**Minutes from RTF PAC on October 25, 2012**

(By Charlie Grist & Jim West)

Present: Tom Karier, Bill Thomas, Carol Hunter, Gillian Charles, Glen Atwood, Juliet Johnson, Steve Johnson, Jim West, Steve Crow, Bob Stolarski, Sara Patton, Karen Meadows, Larry Blaufus, Jason Salmi-Klotz, Ralph Goode, Lauren Gage, Jessica Mitchell, Steve Bicker, Fred Gordon, Charlie Grist, Stacey Donahue, Erin Erben, Sandra Hirotsu

RTF PAC Co-Chair Tom Karier welcomed everyone to the meeting and attendees introduced themselves.

Co-Chair Jim West made a brief presentation providing background on how the PAC originated and responsibilities under its charter: Creation of a Regional Technical Forum (RTF) advisory committee was one of 10 action items from the NEET Process in 2009. Under this action item, an ad-hoc RTF Advisory Committee engaged EMI/Navigant to complete an assessment. The resulting report recommended the creation of the RTF Policy Advisory Committee to identify priorities, secure resources, review progress, and provide consensus recommendations to the Council. The PAC has been operating since July 2011, during which time it has agreed on a funding structure for the remainder of the 2012-2014 planning cycle, approved the scope of RTF activity, approved the 2012 Work Plan, and approved the RTF Charter and By-laws. The PAC has more recently turned its attention to more administrative matters including: Mechanism for providing advice to Council, framework for measuring success, any revisit to bylaws and charter or other mechanisms, renew of PAC charter if appropriate.

Charlie Grist presented the proposed RTF 2013 work plan. The PAC reached agreement on category amounts and the shift from consultants to more in-house contract staff. This shift to contract staff will be phased in, and outside consultants will be used to review staff work. The PAC recommended providing for some sort of independent check on whether in-house contract staff appropriately delegating to outside contracts when prudent to ensure that that independence and objectivity of the work is not compromised. It was agreed to review progress around mid-year 2013. Jim West will draft a recommendation from the PAC to the Council reflecting this.

Lauren Gage presented a proposal for initial dashboard metrics that the PAC might use to monitor and report on RTF operation. The dashboard springs from charter of RTFPAC. Fred Gordon asked whether it will result in well-considered quality decisions. Balance between trust and understanding among members is another key ingredient. Is due diligence enough? Is there so much information that it’s overwhelming and thus not useful? The PAC generally liked the dashboard and agreed to use it on a trial basis by completing the dashboard for the October RTF meeting and possibly for YTD results if the latter could be easily done. Lauren agreed to work with staff to do this. The PAC also had some interest in a subjective low-cost survey to better understand stakeholder perceptions of additional qualitative issues. The PAC will consider this idea at a future meeting.

The group took a lunch break from 12.15 to 1.15.

After lunch the PAC reviewed the RTF Conflicts of interest Policy: There was a good deal of discussion on both the specific language of the Policy as well as its implications for how the RTF would actually operate if a conflict arises. A number of summary issues were identified. Council attorney Sandra Hirotsu agreed to suggest new language that would address these issues, including:

1. More specific definition of “financial interest.” Is a 25% or greater interest too liberal? Does someone’s salary constitute a financial interest? If so, should an employee of a firm with a financial interest be excluded from discussions or voting? The PAC felt this would be too restrictive (except for contract negotiations) and recommended allowing for participation in discussion at a minimum did not rule out participation in a vote.
2. When can conflicted parties participate in the discussion, but not the vote?
3. Define exclusions, including who and why
4. The Policy addresses financial conflicts. The PAC asked about technical bias as opposed to a direct financial interest in the outcome
5. “Immediate family” language needs to be updated to reflect relationships such as domestic partners. The PAC also asked whether the definition should be broadened to include parents, siblings, and dependents for tax purposes.
6. The issue of confidentiality was discussed. Do we need to keep confidential any conflicts stated? Should any provision be made for disclosures of business-sensitive information?
7. Order of procedure in section 4 should be reviewed to make the items more sequential.
8. With state legislation such as WA Initiative 937 now including RTF activity by implication or by reference, does the “all utilities alike” language in 2b still apply as written? Would a literal interpretation be too restrictive?
9. Should self policing of disclosure be written into the Policy?

It was agreed that the PAC and the RTF could simultaneously review new Conflicts of Interest language.

The committee discussed content and timing for its next meetings. Co-chair Jim West recommended a late January meeting of the PAC to prepare a recommendation to the Council for PAC charter renewal, consideration of chair and co-chair and initial feedback on the draft dashboard metrics. Steve Bicker suggested that the PAC meet at least quarterly on a regular basis. Others preferred meetings as needed. The group agreed to a meeting for January 24, 2013 and to poll PAC members for a subsequent meeting date in late May or June to coincide with the RTF 2012 annual report and potential 2013 mid-year work plan reprogramming.

Jim West asked the group to review the RTF’s 2011 Annual Report and submit any suggestions to be considered for the 2012 annual report by November 9, 2012.

Action Items

1. Staff to send invite for January 24 RTFPAC.
2. Staff to Doodle Poll for subsequent PAC Meeting. (Late May or June)
3. Friday Nov 9 comments due on 2011 Annual Report.
4. Get RTFPAC on Council agenda mid February for Charter renewal.
5. RTF Staff and BPA to fill out dashboard data charts from RTF October meeting and see if summary year-to-date stats can be added and make sense. Depending on results & feedback update monthly or quarterly.
6. Sandra Hirotsu will prepare for the PAC’s review some draft revisions of the RTF’s conflicts of interest policy to address the issues raised.
7. Jim to draft PAC summary of comments on 2013 work plan for Council. Review with PAC by e-mail. Karier to deliver recommendation in Coeur d’Alene.

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