

**Public Information Act Compliance Board
Conference Call Meeting Minutes
November 5, 2019**

On November 5, 2019 Board members held a conference call to discuss the draft ***Report on the Public Information Act: Preliminary Findings and Recommendations*** (“**Preliminary Report**” or “**Report**”), a **final version of which** is to be submitted by the end of the year to the Legislature by the Public Access Ombudsman and Public Information Act Compliance Board, pursuant to a Committee Narrative request in the Report on the Fiscal 2020 State Operating Budget and the State Capital Budget.

In Attendance:

Board and Board Staff:

John (Butch) West III, Board member and Chair
Larry E. Effingham, Board member
Deborah F. Moore-Carter, Board member
René C. Swafford, Board member
Jeffrey P. Hochstetler, Board Counsel
Lisa Kershner, Public Access Ombudsman
Janice Clark, Board Administrator

Nearly 20 members of the public observed the call.

Call to order and welcoming remarks.

Board chair, Mr. West, called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm. He noted that the Board was meeting to discuss the Preliminary Report. He provided a brief summary of the Report, noting it provides history of the Board’s function and identifies PIA issues on which the Board and Public Access Ombudsman are making recommendations to the Legislature.

He also thanked Lisa Kershner, Public Access Ombudsman, for taking the lead to put together a comprehensive document. He then opened the discussion for Board members to ask questions or provide suggestions on the Report.

Discussion of Preliminary Report

Board members agreed that the Report is extremely well done. They noted a key point in the Report was the disparity of record keeping by State agencies regarding their PIA practices. They surmised that the disparity could be explained in that this kind of data had not been required in the past.

Board members also discussed the recommendations and the resources required to implement them. They agreed that agencies will need more resources, including training, technology, and, potentially, additional dedicated staff to the PIA. Additionally, the Board itself will need additional staff to implement the enhanced Board jurisdiction recommended in the Preliminary Report.

Board members heard from the Ombudsman on the methodology and data collection used in the Preliminary Report. They discussed the data reported and made recommendations for stylistic changes to the draft before disseminating to the public for comment.

Board members also discussed next steps in the production of the Report. They were asked to vote to approve the Preliminary Report in order to disseminate to the public for comment.

MOTION by Deborah Moore-Carter to accept the draft Preliminary Report and begin next steps in the process. Seconded by René Swafford. Motion unanimously passed.

The Board instructed Mr. Hochstetler to finalize the Preliminary Report based on the discussions earlier in the call and to publish it to the public for comments. The Board also discussed next steps for a Final Report and noted the importance of comments from all Board members individually as progress continues. It was emphasized that all Board members are welcome to contact staff directly with comments before the Board next meets to discuss the Final Report, which will need to be scheduled for December.

Chairman West thanked the Public Access Ombudsman and Board staff for work on this report.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:26.