

ILLINOIS CENTURY NETWORK

JUNE 16, 2004 POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Submitted for: Action

Summary: Distribution of the June 16, 2004 minutes for review by the Policy Committee.

Action Requested: Adoption of the June 16, 2004 minutes.

Recommended Motion: *That the ICN Policy Committee adopts the June 16, 2004 minutes with any edits as noted.*

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Pete Ashi, chair, called the meeting to order. Being new to the group, he asked for a roll call and brief introduction of guests in attendance.

Before the roll call, Pete indicated that he had just been informed of Lugene Finley's retirement at the end of June and wished him well in his future endeavors. Pete then asked Jessica Just to call the roll.

Members present: Pete Ashi, TM Floyd; Virginia McMillan, Illinois Community College Board; Lugene Finley, Illinois State Board of Education; Dan LaVista, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Jay Carlson, Central Management Services; and Brian Foster, Illinois Hospital Association (audio).

ICN staff and invited guests in attendance: Gary Wenger, College of DuPage (audio); Mike Dickson, Western Illinois University; Kim Amann, Western Illinois University; Dan Layzell, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Carla Paoni, SBC; Lori Sorenson, Cindi Hitchcock, Lynn Murphy, Ralph Lucia, Martin Ribble, Duane Von Lanken, Jean Taylor all from the ICN.

Pete acknowledged that since there was no quorum the Policy Committee would be unable to entertain any motions on the action items on the agenda. He informed the group that there might be a special meeting prior to the September meeting to deal with those items, but that in all likelihood, the items would be moved to the meeting scheduled for September 15. Pete also mentioned that sometime during today's meeting he would like to have a brief discussion about the role of the Policy Committee going forward.

Lori Sorenson opened her remarks by reminding the Policy Committee that ICN management staff had completed half of the Regional Information Sessions during the first half of June. The goal of the information sessions was to provide a forum for constituents to get an update on the ICN and ask questions, especially in light of the transition to CMS. So far 181 constituents had attended the meetings and the feedback had been very positive. Lori indicated that much of the feedback echoed the results of the constituent survey. The meetings will be continued through the end of June and a full report will be provided to the Policy Committee at the next meeting.

Lori went on to mention that there had been an article in the Chicago Sun Times about McCormick Place becoming a premier destination for conventions and trade shows that require high bandwidth and reliable connectivity. While the ICN was mentioned as a

network that connects all of education in the state, the article failed to mention that the ICN is the Internet egress provider for McCormick place and that their ability to provide reliable service is due to their connection to the ICN. As a state/municipal entity, McCormick Place is eligible to connect to the ICN however they do pay the entire cost of their connection and bandwidth.

Pete asked Lori to introduce the next agenda item.

Lori indicated that due to the lack of a quorum, the Policy Committee would be unable to take action on the fiscal year 2005 budget however she wanted to have Cindi Hitchcock give an update of the fiscal year 2004 budget.

Referencing the information in the agenda, Cindi reviewed the most significant changes to the fiscal year 2004 budget which included funds to be received from CMS, the receipt of E-rate funds to date, and the total of cost recovery funds to date.

Cindi went on to provide an explanation to a question that had been raised at the previous Policy Committee meeting regarding the personnel line item. The increase that had been reflected in the budget report was due to the addition of the SURS and group insurance benefits that had previously been recorded in the BHE state projects fund. The current budget format breaks down personnel into two separate lines – one for salary and Medicare and the other for SURS and group insurance – making it appear at first glance that the personnel line had been increased. The personnel line also currently reflects the estimated vacation payout, due to the number of vacation days that can be carried over under CMS personnel policy.

Cindi explained a couple of other lines in the budget and then indicated that the integration of Human Resource and Fiscal functions with BCCS was going well and that all critical deadlines had been met so far.

The proposed fiscal year 2005 budget was discussed briefly but could not be acted upon due to the lack of a quorum and the lack of a final state budget from the general assembly. The fiscal year 2005 budget will be reviewed at a future meeting.

Jay reminded Lori to make note of any significant savings in telecommunications costs realized by the ICN and to report those to BCCS for inclusion on the composite savings scorecard.

Lugene asked Lori if she had been involved in any of the discussions with the speaker of the House on a possible three percent cut for all agencies and would that cut impact the ICN.

Lori responded that she had not been aware of those conversations at this point in time, and went on to explain that the proposed budget is based on information currently available and that when the final budget is approved, the ICN will make adjustments as needed.

Hearing no more questions about the budget, Pete thanked Cindi for her report.

Lori introduced Gary Wenger, chair of the Advanced Engineering Taskforce, who was joining the meeting via audio due to a commitment he had that evening with his institution's Board of Trustees.

Gary began his presentation by apologizing for being unable to attend the meeting in person. He went on to thank the members of the Policy Committee for allowing him to serve as chair of the AET and thanked Lori and her staff for working with the AET throughout the year. Gary also thanked the AET members who attended the meetings and contributed to the development of the recommendations that would be included in the report.

Recognizing the significance of the Internet's use in mission critical systems for most organizations, Gary discussed the S.W.O.T. (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis that the AET conducted throughout their deliberations to help determine how the ICN would continue to deliver quality support and services to all of the users that are connected to the ICN. Gary went on to point out a few observations from that analysis. All of the AET members were really pleased with the overall reliability of the network and the high quality of service provided by the ICN. Based on Gary's experience, the ICN is one of the best state networks in the country. The AET also commented on the knowledge and skill set of the staff, their commitment to service and willingness to adapt to some of the new technology and services that need to be provided.

Gary indicated that one of the weaknesses that came to light during the early meetings was the transition of the ICN to CMS. However, Gary felt that Tony Daniels and Lori Sorenson were able to calm these concerns and that the original skepticism turned into a positive situation. Another weakness expressed through the analysis was the concern about staff retention. The AET felt that it was very important to keep the existing staff that understands how the network works and has an appreciation for providing high quality service.

Gary reported that the analysis yielded four major challenges for the ICN: (1) maintaining a reliable network; (2) meeting the needs of the user community as demand for Internet access increases; (3) continuing to utilize a user-driven model for planning; (4) and maintaining an appropriate funding model.

Gary asked if there were any questions.

Jay responded that he understood the CMS situation to have been considered a weakness in the beginning, but Gary had indicated that Lori and Tony had worked to cause those initial concerns to subside. Jay asked for clarification as to how the situation would be reflected in the report.

Gary explained that although it was initially posted as a weakness, he really felt that it was a strength. Gary went on to say that the merging of the ICN and CMS has the ability to save the state money and that after the AET discussed the issue in detail the merger would not be identified in the report as weakness. However, Gary indicated that he felt it was his responsibility to inform the Policy Committee that the merger had initially been viewed as a potential weakness.

Jay thanked Gary for the clarification.

Gary continued by giving a brief overview of the recommendations that will be included in the final version of the report. The recommendations include (1) developing a formal strategic planning process with measurable outcomes; (2) modifying the charge to the AET to further identify the roles and responsibilities of the group; (3) strengthen the participation and membership of the AET to insure consistent representation of all users; (4) develop a hardware replacement strategy to share with constituents; (5) continue to investigate and provide best practices to deal with network security issues; (6) look for ways to make content more accessible to constituents; (7) pursue alternative means of connectivity through the use of wireless technologies; (8) participate in efforts such as the Governor's broadband taskforce; (9) modify the cost recovery model so that constituents who wanted to share bandwidth would not be penalized for doing so; (10) continue to hold or reduce costs for network services without impacting quality and reliability.

Gary indicated that further explanation of the recommendations would be available in the report and asked if there were any questions regarding his brief summary.

Pete thanked Gary for his report. Gary said he would remain on the call for the duration of the meeting and agreed to let Lori handle item #5b regarding the revision to the charge of the AET and the new members being put forward for appointment.

Lori began by stating that the AET members felt it was time to revisit the original charge in order to expand the scope of work to include looking at constituent needs for network services and not focus solely on the technology. The revised charge is also to remind AET members that they are a conduit between the AET and the constituency group they represent, not simply a representative of their individual institutions. Lori indicated that the revised charge was included in the agenda for consideration by the Policy Committee although they would be unable to vote on it at this meeting. The second recommendation from the AET is to add an attendance requirement to the membership. In order to achieve active representation the AET felt that participation by all members was critical. The recommended requirement is a commitment to attend at least two meetings per year, with the provision that the Chair, with input from the Policy Committee and staff, would be able to seek replacements for those individuals unable to meet this requirement.

Lori went on to add that the Policy Committee needs to consider two specific replacements and reconfirmation of the remaining members of the AET at this time. William Barnett, Vice President and Chief Information Officer at The Field Museum, is being put forward as a replacement for Allen Newman of the Art Institute, who resigned

from the AET. William Barnett would fill Newman's term which runs through 2006. Robert Einhorn, College of Lake County, is unable to continue his term which expires in 2004. Diane Jaybush, Spoon River College and chair of the Information Technology Commission of the Illinois Council of Community College Administrators, has been recommended to fill Einhorn's position, representing community colleges. The remaining members requiring reconfirmation due to the expiration of their terms have been very active in the group and have indicated their interest and willingness to continue to serve on the AET.

Lori asked if there were any questions.

Pete asked if the delay of action on these items would jeopardize the appointments to the AET.

Lori responded that she did not think the delay would cause a problem as the next meeting had not yet been scheduled. She suggested that if the Policy Committee was in agreement, all of the appointees would be invited to the first meeting and the situation explained to them, and official action on the appointments could take place at the next Policy Committee meeting. The members of the Policy Committee indicated that this would be the way to proceed.

Pete asked Lori to present the next item regarding the proposed schedule of Policy Committee meetings.

Due to the number of changes on the Policy Committee, Lori began by saying that she thought it would be a good idea to review the schedule of meetings. Pete added that he thought it would be good to have a discussion of the role of the Policy Committee going forward. Lori distributed copies of the meeting schedule that had been approved at a previous meeting and the 2005 dates if the Policy Committee was to follow the same schedule format.

Lori briefly explained the rationale for the placement of the meetings during the calendar year. The fall meeting dates are of primary importance in reviewing the cost recovery model and allowing enough time to notify constituents so that they can make the necessary changes in the budgets and plans. Other than those dates, Lori indicated that the other meeting times were at the discretion of the Policy Committee.

Pete asked if it was possible to conduct the meetings using video conferencing.

Lori responded that it hadn't been tried with this group, but that it would be possible to connect up to three locations to help reduce travel. Lori mentioned that the recent meetings had included an audio bridge to help Policy Committee members participate remotely if they were unable to attend the meeting in person.

Virginia McMillan indicated that the room they were meeting in had video capabilities and that the Policy Committee was welcome to use that functionality in the room. Brian Foster and Gary Wenger indicated the availability of their video rooms as well.

After a brief discussion the Policy Committee determined that three locations, Chicago, Springfield, and the western suburbs would be scheduled as video sites for the meetings. Lori wrapped up the conversation by agreeing to get the video sites scheduled, get the relevant information out to the members of the Policy Committee, and table the action item on the 2005 meeting schedule until the next meeting.

Lori said she would continue working with Pete on the format and level of detail for the items included in future agendas.

Pete thanked Lori and asked for the network update.

Lori introduced Jean Taylor, ICN Supervisor of Network Design and Engineering, who is filling in for Karlin Sink, who had resigned at the end of May.

Jean provided a network update that included POP site redundancy, increases in the amount of Internet egress, and upgrades to the network backbone. Jean did point out that due to negotiations with the egress providers, the ICN will actually pay less for the upgrade to 4 Gb than the current cost of 2.8 Gb, realizing significant cost savings. The backbone upgrades in process include the Bloomington to Champaign; DeKalb to Chicago; and the Quincy to Springfield links. Jean went on to mention that the NDE staff had been working with the EKI consultants to upgrade the OC12 ring to an OC48 in anticipation of the need for bandwidth to handle increasing IP video traffic and the addition of state agencies to the network.

Pete thanked Jean for her excellent report.

Jay asked the Chairman if he could introduce a couple of new business items associated with the network.

Jay reported that BCCS was in the process of releasing a comprehensive RFP for VSAT service. This service is intended to accommodate connectivity solutions in geographic areas not currently well-served by telecommunication providers. While initially designed to facilitate connections for state agencies, Jay felt that the service could be made available for ICN constituents who were faced with high circuit costs, either due to geography or lack of telecommunication options. Jay went on to cite this as a prime example of how leveraging the cooperative interest of all helps to extend connectivity and keep costs down.

Jay indicated that CMS was also looking at the implementation to move state agency voice traffic from a switched environment to a voice over IP environment. This is another area of service that might be shared with ICN constituents. Jay also wanted to make it very clear that CMS is not going to become a phone company however it is

important for the state that CMS look at ways to leverage assets to provide enhanced video and voice services to help reduce costs. SBC is currently partnering with CMS in establishing the criteria to migrate to an IP environment.

Lugene remarked that ISBE uses voice over IP service in their IT center with an online system and that it has been a tremendous asset.

Jay added that as more critical traffic moves to the network, CMS will be working on enhanced disaster recovery capabilities as part of the network's evolution.

Pete thanked Jay for the update and asked to move on to the constituent survey results.

Lori introduced Lynn Murphy and asked her to share some of the results of the constituent survey that was conducted in April.

Lynn began by saying that the constituent user survey was the first formal survey conducted by the ICN. The timing of the survey coincided with the ICN's shift in focus from connectivity to services and with the desire of the AET to obtain data from constituents to inform their deliberations this year. The survey was completed electronically and sent to 5,544 constituent contacts. The 924 responses represented a return rate of 17 percent.

Lynn went on to say that the electronic format of the survey allowed for a very quick turn around time and the ability to look at the data in a number of ways. The survey touched on constituent satisfaction with the ICN; identification and interest in new services; and constituent need for additional bandwidth in the future. Of particular note, both in the numerical responses and in the comments, was the sense of customer service that constituents feel they receive from ICN staff at all levels. In light of initial concern about the transition to CMS, this response indicates that both the ICN and CMS have kept their commitments to make the transition as seamless as possible to the constituents.

The findings of the survey indicated that one of the greatest strengths of the ICN is the customer service provided throughout the state by regionally located technical staff. Survey respondents indicated, often by name, that their relationship with the RTC staff was a key component to their overall satisfaction with the network.

Lynn added that another one of the main reasons to conduct the survey was to find out what kind of services ICN constituents were investigating. The top three services, SPAM filtering, antivirus, and security scanning, are also of concern to the ICN and the technical staff will be researching opportunities to provide service in these areas without impacting the current level of network reliability and service.

With regard to the estimate of future bandwidth utilization, Lynn indicated that the AET would be taking this information and including an analysis of the responses in the AET report which is expected to be published at the end of July.

Many of the respondents indicated that they were unaware that the ICN offered content filtering and IP video, pointing to the need to increase the marketing efforts to constituents. The complete results of the survey are available at the ICN web site, www.illinois.net.

Pete thanked Lynn for her report and invited the folks from Western Illinois University to do the School to Home demonstration.

Lori introduced Ralph Lucia to give a brief overview of the project in light of the questions raised at the last meeting regarding budget requirements for this project, including costs to date and projections for the future. Lori also introduced Marty Ribble and Duane Von Lanken, ICN network engineers who will have primary responsibility for the support of School to Home once it is deployed.

Before turning it over to Ralph, Lori indicated that they would make the demonstration available to those Policy Committee members who were attending via audio.

Ralph reviewed the attached budget breakdown which showed previous investments in software development, staff training, and hardware. The fiscal year 2005 projection includes maintenance and upgrades for the software as the initial users implement the system and provide feedback to enhance the operation, especially in the integration of School to Home with existing administrative systems. Funds for additional hardware are also included to be able to scale to meet the expected increase in users, should that occur. Based on information gleaned from the survey and conversations with interested schools, Ralph indicated that existing equipment may be able to handle the initial roll out and that additional equipment may not be required for fiscal year 2005, but the line amount is included to be on the safe side.

Ralph went on to say that initial staff support for the system would be provided by two of the network engineers as part of their regular workload with assistance from the Regional Technology Center staff who would work with the individual schools. If utilization of the system grows as expected, the need for a full-time staff person is projected for fiscal year 2007. Ralph turned the floor over to Mike Dickson for the demonstration.

Mike thanked the Policy Committee for inviting them and gave a brief overview of the Center for the Application of Information Technologies (C.A.I.T). In order to determine the need for this application, Mike mentioned the survey that was conducted by Illinois State University, under the leadership of Ross Hodel. Mike went on to add that commercial products designed to do similar functions were investigated to make sure that state dollars were not spent on the development of an application that was readily available at reasonable costs. While the development of the software is a significant undertaking, Mike reminded the Policy Committee that it is even more critical for schools to develop policies and procedures based on best practices that will overcome obstacles to adoption of the system. C.A.I.T. hopes pilot the project with three different schools during the fall 2004 term.

Mike introduced Kim Amann, project director, to give the demonstration, again reminding her to be as descriptive as possible for the Policy Committee members joining via audio.

Jay asked for clarification on the issues surrounding the reporting of attendance.

Mike said that one of the issues had to do with the expectations of the teachers and how they wanted to use attendance, mentioning the differences between taking attendance at an elementary level and at the high school level where students move from class to class throughout the day.

Jay expressed an interest in the concept of using a wireless automated attendance system with mandatory identification badges, primarily for security purposes, but perhaps it could help address attendance issues as well. A system like this would also help reduce the administrative costs associated with taking attendance, especially in large school districts.

Mike responded that the planning group had a great deal of interest in wireless technologies and hand-held PDAs, with the goal of providing teachers and administrators with tools to make their jobs easier.

Jay offered to bring technical expertise to the table if Mike thought that one of the schools in the fall pilot might want to explore this technology. Jay asked Lori to coordinate a follow up discussion as the pilot gets underway.

Kim Amann gave an overview of the functions and tool sets that had been developed so far. One of the key issues that the development team is trying to overcome is the ability for school personnel to be able to batch load student information from existing systems into the School to Home Toolkit, eliminating the need to reenter all of the data manually.

Jay asked if the commercial vendors faced the same challenge.

Mike added that this issue of interoperability between systems was something that the commercial vendors were struggling with as well and that the vendors had been willing to openly discuss their experience with these challenges with the development team. The long term solution for this problem involves the school interoperability framework standard which would allow these applications to interoperate between software packages and platforms, but it is not 100 percent at this time.

Jay asked if the Toolkit would have the curriculum prerequisites for teacher certifications to keep up with changes in the curriculum.

Mike responded that the teachers who participated in the study came up with a list of functions that was very long and that the development team had to keep the focus on the communication issues due to budget considerations.

Kim reminded the Policy Committee that the main feature under development is the communication between the school and the parents with regard to grades, assignments, and attendance. The communication methods include discussion boards, announcements, and email.

Mike added that the parents would only be able to see the grades of their own student. In response to a question about class average so that parents might be able to determine how well their student is doing in comparison with the others, Mike indicated that decisions of that nature are related more to individuals and individual school policy. Security issues with this kind of system are also of great concern.

Mike went on to add that during the design, serious consideration had been given to making the Toolkit as intuitive as possible, recognizing that there are many levels of user expertise. The goal was to design an application that had a great deal of utility but was also user friendly.

Jay said that continued funding was definitely going to be predicated on getting sooner than later in front of the Governors office and doing a demo so that maybe the project group should consider an appropriate time to set that up.

Lori echoed what Mike had said about the Toolkit being approximately eighty percent developed and that as the schools begin the pilot there will be additional changes and enhancements made to the application. As the group envisions the pilot project, three schools/districts will be selected based on their ability and interest to test the application and provide feedback to the development team. The project group wants to work on the training plan and documentation and make sure that the pilot goes as smoothly as possible.

Mike echoed Lori's concern saying that although there have been lots of calls about the Toolkit and that word is getting out, the roll out of the application should be somewhat controlled so that the schools have a good experience and the project can meet their expectations.

Pete thanked Mike and Kim for the demonstration.

Having concluded the agenda items, Pete asked the Policy Committee members if they would mind taking a few minutes to talk about the role of the Policy Committee going forward.

Pete asked those who had been on the Policy Committee since its inception, how they felt the role of the Policy Committee might change now that ICN is part of CMS.

Lugene asked if Pete felt that the roles of the participating agencies on the Policy Committee would be different. He went on to say that it was his thought that the Policy Committee would function in more of an advisory role and providing direct input to the director.

Pete agreed, but thought that it would be better for the entire group to formulate some direction on this as he was the newest member.

As the CMS representative to the Policy Committee, Jay offered to provide some input from the CMS point of view. He began by saying that CMS is certainly committed to maintaining the momentum that has been created through the direct actions of the staff and the extended actions of both the Policy Committee and the technology committee.

With regard to changes resulting from the consolidation, the day to day governance of the staff will fall directly under the authority of Michael Rumman, the Director of CMS. Jay added that it's Director Rumman's commitment to make sure that the constituents will continue to have a voice in the further morphing and evolution of the ICN and its service offerings. Jay went on to propose that the Policy Committee's role would change as well, but should remain focused on service level expectations on behalf of the constituents that are represented.

Lugene asked, for example using today's agenda, would the Policy Committee continue to review and approve budget items?

Pete responded that as chairman he would expect that the Policy Committee members should see what the appropriations look like to be able to respond to their constituents. For obvious fiscal reasons, the Policy Committee will most likely participate less in the formulation and approval process, but there's always going to be a need for the constituents to understand where the investments are being made. Pete envisions that the information will be extended to the Policy Committee for guidance and short of approving the budget, remarks of agreement or concern would be appropriate.

Lori added that the statutory language changing the role of the Policy Committee from governance to advisory was included in the budget implementation language and would become effective upon approval of a state budget.

Pete went on to say that the spirit is only as good as the folks that are at the table, and that the group has the opportunity to establish how they will navigate going forward, recognizing that it's going to be a continuously evolving process. Pete added that he felt that this change will open opportunities for creative input and contributions and that even though the fiscal responsibility is removed from the group, the constituents will not lose their voice in the further development of the ICN.

Virginia asked Pete, as chair, what he saw as the vision for the committee.

Pete replied that he had had some discussions on this topic with Lori, Jay, and Director Rumman and they all seem to believe that the Policy Committee will continue to have a very important role moving forward. Guidance for the development of the network; making sure that the right questions are being asked as the network moves forward; and

providing a very strong voice for the constituents are the areas that Pete felt would be the primary areas of activity for the Policy Committee.

Jay added that CMS sees tremendous value in the extended resources that are gathered in the collaboration of the Advanced Engineering Taskforce and that it is expected that the AET would be tapped quite frequently as CMS moves forward looking at new technology.

Lugene asked if there had been any thought of expanding the representation on the committee as it migrates to play more of an advisory role. As an example, the K-12 community could be broken out into many constituencies such as special education, adult education, vocational education, etc. Lugene asked the chairman if he felt the State Board would still represent all of K-12 or would the participation be expanded to these other groups.

Pete responded that there are two schools of thought regarding expansion of representation during a time of change – some might argue that it would be good to expand the representation during the transition, while others might feel that the current representatives see the Policy Committee through the transition and then consider the possibility of expanding the representation. Pete added that they should look at this from all angles, perhaps at a future meeting when more Policy Committee members are present.

Pete asked if there were any other items to cover.

Lori said that there were no more staff items, but that the Policy Committee needed to think about cost recovery for the next meeting in September. Lori indicated that the original plan had been to put together suggested recommendations for cost recovery for the Policy Committee to consider at the September meeting and then allow time for additional research or clarification before making final recommendations at the November meeting. The goal is to communicate any changes for the next fiscal year in time for the constituents to make appropriate adjustments, if necessary, to their technical and fiscal plans. While cost recovery decisions will not be voted on by the Policy Committee, Lori stressed that it is still important for the group to review the recommendations on behalf of the constituents they represent.

Virginia asked if the ICN had been subject to the recent hiring freeze and what impact that might have on replacing some of the staff members who had left over the past few months.

Jay responded that while the ICN hadn't been isolated from the hiring freeze, CMS had made significant headway in securing vacancies that might have been targeted for additional savings. The intention is to hold the vacancies and make the case to have them filled based on identified needs of the ICN and CMS as the consolidation continues. Jay went on say that Lori and her staff, in conjunction with CMS, had done a wonderful job

articulating staffing needs and in order to keep the commitments made to constituents, the staffing issue would have to be addressed.

Pete thanked Jay for the explanation and asked if there was any other business to be brought before the group. Hearing none, Pete adjourned the meeting.