

# ORBA Steering Committee Notes

## April 23, 2018

### Items for Discussion:

- Call to order
- Roll call
- Adoption of agenda
- Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting
- Report from the Chairperson (Harry Stone) USACE Planning Assistance to States (USACE planning leadership)
- Reports from the other committee members
  - update from Financial Chairperson (Brian Farkas)
  - update from Website Team (Megan Thompson/Chuck Somerville/John King)
  - update from AWI Liaison (Chuck Somerville)
  - update from ORBCRE Liaison (Chris Lorentz)
- Reports from the working group leaders
  - Sustainable Growth And Competitiveness (Harry Stone)
  - Water Quality, Availability and Management (Ted Lozier/Richard Harrison)
  - Restoration and Protection (Sarah Hippensteel Hall)
  - Enterprise and Infrastructure (Kari Mackenbach)
- Unfinished business
  - Outreach plan to engage more organizations/individuals in ORBA to collaborate on high priority challenges
  - Status of proposal for Ohio River Basin Initiative
  - Securing a near-term win
  - Planning for 2018 ORBA Summit
  - Process for ORBA to make commitments related to regional priorities and funding
  - Potential face-to-face Steering Committee meeting in Cincinnati in May
- New business
- Adjourn

### Call to Order

### Roll Call

Attending: Harry Stone, Megan Thompson, Jim Lazorchak, Tom Meier, Rebecca Albert, Richard Harrison, Mike Donahue, Laurel Cornell, John King, Sharon Bond

Excused: Chuck Somerville, Marty Hettel

### Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted by consensus.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting by consensus.

## **Report from the Chairperson**

USACE Planning Assistance to States (USACE planning leadership)

ORBA is pleased that the USACE planning leadership joined our April 23rd Steering Committee teleconference to help us understand Planning Assistance to States funding potential and process.

The following information (previously sent to Harry Stone by e-mail) was conveyed by the Rebecca Albert and the USACE team:

1. Last year, Louisville District secured a Letter of Intent from the Commonwealth of Kentucky. This letter supported a budget package requesting Federal funds for the investigation and identification of priorities for integrated water resources management decision-making throughout the Ohio River Basin. The total Federal cost of the study was \$1.5M with \$200K being requested in the first year. If the study was being conducted as a watershed assessment, the cost share would be 75 percent Federal and 25 percent non-Federal. The package was submitted through USACE's normal budgetary process, which runs on a two-year cycle. Last year's request would have been submitted for consideration in the FY 19 President's Budget. It was not picked up in the President's Budget. It is being resubmitted with the ORBA letter of intent.
2. Planning Assistance to States (PAS) is different in that USACE has the ability to request funds as needs arise. In order to secure PAS funds, the Corps must negotiate and execute a cost share agreement (including a scope of work) with a non-Federal sponsor. PAS efforts are cost shared equally with a non-Federal sponsor and the scope of work is driven by the needs of the non-Federal sponsor. In this case, USACE could bring to the table our watershed planning competencies. The PAS program presents an opportunity to compliment any grant funding ORBA receives with Federal funding to allow for the completion of a more comprehensive product.

PAS is available on an annual basis. Regional needs are elevated to a higher level to request funds from those available for the program. Sometimes this appears to be awarded on a first-come, first-served; sometimes it is more need-based. Technical guidance and planning assistance require a 50/50 Federal to non-Federal cost share. The USACE and non-Federal sponsor negotiate a scope of work. The scope can be flexible, but must be related to a water resource issue. Comprehensive strategy for the Ohio River basin is a good fit. Match can be in-kind. Small levels of effort can be moved forward. It does get more complicated coordinating across state boundaries. PAS is limited to \$2 million available per state, tribe, or local government.

3. The development of budget packages for consideration in the FY 20 President's Budget requires a letter of intent requesting Federal assistance and acknowledging cost share is required. This letter does not obligate the non-Federal sponsor in any way and only serves as an expression of interest/intent. ORBA provided such a letter of intent in support of the budget package request related to the Ohio River basin-wide strategy. The FY 20 Presidents Budget process is underway. It envisions a large scale feasibility study with a 75% Federal / 25% non-federal sponsor.
  - The normal budget process and the PAS are parallel efforts to secure funding for a significant level of effort.
  - ORBA could take a piecemeal approach. For example a headwaters PAS proposal could be used for knowledge gaps for climate change adaptation.
  - Water resource issues for which studies are appropriate include supply, demand, water quality, conservation, and flood damage reduction. PAS is not used for project construction.
  - Corps personnel would do part of planning level studies. A justification is needed for subcontracts. There can be a blend of Corps folks and contractors.
  - \$50k is smallest PAS they have done. \$150k - \$200k typical.
  - Action items: Come up with path forward. ORBA's efforts toward its mission to date does that. May need subwatershed by subwatershed PAS.
  - USACE needs to check with legal on non-profits executing cost share agreements. This is an issue. They will provide guidance on in-kind.
  - Work needs to continue on defining what the scope for non-Federal sponsor. Cost-share agreement will need to be executed. This group should be used: Tom Meier, Sharon Bond and Rebecca Albert can provide help.
  - Get the state support. Can have multiple states and possibly multiple years of project proposed.

### **Reports from other committee members**

Tabled

### **Reports from the working group leaders**

Tabled

### **Unfinished business**

Tabled

**New business**

Tabled

**Adjourn**