

NAEPB Executive Session Minutes
September 30, 2011
Teleconference

Call to Order

President Karen Walls called the meeting to order at 10:35 am EST.

Board Members in Attendance

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

Board Members Absent

Kirk Adams

NIB Staff in Attendance

Vida Muldarry

Introductory Remarks, Discussion, Observations

Karen Walls reported the survey results are in and the overall indication is that it is important to continue messaging on the Hill; the question is how to do it. From the comments section of the survey, it was obvious there is a definite split down the middle and there are a number of people (“the in-betweens”) that neither agree nor disagree, or generally don’t know how they feel about the subject. The in-betweens range from 16%-24%. Others voiced concerns over duplicating efforts and that if NAEPB were to engage its own GR firm, then both the NIB and NAEPB GR firms must communicate and coordinate their efforts. Ms. Walls questioned whether the group is more informed now than it was a week prior and opened the floor for discussion and observations.

Mike Gilliam reviewed the comments made by 23/41 responders and felt the membership does not feel strongly about NAEPB having a GR firm on its own, or jointly with NIB. He emphasized the need for more information; the need by agencies to feel they are getting good value for money.

Dick Monaco also reviewed the comments and felt they indicated a split down the middle and are not conclusive; he recommended that the Board vote on how to proceed, share these results with the Membership at the meeting in New Orleans and then open the floor for discussion. John Mitchell agreed with this suggestion.

Jim Kerlin felt the survey confirmed the importance of messaging as well as having independent GR representation. Reinhard Mabry agreed and added that 63% (of those who commented) agree there are instances where NIB and NAEPB have a conflict and NAEPB needs a separate voice. He also added the message is clear for the need to spend funds wisely, and that both the lack of education and the current economic climate have contributed to the growing number of negative opinions on the subject.

Chuck Lange also mentioned there is a lack of reporting on exactly “what” MLA does and that if there was some ongoing way to report progress, the problem of an uninformed membership could be eliminated. Mr. Mabry commented that not all information can or should be available due to its sensitive nature. It is extremely important to protect the relationships that offer intelligence on the Hill. He also expressed that having sources from two GR firms (NIB’s and NAEPB’s) has been beneficial to the program in that one might offer information where the other has little or no information on a topic. Case in point, Mr. Mabry noted that the very nature of these relationships led to information on the GAO letter.

Actions

President Walls called for a vote to determine the Board’s position. Jim Kerlin made a motion to recommend to the membership to continue with GR support as we have been to date. Charles Lange seconded the motion. Mike Gilliam and John Mitchell were not in favor. Mike Gilliam felt the Board should go to the membership with a balanced perspective and let them know that the Board has “heard” them.

Ms. Walls asked the Board whether or not to make changes to the dues structure. The Board agreed to move forward with a budget that maintains the GR structure, and leave the dues structure as is.

Other

Membership engagement is an ongoing issue. Billy Sparkman queried whether a second survey will go out prior to the January retreat. Ms. Walls confirmed the survey will go out with the purpose of getting feedback on how the NAEPB is doing as a Board.

Separately, there is no written position on NAEPB Committee membership. It has been generally accepted that the NAEPB requires membership for eligibility. Ms. Walls stated that the BSC Committee could possibly be exempt from this because the BSC’s are assigned by NIB and approved by the Committee for Purchase, and to exclude one operator could be detrimental to the entire group. Non-member participation and membership requirements will be on the agenda for the January retreat.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:30am.