

TWG AD HOC GROUP ON BUDGET PROCESS
REPORT TO TWG
2/13/01

At its 9/20/99 meeting, after some discussion of AMP budget issues and processes, the TWG voted to form a TWG ad hoc group to “review the budget process and bring recommendations back to the TWG”. Members appointed to the group are: Cliff Barrett - chairman, Clayton Palmer, Randy Peterson, Wayne Cook, Robert Begay, Bill Persons, and Norm Henderson. During the TWG discussion of the budget issues the following comments/suggestions were made and captured on a flip chart:

1. Develop a more effective consensus building process for budget review and approval
2. Develop a better forum for discussion of minority views
3. Start budget discussions earlier in the budget process
4. Develop a prioritization method
5. Organize a “lobbying “ effort in Washington DC to support the budget once it is approved.
6. Develop a process for frequent updates of the TWG and AMWG on the budget as it moves through the Administration and the Congress.

The ad hoc group used these six items as the starting point for discussion and the framework for this report. This report contains the ad hoc group’s recommendations to the TWG for actions that will help in the AMP budget process.

BASIC ASSUMPTION:

All of the following discussion and recommendations are based on the assumption that the AMWG wants the TWG to be deeply involved in the AMP budget process and wants to receive TWG’s recommendations on the budget and budgeting issues. This assumption should be confirmed.

RECOMMENDATION

- a. The ad hoc group recommends that the TWG ask AMWG for guidance on the degree of involvement AMWG wants in the AMP budget process and how much help it wants from the TWG in meeting that goal.

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ITEMS 1-3

The first three items relate to having more timely and effective discussions. Effective discussions, during which all views on a topic are heard, discussed, and understood by interested and involved TWG participants has been a goal of the TWG for some time. TWG has a game plan and meeting rules that will provide for this. What is needed more than anything else is for the TWG agenda to be prepared in a way that allows enough time for thorough budget discussions at a place in the meeting where the participants have the time and are of the mindset to apply themselves to the problem, i.e. not at the end of the meeting nor the end of the day. Let's give the budget some "quality time".

TWG consideration of the budget would be facilitated if a small group were to work with the USBR and GCMRC throughout the entire budget process, from initial formulation to formal budget presentations and on into the execution phase. TWG needs a small permanent group of members that have the time and inclination to work together on detailed budget problems. This group could then work with USBR and GCMRC in the budget process, do required liaison with TWG members, and help USBR and GCMRC bring to the TWG budgets that have had some review, had major items discussed, and are prepared for full TWG discussion and recommendation. To provide continuity from year to year this should be a permanent work group of the TWG.

A major concern with this and other proposals in this report is the potential violation of the GCMRC RFP protocols which are intended to prevent the conflict of interest that occurs when potential bidders on RFPs are involved in detailed discussions of work plans, budgets, and RFP issues. As there are several potential bidders on the AMWG and TWG, the budget review process must be done in a way that ensures there is not the perception or reality of potential bidders obtaining insider information. An extreme way to accomplish this is for all potential bidders to exclude themselves from any work plan, budget, or RFP discussions. This may result in a dysfunctional AMWG and TWG when it comes to these issues. The other extreme is for AMWG and TWG to be only superficially involved in the budgeting process at a level that may even preclude the ability to make informed recommendations to the Secretary on budget issues. The TWG Budget Group and the Director of the GCMRC, and perhaps the USGS Contracting Officer need to have a full discussion of this problem before the proposed AMP budget process is implemented.

The timing of TWG and AMWG budget considerations within the budget process has been a problem and has been discussed at the most recent meetings of both TWG and AMWG. The ad hoc group has reviewed the GCDAMP Budget Protocols and Federal Budget Process document adopted in 1998 and prepared a draft revision which attempts to provide for the current budget situation which includes both USBR and USGS funds as well as those from other agencies. A draft is attached to this report. This document should be finalized by the TWG Budget Work Group, reviewed by TWG, and presented to AMWG for adoption in July 2001.

Success will also depend on obtaining from GCMRC, USGS, and USBR budget documents that give the information needed for a comprehensive review, and are internally consistent in format. The AMWG has developed a trial format and GCMRC has been presenting its budget in this format as of FY2001. It is “a work in progress” and some patience will be required by all parties as AMWG and GCMRC work toward the “ideal.” Completion of this effort could be assigned to the AMP Budget Working Group.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding items 1-3 the ad hoc group recommends the following:

- b. The TWG form a permanent AMP Budget Work Group
- c. The TWG assign the Budget Work Group the task of reviewing and finalizing the attached draft GCDAMP Budget Protocol and Process and bringing it to the TWG for recommendation to the AMWG in July, 2001. . The Work Group will assure that the process allows ample time for internal Tribal discussions to take place before key meetings of TWG and AMWG on budget matters.
- d. The TWG recommend to the AMWG that it assign the AMP Budget Work Group the task of completing the work on standard budget formats.
- e. The chairman of the TWG assure that TWG agenda gives appropriate time for full discussion of the budget, and that budget documents are furnished to TWG members sufficiently in advance to allow for their review prior to the meeting.
- f. The TWG should discuss the way budget discussions are conducted and determine if there is a need for training the TWG in meeting process, conflict resolution, and other items that will increase the ability of the TWG to work together as a team. The TWG should then make appropriate recommendations to the AMWG and the involved Federal agencies to obtain the help needed. Adoption of this recommendation will help the TWG in all of its work, not just the budget.

ITEM 4: Develop a Prioritization Method

All parties (AMWG, TWG, GCMRC, USBR, USGS) must recognize the fact that not all funds needed and requested will always be made available. Prioritization of work is essential to the budgeting process. This is especially true as we move toward a budget that has some fixed resources (power revenues) and some that depend on further Congressional action (appropriated funds) and some that are outside the federal system (non-federal funding). A system must be devised that gives the TWG /AMWG a clear idea as to how available funds will be allocated if all the anticipated funding is not obtained. TWG/AMWG must have this information throughout the budget process so that guidance can be given to GCMRC/USBR/USGS as they go through their internal processes even before the budget goes to the Congress. There are many opportunities for

budget adjustments in this process, and TWG/AMWG need to be involved if they are then to be expected to support the final budget as it goes to the Congress.

The Strategic Plan, the Goals and Management Objectives, and especially the prioritized Information Needs should serve as the base for determining budget priorities. At its basic level the budget should put the baseline monitoring and high priority information needs ahead of other activities. This will necessarily be modified year to year by hydrology and other scientific considerations. An appropriate priority will also have to be given to PA activities included in the AMP

RECOMMENDATION:

g. The ad hoc group recommends that GCMRC and USBR be requested to identify a prioritization process that they will use in the event of budget reductions anytime in the budget process. This process may include a list of items that could be reduced if required, in some order of priority. This list would then be considered by TWG/AMWG in their budget recommendation process.

ITEM 5. Organize a lobbying effort to support the budget

This breaks into two levels. The first is in the budget formulation phase while the agencies, the department and OMB are developing the budget that will be sent to the Congress. During this phase the members of TWG and AMWG need to work with the Secretary's representative to the AMWG and the Federal members of TWG/AMWG to assure that sufficient funding is proposed. This is best done during the process described above where the budget is reviewed, discussed and prioritized. The federal members and the Secretary's representative should get a good idea as to the TWG/AMWG support for the budget from these discussions, and can carry that message to the involved offices in the Department.

The second level is at the Congress. The ad hoc group views this as a task for the non-Federal members of the AMWG. The AMWG could form a group to develop a concrete game plan for this effort. The plan would include: a) identification of key Congressmen and staff members who either deal directly with the budget, or who are interested and can exert influence; b) organize a letter writing effort; c) organize visits in Washington with members and staff.

RECOMMENDATION

h. The ad hoc group recommends that the TWG recommend to the AMWG the formation of a group of non-Federal AMWG members to devise and carry out a plan to gain support for the AMP program and required budget from the involved members of Congress and the Congressional Committees.

ITEM 6. Frequent budget updates for the TWG and AMWG

There is a need for all members of the TWG and AMWG to be fully informed on budget issues as the budget is prepared and moves through the Federal approval and appropriation process. This will be a natural result of the recommendations made above. The AMP Budget Work Group, the GCMRC and USBR will report to the TWG frequently as the budget is formulated, executed, and adjusted. More complete and timely communication and reporting of TWG members with their AMWG member will be required to aid the AMWG in understanding, accepting, and recommending the budget to the Secretary. Further updates to the AMWG will be necessary as it organizes the support needed to carry the budget through the Administration and the Congress, and in applying the priorities.

RECOMMENDATION

- i. The ad hoc group recommends that a brief budget update by GCMRC and USBR be included on the agenda for every TWG meeting. In addition TWG members should be responsible for keeping their AMWG members fully informed on budget issues.
- j. AMP budget status and issues should be on the agenda for every January and July AMWG meeting, with time allocated for a full discussion. Brief status reports should be given at other AMWG meetings as needed.

GENERAL

In addition to the above recommendations the ad hoc group, having completed its work, and assuming its recommendation to form a permanent AMP Budget Committee is adopted, further recommends that this ad group on budget process be discontinued.