

**Arkansas Geographic Information Systems Board**

Arkansas Real Estate Commission  
612 South Summit Street  
**Little Rock, AR**

**Meeting Minutes**

**November 3, 2010**

**9:30 a.m.**

**Board Members Present:**

Tracy Moy  
Dr. Jack Cothren  
Kasey Summerville  
Glen Dabney  
Bekki White by Proxy – Nathan Taylor  
Judge Clayton Castleman  
Jon Sweeney  
Dr. Beth McMillan by Proxy - Phyllis Smith

**Board Members Absent:**

Randy Everett  
John Ed Isbell  
Claire Bailey  
Judge Jerry Hunton

**AGIO Staff:**

Shelby Johnson, Director  
Learon Dalby, GIS Program Manager  
Rachel Hood, Communication Director

**Guests:**

Ron Herrod, GISB Advisory Panel

## **Call meeting to order**

**9:37 a.m.:** Meeting called to order by Chair Tracy Moy

The Chair called for any corrections to the minutes for the Oct. 18, 2010 meeting. No corrections were noted.

**Motion:** Glen Dabney motioned to approve the corrected minutes.

**Second:** Clayton Castleman seconded the motion to approve the minutes, and there being no further discussion the motion passed unanimously.

Tracy welcomed the new member Jon Sweeney to the Board.

Tracy said it was her understanding that everyone on the Board wants to continue offering GeoStor's services at no fee to the user. She asked if anyone disagreed with the no-fee policy. With no objections, the discussion continued with the assumption that the Board unanimously supported the no-fee policy.

Learnon Dalby of the AGIO presented background information about AGIO and GeoStor. The question being addressed was a recent Joint Budget Committee conclusion that AGIO's budget request could not be issued in full to support the requested budget increase. It suggested that the AGIO start collecting a fee from GeoStor users, however this does not agree with the GISB and AGIO's enabling legislation. Learnon noted that in order to garner funding for GIS data maintenance and acquisition, the following goals need to be set:

- Educate state legislators on the function and benefits of GeoStor and GIS data
- Reflect if a policy change is necessary

Learnon went through a timeline of legislative background with the AGIO and GeoStor. He said that the initial goal was to "set the perception that we would be a state that provided data [at no cost to the user]." He mentioned that in 1995 there was a 1 to 5 ratio of funding from the state versus the private sector, respectively. It was during this time that the precedent of a "no-fee policy" for data was established, and he said that policy has always been the agency's intent.

GIS data provides valuable information for companies, which in turn creates jobs, and for contractors, which saves the state money.

He mentioned that stakeholders have added that the policy alleviates FOIA requests, maintains equitability across the state and lessens the burden of unfair competition.

Learnon concluded that a fee of some sort to accomplish the goals of the strategic plan might not be a bad idea, however.

He mentioned that other fees are possible, but requests have not passed so far. He concluded that the GIS community and Board have studied these possibilities thoroughly, but it would require some creative thinking from the legislature to pass a feasible request.

One suggestion he offered including requesting money from the General Fund (he provided PAGIS as an example) because each agency that used GeoStor would contribute to the funding, and the revenue would be solidified by including the service in IT plans.

He also suggested the possibility of having a raw data fee, with the reasoning that the more data that gets used would mean that better decisions are made and better data is available.

Tracy asked about the land acquisition fee, if the funding possibilities could be ranked in terms of what makes more sense or what will be better received by the JBC. Learnon said that all options will have pros and cons, and people for or against any proposal. "GIS is difficult to quantify. It crosses all sectors and everyone uses it." Because of its commonality, no one is against it exactly, but also there are not many who actively advocate for it either; they expect others to do so.

Learnon continued with other possibilities such as an increase in the State 911 tax or possibly pulling from utility fees, which are spread across several users.

Phyllis asked about other states' success. Learnon said a few states have been successful, but data maintenance is a common problem nationwide. He said the best data is local data. --solidify back-up or assist counties, update orthos, biz plan, etc.

Tracy asked if the business plan has been seen by any committee, and Learnon mentioned that AGIO presented the highlights of the plan to the Joint Committee on Advanced Communications and Information Technology (JCACIT) meeting in June. The plan was well received, but it did not make a specific recommendation about viable funding structure for other projects to respond to legislative request.

Learnon said the homework has been done, but the legislature is requesting the proposed return on the investment. He also discussed the agency's data search-and-acquire cost with GeoStor. The number would significantly change if there was a fee, but then people couldn't "just check it out and give it back" if they didn't like the product.

Jon Sweeney asked about the relationship between the JCACIT and GIS. Shelby commented that the committee has a small relationship with the agency but not with the Board. Jon asked if it would be feasible to go through the JCACIT, and Shelby said it was.

Phyllis asked if the proposal was related to the overall AGIO budget or just to GeoStor? Shelby explained there are base budgets and increase requests. The proposal included an aerial update, parcel completion and additional staff to the agency. He said the nature of the committee's questions was that he was asking for more money but did not have a plan to generate the revenue for it. Shelby said he was not prepared enough to respond at that time with the background that Learnon presented.

Tracy asked about the budget approval for GeoStor. Shelby said they approved the executive recommendation which would provide the base level of funding. He said eventually a general improvement bill would fund other projects. However, the actuality of the funding is very small.

Ron suggested that if the agency asked for less, then there would probably be less of a negative response. Also, if the request was more fair it would have a better chance of passing and there would be less overreach. He also said that they needed a fallback on an easy target. Tracy commented that more education about GIS is needed. \*\*

Tracy suggested eliminating ideas for funding that the Board knows will not work presently. She asked about the logic behind increasing the cell phone tax. Learnon said it was an option because there was a large volume of users and the data is used by necessary commercial entities. Therefore, the agency could pull from that funding for data support.

Tracy suggested putting a spin on mapping availability through cell phones. Shelby said it would require education, because the data in those maps are not always reliable outside of urban areas. Tracy commented that most people are aware of the data, but they do not know where it comes from. She said she would like for the Board to narrow down the funding options to one or two possibilities.

Ron suggested that the agency try to get the supporters in the IT committee on board with the agency's plans. The committee agreed that the AGIO needed the funding, but couldn't give it without a solid revenue source. He mentioned the approximate number of new legislators in the House (47) and Senate (15), and that the agency should educate them as much as possible while they are still new.

Learnon said in 2003 they originally suggested broadening the scope of funding to IT. Glen commented that any tax increase would be a tough sell with the nature of real estate and forestry. He suggested approaching from a different angle: What can be done internally to distribute revenue that already exists? He also commented that education is hard to fund.

Phyllis asked if the data has been used for anything major in the governor's office. Shelby said that it has had several high profile uses, including the Twin Rivers Schools redistricting. Glen suggested taking the uses apart; instead of saying the funds are just for GeoStor, say it is for acquiring new data. Phyllis commented that if the JBC does not understand that GIS is used and needed by everyone, then they will think the funding is just for the AGIO.

Tracy asked for the ways that early aerals were previously funded.\*\*

Shelby mentioned that the legislation could change funding after the session starts.

Glen asked about nationwide aerial coverage. Learnon explained that the federal committee authorized and funded 1-meter aerals every year and that there are buy-up options, such as 1-foot every three years and others. He said the proposal is stalled in the federal committee as well. He mentioned that Microsoft is providing coverage and Google is purchasing 10 aircrafts worldwide to fly their own imagery but these are not sources that are reliable yet for a state and local purposes.

Shelby did not think the Board should leave the options open-ended for parcel and imagery funding.

Glen said he thinks the projection should be separate. He said the ultimate purpose of the government was to serve the people, and the AGIO needed to convince the legislature that GIS is not a convenience anymore – it is a necessity.

Jon emphasized that the funding source should be researched more instead of throwing a "guess" out for the committee. He also said to emphasize that if GIS is not funded it simply will not be available. Tracy agreed, and said we can give the legislature the other options.

More discussion ensued about how the legislature would respond to the Board's response letter. Shelby said the Board needs to engage in advocacy. Learnon said the AGIO needs to educate, and the GISB needs to both educate and advocate.

Tracy said that she, Learnon and Shelby would polish up the letter and follow up with the supporters in the legislative committee.

**11:51 a.m.:**

After almost two hours, the Board decided to respond with a definite "No Fee" position and then to propose previous options, plus one new that was discussed, to the committee.

Action items were for Tracy to send very brief e-mail to the Users Forum to let them know the Board took a "No-Fee" position and to let them know more information will be coming soon.

She said she planned to get with AGIO staff and draft a response to ALC-JCB. Then, she will send the response to rest of the Board for very short review. The response letter will be sent to both co-chairs and the committee secretary only.

**11:52 a.m.: New Business**

Shelby informed the Board about a number of LIDAR elevation data development projects that were starting up in 2011. These were spawned by a NRCS project. Shelby talked with a number of cities who want to add on to the procurement to cover additional areas. He also talked about areas prioritized by FEMA and NRCS. The procurement by NRCS used the USGS LIDAR Version 13 specifications and when complete the data will become public domain.

The Chair called for a motion to adjourn.

**11:58 a.m.:**

**Motion**

**Clayton Castleman** moved to adjourn.

Kasey Summerville **seconded** the motion.

The Chair called the vote. With all ayes, the meeting adjourned.

Next meeting date is 10 a.m., December 1, 2010 at the Arkansas Real Estate Commission.

Minutes prepared by Rachel Hood, AGIO.