

Arkansas Geographic Information Systems Board

Meeting Location:

By Teleconference

**Public access to the teleconference available at Arkansas Geographic Information Office
located at 1 Capitol Mall, Suite 2B900, Little Rock, Arkansas**

GIS Board Special Topic Board Meeting

By: Teleconference Call

Meeting Minutes

October 18, 2010

9:00 a.m.

Board Members Present:

Tracy Moy

Bekki White

Jack Cothren

Beth McMillan

Kasey Summerville

Randy Everett

Glen Dabney

Claire Bailey by Proxy - Herschel Cleveland

Clayton Castleman

Jon Sweeney

Board Members Absent:

Jerry Hunton

Robert Kissell

John Ed Isbell

AGIO Staff:

Shelby Johnson, Director

Learon Dalby, GIS Program Manager

Guests:

Elizabeth Bowen

Call meeting to order

9:02 am: Meeting called to order by Chair Tracy Moy

The Chair called for any corrections to the minutes for the September 22, 2010 meeting.

Motion

Bekki White motioned to approve the minutes. Kasey Summerville **seconded** the motion. The Chair called the vote and the vote was unanimous. The minutes were approved.

10:43 am: New Business

1. Consideration of new GIS data for loading on GeoStor - Arkansas Circuit Court Districts.

The Chair gave the floor to Shelby to explain the data recommended for loading. Shelby explained the data represented the Circuit Court Districts of Arkansas. The data was created by Tim Humphries in the Secretary of State Redistricting Office to aid in election administration and redistricting. The AGIO had planned to bring it forward for loading at the previous meeting but the data topology was not correct and needed to be corrected. The correction was made and the AGIO was now recommending the data be loaded for the data loading policy. The Chair asked for any questions. There were none. The Chair asked for a motion to load.

MOTION

Bekki White, motioned to have the Circuit Court District data be loaded on GeoStor. Judge Clayton Castleman seconded the motion. Chair called for discussion. There being none the Chair called the vote. The vote was unanimous, motion approved.

2. Review draft legislation requiring digitized maps of Justice of Peace, School Board, and City Ward districts.

The Chair opened the discussion and requested Shelby to explain the draft bill. Shelby provided background on why the bill was drafted. In last decade a number of election districts were drawn on paper maps. Over time some of these were lost, damaged, or inaccurate. In some cases the election commissioners who were responsible for drawing the districts in the last decade had moved or were deceased and in some cases no one knew where the lines were meant to be drawn. In some areas this created problems for administering elections. The AGIO had been coordinating with Tim Humphries on this issue and Tim drafted this bill so that election districts could be created digitally and archived on GeoStor for preservation. The bill would affect Justice of Peace, City Wards, and School Board zones. The data would be filed on GeoStor. The draft bill would also include specific language in the GIS Board's law that requires the data to be published.

Shelby outlined two issues for consideration. Smaller districts or cities may see this as un-funding mandate, however communities are also the least likely to change the impact may be so minimal.

Jon Sweeney asked if there was an estimate of how many at the city level are using the digital maps?

Shelby responded, that is would be difficult to tell for sure. There are 500 incorporated cities in Arkansas, but if their population has not moved then they would have very little changes to their wards. The problem is there is not a statewide digital version of the wards. Shelby also noted that not all school boards have to redistrict because some elect their Board members at large.

Randy Everett asked if this bill can be amended to include city boundaries? Randy aired his concerns over a number of accuracy issues associated with the city boundary file. He provided examples where inaccurate city boundaries are costing the city on electric service franchise fees. Randy thinks this would be the next step in moving to a better system. Randy asked that Shelby speak with Tim Humphries and see if he is open to amend changes to expand to city boundaries.

Tracy asked if this could be expanded to include county and city and state administrative boundaries?

Shelby stated that issue may be better dealt with in another separate bill and that he will consult with Tim Humphries and report back to the Board. Under the current workflow the Secretary of State receives annexation documents, just like a recorder of the deeds and they forward that information to the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) to be mapped. AHTD maps the annexation changes and sends the data to GeoStor. AHTD has stated they are not an official recorder of the maps. They do it because the information is needed for their work and they are glad to share it with other users.

3. Arkansas Legislative Council Joint Budget Committee Request for Board to Evaluate Setting Fees for Arkansas Geographic Information Office Services

Shelby reported what took place during the Budget Committee hearings where the AGIO budget request was reviewed. The budget request included funding of the statewide imagery and Parcel projects which are large funding requests

Shelby answered questions from Legislators for nearly an hour. They ranged from educational aspects to policy aspects to fee setting. Several members were concerned the agency made its request and did not offer specific recommendations about how to pay for it. They instructed Shelby to get with the Board and revisit the issue of setting fees for the agency's services.

Shelby summarized his answer to the Legislators by saying the board debated this several years ago. The Board at that time could not support having fees on GeoStor access because it would stifle data sharing and coordination. For example why would the Highway Dept pay a fee to access the soil file when they were putting in their road file?

Shelby observed the line of questions from the Legislators was not an adversarial environment but instead he sensed the members were looking for a way to fund the projects and some of them had commented on the value of the work being done.

Jack Cothren asked if the discussion delat with all the other data on GeoStor already published and the how having to revisit those layers that were added under old policy?

Randy Everett observed why would someone put information out there that someone would pay for and scrutinize it? Currently, the data in the clearinghouse may not be completely correct, but it is the best we have got. And the way it works is a much more efficient way to distribute data rather than organizations having to serve it out themselves.

If you take that away how much will it cost them to serve it.

Jack Cothren asked if the Board can we revisit past decision and look at the minutes from the when the original policy was set on no fees and help the current Board understand the issues that were discussed then?

Kasey Summerville asked, have you looked at other states to see who charges?

Shelby responded the agency has looked at other states. Most serve out the data from their clearinghouses at no fee. Tennessee is the closest example that does not. Shelby reported he had spoken with the Tennessee GIS Director and he stated the revenue from data sales was a very small part of their budget.

Bekki White asked if the Legislators were concerned about funding the whole agency operation or just the new request.

Shelby responded that his sense was they were concerned about the new projects. The problem is that most of the data in GeoStor is already public data develop by state agencies and counties. Setting up a fee on accessing this would be like double dipping the tax payer because the data is mostly tax payer funded already.

Jack Cothren suggested the main thing we have to do is to go back and look at why and how Geostor was added and review the original language and make sure there is a Public outlet for this information.

Glen Dabney opined that setting up a fee system for GeoStor is a very slippery slope. The Board should not forget the free enterprise system because if there is a fee setup it could be perceived as competing with the private sector.

Shelby further explained one of his answers to the legislators about no fee for data is that it was in the best interest of the state for Google and others like them to have the data because the data is the best that is available and it is in the best interest of the state to have the best available out there to be consumed.

Kasey Summerville asked are they private only?

Randy Everett stated the private sector does have seats on the board we need to be careful about excluding certain groups. The Board needs to protect the structure of GeoStor. We need to make a formal response quickly and then look at ways to fund the projects besides data sales. One idea would be a Bill for fees on cities when they annex that would generate revenue to fix those errors and possibly enough to do the other projects.

Jack Cothren agreed with Randy the Board should respond very quickly. He suggested perhaps forming a subcommittee to draft a whitepaper response that reviewed why the Board has operated this way.

Shelby then read an excerpt from the original legislation, "In recognition that a vast majority of all information used in the management of government can be spatially referenced and that public institutions and private firms expend considerable resources collecting and managing land information records in diverse and disparate formats and scales, a modern automated system of accessible land information data

and technologies is required to serve the essential needs of individuals, businesses, and government agencies.” this is how it is.

Shelby asked Bekki White how should we respond? A letter back to the Chair? Bekki suggested a letter to the Chair of the Joint Budget Committee, then schedule a follow up meeting with the Board to refine a position.

Beth McMillan suggested the Board examine the current effort with GeoStor and calculate the current savings. When you couple the savings with the fact that GeoStor isn't likely to bring in much revenue to pay for making new data maybe the Legislature will understand. Plus you have the opportunity costs lost for economic development. Then this looks like a situation that is penny wise and pound foolish.

Herschel Cleveland responded, I agree with what you are saying.

Jon Sweeney stated he did not want the Board to have a knee jerk reaction. The whole board should get together to come up with a more coherent response and show diligence that it is carefully evaluating this issue. I would like to make it very clear that we have looked in detail at the impacts.

Bekki White suggested that Tracy and Shelby draft letter that we have had a discussion by conference call that we need to study this in more detail.

Should be Board as a whole. Herschel – I would like to summarize.

The Tracy Moy read through the list of Board members and asked for members willing to assist in research over the next two weeks.

Bekki White, Jack Cothren, Kasey Summerville, Glen Dabney, Jon Sweeney, Herschel Cleveland, Beth McMillan each volunteered their time. Tracy said most of this work can done through email. Board members who are able and the committee will prepare that information for distribution prior to the next Board meeting. The Chair intends to solicit comments from other GIS Users as well.

The Board discussed options for the next meeting date and decided on November 3rd with a location to be determined.

Shelby made an announcement that Pam Cooper of the Natural Resource Conservation Service got some end of year federal money and would be flying LIDAR over portions of Arkansas. Shelby said he will send to board the graphic of coverage when he received it.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending on short notice and called for a motion to adjourn.

10:18 AM: Bekki White moved to adjourn. Kasey Summerville seconded the motion. The Chair called the vote. All ayes the meeting adjourned.

Next meeting date November 3rd, 2010

Minutes prepared by Shelby Johnson, AGIO.