

NAEPB Executive Session Minutes
September 12, 2011
Teleconference

Call to Order

President Karen Walls called the meeting to order at 10:34 am EST.

Board Members in Attendance

Kirk Adams
Mike Gilliam
Chuck Lange
Kevin Lynch, Ex-Officio
Reinhard Mabry
John Mitchell
Dick Monaco
Lou Moneymaker
Billy Sparkman
Karen Walls

Board Members Absent

Dan Boucher
Jim Kerlin

NIB Staff in Attendance

Vida Muldarry

Introduction of Proposed Budget 2012

Ms. Walls thanked Kirk Adams, Mary Cabrian and the Finance Committee for their efforts in preparing the two versions of the FY2012 Budget, inclusive of and excluding the Government Relations (GR) expense. She noted that modernization legislation is not moving forward and the environment on the Hill indicates this will be the case for the coming term. In addition, several agencies are struggling because of decreased federal spending. These two factors are the catalyst for the discussion and Ms. Walls reported NIB is willing to use their GR firm to further NAEPB messaging. She opened the floor up for discussion/comment.

Discussion

Kirk Adams noted that the decline in membership means there is a smaller dues paying base. As agencies struggle financially, they are forced to make difficult decisions and justify every dollar spent. This has prompted the need to review expenses and decrease dues if possible.

Mike Gilliam requested Reinhard Mabry's input due to his ongoing involvement with MLA.

Mr. Mabry noted that the current environment is complex and NAEPB needs to remain visible, keeping an ear to the ground. He emphasized that strategically the NAEPB should not be changing its tactics.

John Mitchell inquired of Mr. Mabry what overall value NAEPB has received from MLA.

Mr. Mabry emphasized that MLA's work/accomplishments can be measured over a period of time. He reminded the group of the material change its involvement made on the Hill during modernization discussions: Congress asked for agency guidance which at the time was unprecedented. NAEPB visibility on the Hill set the stage for our voices to be heard in the future. NAEPB, through a variety of means, moved things in the direction of Enforcement, which MLA had a hand in.

Kirk Adams asked where MLA's focus will be since modernization has been tabled?

Mr. Mabry cautioned the group that the tabling of modernization legislation does not mean the AbilityOne Program cannot be impacted negatively in other areas. There still is a need to keep an ear to the ground for organizations that might use budget changes to weaken the Program.

Chuck Lange concurred with Mr. Mabry's comment and added that we need to keep an eye on programs that will be cut due to the anticipated reductions in federal spending and social programs.

Billy Sparkman inquired whether NAEPB can engage MLA in a different manner, i.e., on a retainer or an ad hoc basis?

Kevin Lynch reiterated the need to be concerned with cutbacks on social programs and confirmed NIB can offer the support of its GR Firm for NAEPB matters. He added there is value to NAEPB having its own voice on the Hill, especially in situations where politically it is not in NIB's favor to be in the forefront.

Mike Gilliam had to leave the meeting and proposed that NAEPB utilize the assistance of NIB's GR firm and use this year as an example.

Dick Monaco is of the opinion that it is better for NAEPB to have its own GR firm than not have one and inquired is there some way to raise the funds differently? Kirk Adams reminded the group of the evolutionary nature of the funding cycle from an accounting standpoint and noted that it has always been a controversial issue amongst members.

The following questions were raised on the value of GR:

Is GR a luxury or necessity? Would eliminating the GR expense significantly impact those agencies that are in financial difficulty? What would happen if GR activity ceased for a year and then resumed? Why are two representatives on the Hill necessary during

these trying times? Are GR dues really the problem; folks are dropping out of NAEPB membership and it really is not clear as to why.

Mr. Mabry reiterated the value of MLA, stating that the cost benefit analysis concluded MLA provides excellent value for money. If NAEPB were to terminate the contract for a year, the re-signup cost could be significantly higher. He added that having MLA out of the loop for a year would also mean having to spend time getting reacquainted on hot topics. He stated a greater conversation needs to take place to identify the direction of the NAEPB and its strategy.

Ms. Walls commented the GR expense makes up two-thirds of NAEPB's dues and when worded that way, agencies feel this is a significant contribution for them to make.

Lou Moneymaker inquired the significance of passing a budget that day and proposed waiting for further information. All agreed to delay the vote.

Findings/Action Items

- Mike Gilliam is compiling a list that captures the efforts made by each NAEPB Committee (showing the value of NAEPB)
- No one is saying that GR should be eliminated; the question is how to retain this value at a lesser cost and whether this truly an issue.
- Membership engagement will be discussed at the Annual Retreat in January
- Budget needs to be finalized by the end of September 2011
- Reinhard will contact MLA and report back to the group regarding:
 - Cost of MLA on a retainer and ad hoc basis
 - Implications of not using MLA services for a year and resuming
 - What value MLA can bring to the table at a reduced rate
- Karen, Billy and Kirk will work on content for a survey to be presented to the General Membership (Kirk commented that an interview with the membership would be more appropriate than a survey)
- The group will reconvene the week of September 19 to discuss and approve the content for the survey
- Vida will poll the group for a meeting date and forward survey content

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:34PM EST.