

Government Oversight Committee
(Joint Legislative Committee on Program Evaluation
and Government Accountability)

**Meeting Summary
January 30, 2006**

CALL TO ORDER

The Government Oversight Committee's Chair, Sen. Mitchell, called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. in the Labor Committee Room.

ATTENDANCE

Senators: Sen. Bartlett, Sen. Courtney,
Sen. Dow, Sen. Mitchell,
Sen. Raye

Absent: Sen. Perry

Representatives: Rep. Collins, Rep. O'Brien, Rep. Trahan,
Rep. DuGay,
Rep. Canavan (joined the meeting in progress),
Rep. Crosthwaite (joined the meeting in progress)

Legislative Officers and Staff: Beth Ashcroft, Director of OPEGA
Diana Stiles Friou, Principal Analyst - OPEGA
Susan Reynolds, Analyst - OPEGA
Wendy Cherubini, Analyst - OPEGA
Jennifer Reichenbach, Analyst - OPEGA
Lorna Pelkey, Administrative Secretary - OPEGA

Executive Officers: Richard Thompson, Chief Information Officer

Introduction of Government Oversight Committee Members

Members of the Government Oversight Committee introduced themselves for the benefit of the listening audience.

COMMITTEE VOTE ON OPEGA FINAL REPORT

Director Beth Ashcroft informed the Committee that OPEGA advertised an announcement of today's scheduled Public Hearing in four weekend newspapers (related to OPEGA's review on MECMS Stabilization Reporting). Sen. Mitchell asked if there were any public comments on the above report to be heard at this meeting and there were none. Director Ashcroft reported that there had been no written comments received.

It was the consensus of the Committee that discussions were needed on what actions the Committee might take on findings/recommendations coming out of the OPEGA reports to date. This discussion will occur at the next GOC meeting.

Motion: That the Government Oversight Committee endorse OPEGA’s final report on MECMS Stabilization Reporting. (Motion by Rep. Trahan, seconded by Rep. O’Brien – PASSED; vote unanimous.)

OPEGA FINAL REPORT PRESENTATION

Director Ashcroft presented the OPEGA Report regarding State-wide Planning and Management of Information Technology. First, she acknowledged OPEGA Principal Analyst, Diana Stiles Friou and OPEGA Analyst, Susan Reynolds for their help in performing the review and preparing the report. She also thanked State Chief Information Officer Dick Thompson and his staff for their helpfulness and cooperation.

During the presentation, the Director and the CIO, Dick Thompson, responded to questions and comments from Committee members. In general, these exchanges focused on the following areas:

- Including the Legislative and Judicial branches in the State IT “enterprise”;
- The role and membership of the CIO and Executive Councils advising the CIO;
- The appropriate legislative committee of jurisdiction over the Office of Information Technology;
- Security system measures in place to prevent hackers from getting to citizen information;
- Risks of changes in the CIO due to political process, i.e. CIO is a politically appointed position; and
- Adequacy of salaries in IT to attract and retain skilled and knowledgeable staff.

The Committee decided to hold a public hearing and work session related to the final IT report at the next Committee meeting, after which they will vote on the report.

SCOPE STATEMENTS

1. Highway Fund Use by Public Safety

Director Ashcroft informed the Committee that this proposed review would be conducted in part by a contractor. An RFP will be developed and advertised for this purpose. She also notified the Committee that she has a conflict of interest on this review as her husband is a sergeant with the Maine State Police. This conflict would be avoided by using a contractor and by appointing OPEGA Principal Analyst Diana Friou to serve in the project oversight capacity, normally the responsibility of the Director. After a very brief discussion a motion was made:

Motion: That OPEGA proceed with the Highway Fund Use by Public Safety review. (Motion by Sen. Dow, seconded by Rep. O’Brien – PASSED; vote unanimous.)

2. Riverview Bed Capacity

Sen. Mitchell said she’d like OPEGA to conduct this potential review to help legislators understand all of the perspectives of the Riverview issue.

Director Ashcroft went through the Scope Statement on Riverview that OPEGA had developed. The Scope Statement presented several possible scope options for an OPEGA review on this topic. They discussed the various options. The general consensus among the Committee was to have OPEGA

proceed with Scope Option #1. This scope focuses on whether the conclusions being drawn from the data collected at Riverview are valid and whether there is any other useful information that further analysis of the collected data could provide. Rep. Crosthwaite also expressed a desire for OPEGA to provide the Legislative Guide listed as Scope Option #4. The remainder of the Committee agreed. Committee members asked that OPEGA report back to them on this subject as soon as possible, preferably at the next GOC meeting.

Motion: That OPEGA proceed with Scope Option #1 and #4 of the Riverview Bed Capacity Scope Option Statement as a rapid response review. (Motion by Sen. Bartlett, seconded by Rep. Crosthwaite - PASSED; vote unanimous of those present.) Sen. Mitchell advised that those Committee members absent would have the opportunity to come into the OPEGA office and vote within the specified timeframe outlined in OPEGA's Rules and Procedures. (Three additional absentee votes were received. All were in favor.)

Sen. Courtney asked when there would be a discussion regarding the status of OPEGA's annual work plan. Director Ashcroft answered that a good discussion was needed on this subject and suggested it be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

REVIEW PROPOSAL FOR PURCHASE OF TEAMMATE SOFTWARE

Director Ashcroft directed the Committee members to the TeamMate proposal document. She explained the various options available and prices for each and also indicated OPEGA staff had done considerable evaluation of other available software. A discussion ensued regarding the merits of TeamMate, the costs of the various options, and where in the budget this purchase would be paid for.

Director Ashcroft advised the Committee that she thought she would be able to pay for the software/hardware out of this year's budget. Sen. Courtney stated he feels it is very important to stay within the budget as OPEGA is a new department just starting up.

Motion: That OPEGA purchase TeamMate software with the attendant hardware to operate it as long as OPEGA can fund this purchase within the FY 06 budget. (Motion by Sen. Courtney, seconded by Rep. Canavan – PASSED; vote unanimous.)

Rep. Crosthwaite questioned whether additional hardware would be needed down the road and asked Director Ashcroft if she envisioned department savings because of the TeamMate purchase. She answered that she did not expect actual cost savings but rather considerable productivity gains which will allow OPEGA to spend more time on reviews. She also noted that OPEGA may indeed seek additional hardware in the future if it was determined that OPEGA needed a more secure network server configuration. She indicated this was not a priority at this time.

NEXT MEETING

After a brief discussion, Committee members decided on Feb. 27, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. for the next GOC meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Sen. Mitchell thanked all present for their contributions and patience and adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.