



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

December 3, 2010 Minutes

A meeting of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board was held in Washington, D.C. on Friday, December 3, 2010, at 1:30 p.m. and continued until 2:05 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
Gregory H. Friedman, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Energy
Daniel R. Levinson, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Glenn A. Fine, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Justice
Eric M. Thorson, Inspector General, U.S. Department of the Treasury
J. Russell George, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration

Board Staff:

H. Glen Walker, Executive Director
Ed Pound, Director, Communications
Ross Bezark, Chief of Staff, Recovery.gov
John Higgins, Director, Accountability
Alan Boehm, Deputy Director, Accountability
A.J. Benavidez, Assistant Director, Accountability
Douglas Hassebrock, Assistant Director, Investigations
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 November 5, 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 current quality assurance (QA) period ends December 8th after which final updates to the Quarter 3 reporting statistics will be displayed on Recovery.gov. Mr. George also discussed the Quarter 4 reporting cycle. Mr. Bezark informed the group that FederalReporting.gov will be open for recipient reporting from January 1, 2011 through January 14, 2011. This includes a four day extension to the normal ten day reporting period. Mr. Bezark reviewed the screenshots of FederalTransparency.gov and the education jobs fund information. He informed the members that the site, which launched on November 15, 2010, continues to be enhanced. He added that the most recent site enhancements will be unveiled on December 15th. Mr. George provided an updated count of OIG reports currently on Recovery.gov. He noted that TIGTA will issue a new audit report during the week of December 13, which will be published on Recovery.gov shortly thereafter.

Mr. Higgins, on behalf of Mr. Scovel who was absent, provided the members with updated activity from the Recovery Funds Working Group Committee and reviewed the status of three projects currently underway. Mr. Higgins noted that the Board and the Office of Management and Budget

(OMB) had resolved several issues regarding the Statistical Job Sample Audit. As a result the Board will soon file its request with OMB for Paperwork Reduction Act approval. Mr. Higgins informed the members that the Suspension and Debarment (S&D) work group is currently assessing the responses to two key S&D surveys to help shape the ARRA S&D survey instrument. He remarked that the work group's goal is to have a focused instrument of ten questions or less ready for circulation in January. Mr. Higgins also informed the members that the Grant Fraud Focus Group will meet in December to begin development of the Grant Fraud Guide, which will be patterned after the DoD Contract Fraud Guide. Mr. Higgins added that Dr. Brett Baker, AIGA, NSF-OIG and chair of the Grant Fraud Focus Group, presented the framework and approach at the recent 2010 National Procurement Fraud Task Force Conference in Philadelphia on November 15, 2010.

Mr. Hassebrock, on behalf of Mr. Skinner who was absent, provided an update of key Accountability committee issues. Mr. Hassebrock discussed the Committee's efforts to identify recovery oversight of entitlements and other programs not subject to section 1512 reporting requirements. He informed the members that the Committee anticipates issuing a January data call to the oversight community to determine what oversight work has been completed and what is currently underway or planned. Mr. Hassebrock introduced Mr. Benavidez who discussed the four-phased approach for the Recovery Operations Center (ROC) Collaboration Pilot Project. Mr. Benavidez informed the members that the project will operate for 60 days and includes the Offices of Inspector General from the Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Education, and the Department of the Interior. He added that the cost of the additional server space will be absorbed by the Board through the existing contract and passed onto the participating IGs through reimbursable agreements. Mr. Benavidez explained that during the 60-day period the OIGs will have remote access to open-source data. No data mixing or sharing of specific investigative data will be permitted during the pilot program. Mr. Benavidez informed the group that the OIG personnel assigned to the project will receive an eight hour training session with the Board's contracting team. Mr. Devaney recommended that the IG personnel also receive a four hour training session with the Board's ROC analysts. Mr. Benavidez also informed the group that discussions with Board and OIG technology engineers would occur during the following week. Mr. Fine commented on the need to expand the exercise to the audit side of the OIG operation. The Board members concurred. Mr. Devaney requested that the committee provide a follow-up briefing of results from the first 30 days of the project at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Devaney discussed the ROC's Lead Management System developed by the Board's technology team. He reiterated his desire to have the system tested by investigators and auditors from the IG community. He asked each member to provide two individuals to participate in the testing. Names should be sent to Mr. Bezark at the Board. Mr. Hassebrock commented on the ability of the tool to pull in data from the monthly reporting data call.

The Board members discussed a recent budget exercise involving Recovery oversight funds and the status of the Frank-Dodd Amendment requiring agencies to return unobligated Recovery funds. Mr. Devaney noted the willingness of key congressional staffers to work with the IGs if it's determined that the amendment will impact the IG budgets. Mr. Devaney and members of the group provided a recap of the Biennial Fraud Conference. Mr. Devaney remarked that the conference was well attended, provided value-added sessions, and appeared to be well received.

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for January 7, 2011

Cynthia Williams
Secretary