

Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration
April 24, 2009
Minutes

Attendance:

Dan Troy, Co-Chair, Anita Lopez, Co-Chair, Michael Cochran, Jennifer Economus, Dan Foley, Martin Jenkins, Chester Jourdan, Lynda Murray, Charleta Tavares, Tom Weidman, Larry Wolpert.

By Phone: Dean Dipiero, Tim Downing

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 AM by co-chair Dan Troy.

Cochran moved and Weidman seconded the approval of the minutes of the March 27, 2009 meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Tim Downing reported on the funding for the Commission. Having been charged with putting together a proposed budget for the Commission, Mr. Downing was asked to report on the status of the proposed budget, provide a report on how the Cuyahoga County Reform Commission spent its money and to provide an update on potential additional funding sources. Mr. Downing presented a proposed \$150,000 budget that was prepared based upon input from the John Glenn School of Public Policy of The Ohio State University and input from the Commission members who had been overseeing the preparation of the project plan. A copy of the budget proposal is attached to the minutes. Mr. Downing reported that he had spoken to David Abbott, the Chairperson of the Cuyahoga County Government Reform Commission; Mr. Abbott told him that the \$40,000 that was spent by the Cuyahoga County Commission was for administrative costs. As for additional funding sources, Mr. Downing reported that part of the John Glenn School of Public Policy's proposal is to prepare grant applications to foundations that have an interest in the work of the Commission.

Tim Downing reported that the Glenn Institute indicated that they would assist the Commission in writing some grant applications for some of the research. There does not appear to be any additional public funds available for this project. It is also probably too late to access many of the larger foundation grant cycles.

Michael Cochran pointed out that in the proposed Commission budget there was a \$10,000 Web Site development item. Cochran said that through Heidi Fought of the Ohio Township Association, they had worked with Miami University and have already developed a web site for the Commission. There was no charge for this work. The Ohio Township Association paid the fee for the domain name, and the work-to-date by Miami was done a no charge. Heidi Fought told the Commission that if some of the proposed \$10,000 could be spent

at Miami University, we could develop the site so that it could have a more interactive function.

Dave Wirick reviewed the John Glenn Institute Research Proposal. Wirick indicated the Urban Universities are very interested in this project, but that is certainly not an exclusive list of universities that the Glenn Institute will pursue for research proposal partners. Wirick also recommended the Dispute Resolution Management Commission as a possible organization to assist the Commission in writing the final report.

Wirick also said that the Institute would help the Commission identify “free” research, i.e. previously done research by other entities that pertain to the Commission’s mission and objectives.

Charleta Tavares asked that language be included that addressed the issue of improvement of services in both the work plan and the research proposal. She provided draft language and the Commission informally agreed that the intent of her drafted language should be added to both the work plan and the research proposal.

Martin Jenkins moved and Chester Jourdan seconded that the intent of the language be included in both drafts. Motion passed unanimously.

Jennifer Economus volunteered to bring in the research that the School Boards Association has gathered on local and state taxes.

Michael Cochran asked that while the Glenn Institute is recruiting partners in the research, that they don’t over-emphasize the input from urban universities. Cochran pointed out that Bowling Green State University and the Miami University both have excellent programs that have a more rural focus. Tim Downing supported Cochran and recommended that we try to include every constituency of the state. Downing also reminded the Commission that the historically Black colleges needed to be included.

Martin Jenkins pointed out that he thought that “Urban Universities” was a state budget term established by the General Assembly. Jenkins supports including rural universities.

Larry Wolpert suggested that it was equally important to make sure that the professors working on this project had a balance of interests between urban and rural.

Dave Wirick said that the Glenn Institute would make sure that they include representation from all constituencies in their pursuit of research partners.

Lynda Murray volunteered to make arrangements for Commissioner Levin to speak at the May meeting of the Commission. Chester Jourdan volunteered to make arrangements for DOD Director Barbash to speak at the June meeting of the Commission.

The Commission had additional discussion about using Miami University to develop a portal on the Commission's new web site.

Chester Jourdan moved and Anita Lopez seconded a motion to contract with the Miami University for this service. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission had a lengthy discussion of how to handle speaking engagement requests. It was decided that members should use their own discretion about handling requests in their area. Commission members should try to talk about the work and research plans, but not discuss any recommendations or outcomes. It was recommended that for substantial speakers' requests, the Commission member who is contacted should email the full Commission.

The Commission had a discussion about the inclusion of new duties for the Commission in the House version of HB 1. No one on the Commission was contacted about this language. Commission members voiced their displeasure that this language was included without any contact with the Commission. The Commission decided to work to remove the language before the bill passes the House. Co Chairs Troy and Lopez said they would draft a letter from the Commission to the Speaker. Tim Downing urged caution with the language of the letter to acknowledge that there are some aspects of the language that are consistent with the overall mission of the Commission, but that there is an issue of process and a legislatively mandated focus on just these particular items.

The next meeting of the Commission is May 29, 2009 at 10:30 on the 31st floor of the Rife Building

Murray moved and Economus seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.