

Mississippi Management and Reporting System
Steering Committee Minutes
October 14, 1997
Sillers 15th Floor Conference Room

A called meeting of the Mississippi Management and Reporting System (MMRS) Steering Committee was held at 10:00 a.m. in the Silers 15th Floor Conference Room, Jackson, Mississippi, on Tuesday, October 14, 1997.

The following members were present:

Edward L. Ranck, Chairman and Executive Director, Department of Finance and Administration

J. K. Stringer, Vice-Chairman and Executive Director, State Personnel Board

David L. Litchliter, Executive Director, Department of Information Technology Services

Also present were:

Cille Litchfield, MMRS Administrator

Cliff Davidson, MMRS Technical Director / SPAHRS Project Manager

Lynda Dutton, MMRS Functional Director

Mike Lun, Software AG Americas

Tom Gorley, Software AG Americas

Dariush Farkhondehpay, Software AG Americas

A quorum being present, the meeting of the Mississippi Management and Reporting System (MMRS) Steering Committee was called to order by Dr. Ranck.

Dr. Ranck presented agenda item 1: Review and approve the minutes of the meeting of the MMRS Steering Committee for September 4, 1997.

On a motion by Mr. Litchliter, seconded by Mr. Stringer, the minutes were approved as presented.

Dr. Ranck presented agenda item 3: Present status of SPAHRS.

Mr. Davidson reported that the State and Software AG (SAG) are again operating as a true partnership and that the project is moving forward at a positive rate. Mr. Davidson further stated he believed the SPAHRS project has now turned the corner. User implementation workshops are underway. Good questions are being asked by users. Interest and anticipation of user community is very good. Mr. Davidson introduced Mr. Farkhondehpay of SAG as the new vendor manager for the project.

Dr. Ranck stated that he had reviewed the project status with Ms. Litchfield who agreed that the project had turned one hundred eighty degrees in the past two months. Dr. Ranck commended Mr. Farkhondehpay and Debbie Watson for their contributions to this effort.

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Mr. Farkhondehpay stated that credit for turning the project around belongs to the entire team. He further stated that the State people are working well with SAG in an integrated team concept and that we are on track for the November 21, 1997, human resource (HR) implementation. Mr. Farkhondehpay reported that HR system test is wrapping up this week, payroll (PR) segment testing is wrapping up this week, HR acceptance testing will officially begin with a 10/20/97 kick-off meeting, and PR system testing will also officially begin next week. Mr. Farkhondehpay also reported that the team is doing everything possible to ensure that the HR and PR subsystems work seamlessly together, that a contact for Operations implementation has been established to work with Tim Brumfield, the MMRS Operations Manager, and that both training and user implementation workshops are underway.

Dr. Ranck requested that Mr. Farkhondehpay describe his background and experience prior to coming to SAG. Mr. Farkhondehpay summarized his educational and professional backgrounds for the Committee.

Mr. Lun stated that the last "red flag" discussed in the September 4 meeting of the Committee was the questionable status of the PR code purchased from Deloitte & Touche. Mr. Farkhondehpay reported that work had been done to stabilize the code, done some early segment and volume testing, and ensure system integration and believes this code is on stable ground. Mr. Davidson reported that a "vanilla" PR cycle has been completely run and verified that the system integration generally looks OK.

Mr. Farkhondehpay further reported that a plan exists to sync up all environments and get configuration management under control.

Mr. Gorley reported that Doug Benson from Software AG and Syl Staffone, an independent working with SAG, will be coming in to review the SPAHRS project and ready it for a cull corporate review in December.

Mr. Stringer reported the State Personnel Board is enthusiastic as are the agencies and looks forward to seeing the projection system demonstration later this week. Mr. Stringer reported that the SPB staff will be spending more and more time using the new system in preparation for the live implementation.

Ms. Litchfield stated her concerns are stable data for the November 21, 1997 implementation and the management of problems and questions once implementation occurs and that planning for these areas is underway.

Dr. Ranck presented agenda item 5: SPAHRS - Issues concerning SFAS PayPro users.

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Ms. Litchfield stated that MMRS is still having problems communicating with Benny Smith of SFAS. She reported that MMRS/SPAHRs management had met with representatives of the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development (MDECD) on October 13 to discuss this matter. Mr. Smith does not want to contract with MMRS to do a consolidated conversion effort for all SFAS PayPro agencies. He prefers to deal with each agency on an individual basis. Ms. Litchfield stated that MMRS concern is that the SFAS users will all be paying for basically the same work to be done and since Mr. Smith keeps this below the \$5000 limit, there is no control of what he does or charges.

Ms. Litchfield recommended to the Committee that users of the SFAS PayPro system be treated the same as any other State agency currently operating their own internal payroll system. In this, they will be provided file layouts, scheduled for conversion workshops, trained, and provided a schedule they must meet to ensure that a payroll cycle for their agency is not missed. Ms. Litchfield further stated that MDECD has offered to attempt to negotiate a deal to accomplish this conversion for all SFAS users. Ms. Litchfield reported that MMRS would be willing to share this information and roll that cost into the SPAHRs conversion costs, if it can be accomplished; however, we cannot wait any longer to see if this will happen. The Committee concurred with these recommendations.

Ms. Litchfield further reported that MDECD has expressed interest in becoming an online SAAS user and that Ms. Dutton and others will be meeting to discuss this matter with them in detail next week. Ms. Litchfield also reported that the Common State Accounting system is now officially dead since the Board of Nursing is now an online SAAS user. Dr. Ranck excused himself to attend a meeting of the Tort Claims Board.

Ms. Litchfield presented agenda item 4: SPAHRs - Expand agreement with Michael Piazza for SPAHRs training support

Ms. Litchfield reported that a new agreement with Michael Piazza as Professional Development Associates for SPAHRs training and other defined support is being negotiated. This contract will replace the existing contract now in place with him as an individual and will include the following effective 11/1/1997: (a) Add Patsy Cook to supplement the human resource review and training support needs; (b) Extend the agreement to the end of the fiscal year. Estimated total cost for new agreement is \$48,000 (600 hours each @ \$40 per hour). The Committee concurred with this recommendation. Ms. Litchfield agreed with Mr. Stringer's request to locate Ms. Cook at MMRS for this work.

Ms. Litchfield presented agenda item 2: MERLIN update.

Ms. Litchfield stated that MERLIN is experiencing some production roll-out problems. These problems are not unexpected and, in part, are due to delays at DFA in new equipment installations,

agency reluctance to acquire the desk top software, and staffing on the project. Ms. Litchfield also reported that the State had been working closely with the vendor to complete the implementation of the product required to properly back up the system since this was an item which continued in an incomplete status for an unacceptable period of time. Ms. Litchfield stated that IBM will be invited to the December meeting to give a project update.

The Committee agreed to meet again either Tuesday, December 2 or Wednesday, December 3, 1997. Ms. Litchfield stated that the date, time, and location will be confirmed very quickly. There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Stringer moved to adjourn, and, there being no objection, the Committee adjourned.

Chairman, MMRS Steering Committee
Department of Finance and Administration


Vice-Chairman
State Personnel Board


Member
Department of Information Technology Services