

## Government Accountability and Transparency Board

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 Wednesday, August 28, 2013, at 10:00 a.m. and continued until 11:33 a.m.

### ATTENDEES:

#### Board Members:

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

David C. Williams, Vice Chair and Inspector General, U.S. Postal Service

Gregory Friedman, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Energy

Allison Lerner, Inspector General, National Science Foundation

Daniel Levinson, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Ellen Murray, Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources and Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Kathleen S. Tighe, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Education

#### Agency Staff:

Ross Bezark, Executive Director, GAT Board, and Chief of Staff, Recovery Board

Kay Daly, Assistant Inspector General for Audit, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Sharon Kershbaum, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management, U.S. Department of the Treasury

Karen Lee, Chief of Management Controls and Assistance Branch, Office of Management and Budget

Karen Pica, Management Analyst, Office of Management and Budget

Atticus Reaser, General Counsel, Recovery Board

Scott Stewart, Director Application Development, United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General

LeAntha Sumpter, Deputy Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, U.S. Department of Defense

Cynthia Williams, Board Secretary, Recovery Board

Michael Wood, Executive Director, Recovery Board

### DISCUSSION:

Mr. Ginman called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. By unanimous vote of the members present, the minutes of the July 31, 2013, meeting were approved.

Mr. Ginman discussed the recently published report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on federal data transparency.<sup>1</sup> The members were provided a copy of the report for review. A detailed discussion of the two GAO recommendations for executive action, as identified in the report, ensued. GAO recommended that the Director of OMB, with the GAT Board: (1) develop a long-term plan to implement comprehensive transparency reform, and (2) increase efforts for obtaining stakeholder input to ensure reporting challenges are addressed

Mr. Ginman discussed the GAT Board's strategic direction and its limitations for implementing and enforcing changes. He pointed to the GAT Board Way Forward document<sup>2</sup>, which includes both a long-term and near-term strategy; it also identifies the working groups that are executing near-term (2013)

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<sup>1</sup> Full title of GAO report GAO-13-758 is *Federal Data Transparency – Opportunities Remain to Incorporate Lessons Learned as Availability of Spending Data Increases* (September 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Available at [http://www.federaltransparency.gov/about/Documents/GATB%20Way%20Forward%20Strategy\\_Approved.pdf](http://www.federaltransparency.gov/about/Documents/GATB%20Way%20Forward%20Strategy_Approved.pdf)

efforts and OMB's role. Mr. Williams commented on the need for an in-depth discussion of a comprehensive vision and any gaps that may exist. He also commented that the speed at which objectives are accomplished is an important part of the strategy and should also be discussed.

The members discussed the GAT Board's interaction with other federal agencies, including OMB and Treasury, to accomplish transparency objectives. Several members commented on the need for the GAT Board to maintain an independent view of transparency requirements. The members agreed that the current GAT Board Way Forward Strategy document should shape the strategy for Calendar 2014 and beyond.

There was a brief discussion of how best to engage external and non-federal stakeholders. Mr. Ginman reminded the members of the September 12, 2013, meeting with the Sunlight Foundation.<sup>3</sup> He commented that a larger scale meeting for members of the transparency community might be beneficial and committed to a follow up discussion with the members.<sup>4</sup>

Ms. Lee provided the members with an overview of the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) exit conference with GAO. She also discussed the Administration's National Action Plan (NAP), which is part of its Open Government initiative, and the potential utility of the NAP for the GAT Board. The members engaged in a brief discussion of the history and purpose of the NAP, along with the composition of the agencies that contribute information to the document. Several members commented on the need for cohesiveness of transparency efforts. Ms. Pica and Ms. Lee discussed the processes in place to engage the appropriate stakeholders in the development of the document. Ms. Lee volunteered to forward the current NAP document to the members for review.<sup>5</sup> Ms. Lee took an action to set up a meeting between the GAT Board Chairman, OMB, and the NAP sponsor.<sup>6</sup>

The featured working group presentation then began with a recap by Mr. Williams of the Data Analytics Working Group's vision of a government-wide accountability solution.<sup>7</sup> He informed the group that the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) has been identified as a channel for review and possible distribution of this data analytics option. He highlighted the similarities and differences in the vision from what the working group originally presented.

Mr. Williams discussed the shared platform, foundation, and data streams of the proposed solution. He identified its intended users and discussed the three shared platform layers. Mr. Ginman questioned the inclusion of the public as users of a system that might contain sensitive, law enforcement data. Ms. Tighe commented that separate governance could be established at various layers to determine and restrict user access. Mr. Wood agreed and added that the larger issue would be determining who should establish and control the process. The members discussed several initiatives underway to evaluate the feasibility of collaborative oversight efforts by program offices and law enforcement entities. Mr. Friedman

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<sup>3</sup> On September 12, 2013, Ms. Kaitlin Devine presented a briefing to the GAT Board. The briefing is available at [http://presentation.sunlightfoundation.com/kaitlin\\_senate.html](http://presentation.sunlightfoundation.com/kaitlin_senate.html)

<sup>4</sup> On October 23, 2013, the Chairman provided the GAT Board Secretariat with a draft Federal Register notice of a public meeting, for the consideration of GAT Board members.

<sup>5</sup> On September 25, 2013 the members were provided a copy of the draft National Action Plan 2.0 and invited to participate in the discussion with the Office of Management and Budget and civil society organizations on the topic of federal financial transparency.

<sup>6</sup> On September 4, 2013, Mr. Ginman, Mr. Dong, and Mr. Nick Sinai, Office of Science and Technology Policy, met to discuss the NAP.

<sup>7</sup> A copy of the Data Analytics Working Group briefing was made available on FederalTransparency.gov with the posting of the April 24, 2013 GAT Board meeting minutes.

commented that the development of short-term and longer-term strategies may be prudent to address user access.

The members engaged in a discussion of potential costs for the proposed solution. Mr. Williams commented that initial costs would be minimal. Mr. Ginman cautioned that thought must be given to the cost and complexity of licensing and associated fees. Several members noted that a fee-for-service model could be implemented. The members agreed that a thorough cost analysis would be a required step before any implementation plan could be recommended. The members also discussed the importance of analyzing existing initiatives to avoid duplication.

Mr. Williams responded to questions regarding the subsequent steps for the proposal. He reminded the members that the Data Analytics Working Group needs GAT Board approval of the proposed concept. Mr. Williams added that if approved, the Inspector General (IG) community could take the first step followed by an orderly roll-out to other users. He informed the members that the CIGIE Information Technology (IT) Committee has been asked to evaluate the proposal from the IG perspective. Ms. Tighe commented that the CIGIE IT Committee's Working Group will require sufficient time to evaluate the proposal. She added that the CIGIE IT Committee's newly formed Data Analytics Working Group possibly could provide a status report to the GAT Board at a future meeting.

There was a brief discussion of the agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Ginman commented that the Financial Management Integration and Data Display Working Group is slated to brief the members at the October meeting. Mr. Ginman asked the members to consider whether transparency for federal loan data should be added to the GAT Board's focus areas. Ms. Tighe asked if a distinction for different types of loans (e.g. loans to individuals and loans to businesses) is needed. The members agreed to discuss this in more detail at the next meeting.

The next GAT Board meeting is scheduled for October 30, 2013.

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**Cynthia Williams**  
**Secretary**