



Meeting Minutes

May 6, 2014

National Institutes of Health Natcher Conference Center – Building 45

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Peter Lee, Council Chairman, U.S. Department of the Treasury, opened the meeting and welcomed the members at 9:14 a.m. The members introduced themselves.

Welcome and Overview of NIH Executive Secretariat

Mr. Lee introduced Ms. Ann Brewer, Director, Executive Secretariat, NIH, and shared her bio. She introduced her staff and welcomed the members to the meeting. Ms. Brewer provided an overview of her office's function and provided a document with an overview. See attached.

Policy Discussion: The President's BRAIN Initiative (Brain Research Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies)

Ms. Brewer introduced Ms. Lyric Jorgenson, Ph.D., Policy Analyst, NIH Office of Science, Outreach, and Policy, who is leading a special project studying the human brain. This is a high profile White House initiative to understand how the brain works and help prevent and treat the many diseases of the brain and improve the recovery from injuries.

Best Practice Discussion: Processing/handling electronic write-in campaigns and thank you letters

Mr. Lee introduced Mr. Tony Waterloo, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), who discussed how his department handles write in campaigns, both form letters that are all the same and similar letters on the same subject. DOL will respond individually if possible or just respond to an originating organization. Mr. Waterloo discussed two examples of recent write in issues that came in. On one issue they responded by posting information on a public Web site and blog. The DOL system allows the Exec Sec office to record documents in its tracking system in batches, but letters can still be searched individually. The members discussed the different examples of the number of items that come in and in the different forms they come in, either electronic or hard copy. Some members record each item in their tracking systems but some do not and keep one sample and then track of the number of items received. Mr. Waterloo discussed how his department deals with gifts to their Secretary. DOL exec sec forwards information about the gift to the legal office to decide if it can be kept by the Secretary or staff, by the department, or if it has to be returned. Mr Waterloo discussed how his department deals with thank you letters of various types. Members discussed the challenges of getting the information needed to write thank yous following their principals' travel.

White House Update

The White House Agency Liaison provided updates and guidance on White House case work.

Committee Reports

Membership and Meetings – Mr. Lee announced that Ms. Sally Liska, U.S. Department of Agriculture, agreed to be the chair of the committee. He also asked for any volunteers who may want to serve on the committee, which handles selecting the meeting locations and best practices topics.

Web – Ms. Tracy Catoe, Education, no report

Plain Writing – Ms. Terry Layton, Commerce, noted that the Center for Plain Language will be contacting each department asking for a status through each plain language web site and the Center will

only contact once and give a F for no response. Ms. Allen-Gifford mentioned that some departments have their information on their Opengov Web site. The Center will give a grade on compliance with the Administrative requirements and on writing samples provided.

Technology – Ms. Linda McCarty, Internal Revenue Service, reported that the committee proposes to review correspondence tracking system as resources for analytics or trend analysis to provide subject matter experts with policy information.

Open Forum

Ms. Annette Vietti-Cook, Council Vice Chairwoman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, announced that the next meeting will be at the U.S. Department of Commerce on June 3 with Plain Language as the best practices topic. She and Mr. Lee also discussed ideas for the traditional informal lunch that will be scheduled for some time in July. Mr. Lee asked Ms. Liska to provide an update to her effort to update the council's agency directory.

Adjourn Meeting

Mr. Lee adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.