President Biden opened the meeting by thanking the GAT Board members for coming to meet with him. The Vice President emphasized the importance of the topics of transparency and accountability to him personally, and therefore the importance of the work of the GAT Board.

The Vice President then discussed the experience of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act), and how the Recovery Act proved successful in terms of both its effects on the economy and its careful implementation. The Vice President noted that a large portion of the credit for this success is due to the work of Chairman Devaney and the Recovery Board. The Vice

President discussed the efforts of the Recovery Board to ensure transparency and accountability in Recovery Act spending, including Recovery.gov and the Recovery Operations Center.

The Vice President then emphasized that this experience should be a model for how the Government approaches all Federal spending. And the Vice President noted that this is what the GAT Board is charged with, and why their work is of utmost importance. The Vice President asked the GAT Board to provide specific, actionable recommendations in areas such as fraud tracking and system consolidation, and asked that the recommendations be bold. Finally, the Vice President expressed his confidence in the members of the GAT Board, and indicated his eagerness to review their report that will be submitted to himself and the President next month.

Chairman Devaney and the GAT Board members then engaged in a discussion with the Vice President to provide further context for the particular steps that they are considering recommending in the forthcoming report. The GAT Board members re-affirmed their commitment to the Vice President to provide a set of recommendations that are bold and can have an impact on transparency and accountability in the immediate term. The GAT Board members also discussed the importance of taking a broad view of these issues, and ensuring that Federal spending data provide deep insight into Government performance and effectiveness in a way that helps make Government better able to serve the public.

Following this discussion, Chairman Devaney presented the Vice President with a ceremonial check for \$2.9 million, representing unused funds that the Recovery Board had returned to the U.S. Treasury at the close of Fiscal Year 2011. The meeting then adjourned.

The next meeting of the GAT Board is scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on December 1, 2011.

Daniel I. Werfel
Controller, Office of Management and Budget