

Government Accountability and Transparency Board

April 19, 2012 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, April 19, 2012, at 9:00 a.m. and continued until 10:50 a.m.

ATTENDEES

Board Members:

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

Agency Staff:

Cheryl Arvidson, Assistant Director of Communications, Recovery Board
Brett Baker, Assistant Inspector General for Audit, National Science Foundation
Ross Bezark, Executive Director, GAT Board, and Chief of Staff, Recovery Board
Atticus Reaser, General Counsel, Recovery Board
Karen Lee, Chief of Management Controls and Assistance Branch, Office of Management and Budget
Peter Levin, Chief Technology Officer, Veterans Affairs
Robert Mahaffie, Director of Budget, Department of the Treasury
Joel C. Spangenberg, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary, Veterans Affairs
Cynthia Williams, Board Secretary, Recovery Board
Michael Wood, Executive Director, Recovery Board

Discussion:

Mr. Williams welcomed the members and provided an overview of the meeting agenda. By unanimous vote of the members present, the minutes of the December 8, 2011 meeting were approved.

Ms. Tighe informed the members that the Recovery Board received authority to develop and test information technology resources and oversight mechanisms to enhance transparency of and detect and remediate waste, fraud, and abuse in non-Recovery Act Federal spending. She then discussed the modifications to the Recovery Board's internal processes and the amendments to the systems of record notices necessary to begin non-recovery related activities. Ms. Tighe also provided a status of the Recovery Board's effort to test the utility of FederalAccountability.gov as a centralized oversight portal for all government agencies.

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Mr. Werfel briefed the members on the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) recent memo directing the heads of all executive departments and agencies to use the Do Not Pay solution for prepayment eligibility reviews. He provided historical information on the evolution of the Do Not Pay List and outlined the vision for the Do Not Pay solution. Ms. Tighe and Mr. Werfel discussed the joint effort to compare and contrast the Recovery Board and the OMB solutions to determine if the systems could work in concert. The members agreed that the efforts to find synergies between the two systems should continue. Ms. Lerner reminded the members that there might be challenges to developing and implementing a unified structure that serves the needs of both agency program managers as well as the law enforcement community.

Mr. Ginman and Ms. Murray provided the members with an overview of the inter-agency review on data standardization being conducted by the Department of Defense and the Department of Health and Human Services. Mr. Ginman informed the members that the review involves formulating recommendations for contract and grant award data standardization elements for consideration by the Federal Acquisition Regulatory Council. Mr. Werfel recommended that the grant-related recommendations also be presented to the Council on Financial Assistance Reform.

Mr. Wood discussed the Recovery Board's plan to launch a pilot program with selected states, counties, cities, and universities to determine if FederalReporting.gov can be used as a centralized collection point for federal grant data. He added that the pilot is expected to be performed with data from quarter four of this fiscal year. Mr. Wood also provided an outline for a gap analysis designed to determine if data from the USASpending.gov system can be displayed using the Recovery.gov template.

The members engaged in an in-depth discussion on the implementation of a government-wide universal award identification (UAID) system. Mr. Werfel discussed the value proposition for both the UAID and data standardization. He commented that development and implementation of a UAID would facilitate the reconciliation of agency and recipient reported data, while data standardization would facilitate the reconciliation between core financial systems and agency reported data. Mr. Wood discussed the Recovery Board's continued work with a federally funded research center to complete the second phase of a feasibility study regarding the implementation of the UAID. He also discussed the work with the Treasury Department to include the UAID in its payment systems records.

The members discussed the content, format, and timeframe for preparing and issuing the June report to the President. It was agreed that the report should provide a status of the efforts underway to implement the recommendations outlined in the December report. The initial draft will be prepared and disseminated for review and feedback in early May.

The next meeting of the GAT Board is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on June 11, 2012.

Cynthia Williams
Secretary