



From: Broadcasting Board of Governors
Date: September 13, 2012
Subject: **Transcript of BBG Meeting at 4:30 P.M. EDT on September 13, 2012**

On September 13, the members of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) reconvened at 4:30 p.m. EDT to further receive and consider staff recommendations regarding the Agency's FY 2014 budget proposal. According to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-11, Section 22.1, all agency budgetary materials and data are considered confidential prior to the President submitting a budget to Congress. In accordance with section 22.5 of Circular A-11, the BBG determined that its meeting should be closed to public observation pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(9)(B).

The meeting was attended by the following Board members at BBG headquarters in Washington, D.C.:

Presiding Governor Michael Lynton
Alternate Presiding Governor Dennis Mulhaupt
Governor Victor Ashe
Governor Susan McCue
Governor Michael Meehan
Governor Dana Perino (via telephone)
Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy & Public Affairs Tara Sonenshine

The meeting was also attended by the following network heads, staff members and representatives:

Director of the International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB) Richard Lobo
IBB Deputy Director Jeffrey Trimble
IBB Chief of Staff Marie Lennon
Chief Financial Officer Maryjean Buhler
Deputy General Counsel and Board Secretary Paul Kollmer-Dorsey
Director of Board Operations Oanh Tran
Director of Strategy and Development Bruce Sherman
Director of Communications and External Affairs Lynne Weil
Director of the Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation Andre Mendes
Assistant General Counsel (Ethics and Compliance) Andrew Krog
Executive Assistant to the IBB Director Douglas Schuette
Director of the Voice of America David Ensor
President of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Steven Korn
President of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks Brian Conniff

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Office of Inspector General's (OIG) Inspection Team for the inspection of BBG, including Team Leader Ambassador Kenton Keith, Deputy Team Leader Robert Torres, Martha "Marcy" Goode, Elizabeth "Betsy" Whitaker, and Laura Shane

LYNTON: Let's begin.

KOLLMER-DORSEY: This is being recorded in accordance with requirements of the Government in the Sunshine Act.

LYNTON: Right. Great, so now do we continue to deliberate?

KOLLMER-DORSEY: Now...now you can open up, but you can...

LYNTON: Well now we need to take a motion to vote on the budget or should we discuss the budget further?

MEEHAN: If I've understood this correctly, the Board has already voted on a budget...

LYNTON: Right.

MEEHAN: ...submission.

LYNTON: Yep.

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

LYNTON: Right.

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

LYNTON: Right. Anybody have a view? Victor, do you?

VICTOR: What do you want to do about it?

MEEHAN: I'm completely comfortable with where we were before, so I won't make a motion on the amendment.

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MCCUE: So, the second...I'm sorry.

ASHE: I'm comfortable with where we were before too. That's another reason I voted "no."
I've had enough of this.

LYNTON: Right. You and I spoke on the phone.

MCCUE: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: Somebody could offer it, yes.

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

KORN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

LOBO: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MCCUE: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

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[REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MCCUE: But it's the same amount? Both are the same amount, Option A and Option B. The same amount of money.

BUHLER: Correct. You get there differently and there are strategic issues.

MCCUE: What our entity heads are saying makes the most sense based on their experience and their management positions and I would support that if it's the same amount of money.

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

LOBO: And has to be decided by the Board.

MCCUE: I understand that. We're going to have to make these decisions at some point.

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MCCUE: Okay, well then, why did the heads of RFE/RL and VOA then...you obviously don't...didn't agree with the initial proposal.

KORN: Correct.

MCCUE: And you have come back with a second proposal.

MULHAUPT: Do you think that this is better...that this proposal is better for VOA than for RFE...

ENSOR: I think it's better for U.S. international broadcasting.

KORN: No question.

ENSOR: Much better.

MULHAUPT: At the end of the day, it's my view, this proposal has made us resolve a conversation between Michael Lynton, myself, and you spoke to Michael Meehan, I thought.

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MEEHAN: Correct.

MULHAUPT: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MCCUE: That isn't how I feel. Help me understand where you're coming from, Michael.

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

LYNTON: Maryjean?

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ASHE: How much?

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ASHE: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

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SONENSHINE: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ENSOR: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ENSOR: Yes.

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ENSOR: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

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GISA Exemption (9)(B)

LYNTON: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ENSOR: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

LYNTON: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ENSOR: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

LYNTON: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ENSOR: True, but the message is...

LYNTON: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ENSOR: But the message to the workforce and to all the other people who are interested in international broadcasting comes in February. And that message is what I have to manage around.

LYNTON: Right.

ENSOR: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

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LYNTON: Right. There's an argument...I agree, David.

ENSOR: There's a lot of managing to do here.

LYNTON: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ENSOR: Wish we had that luxury. In the federal government, we don't.

LYNTON: I know, I know. So, we have to be helpful towards how to get there. Anyways, is there any other further discussion on the point? Michael? Susan?

MCCUE: So, where are we leaving this? We're accepting Steve's proposal, correct?

LYNTON: Yep.

MCCUE: And what are we...we're putting a pin in David's? Or how are we handling this?

LYNTON: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ASHE: Well, we have to have a vote.

LYNTON: Yes.

ASHE: Someone will have to make a motion.

LYNTON: Yes, but that's where it sits at the moment.

MCCUE: Okay.

LYNTON: So, unless there is any further conversation...

ASHE: Well, who's making the motion? I mean, we need a motion Mr. Chairman.

LYNTON: Will you make the motion?

ASHE: I don't...

LYNTON: Will you make the motion?

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MULHAUPT: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exem

MULHAUPT: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ENSOR: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MCCUE: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: No.

MULHAUPT: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MULHAUPT: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MCCUE: You do.

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MCCUE: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

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[REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MENDES: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ENSOR: We're not proposing that.

MENDES: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

TRIMBLE: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MENDES: No, no, no.

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MENDES: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MENDES: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: Okay, thank you. I take it back.

ASHE: Mr. Chairman, can...

LYNTON: I got confused too. Michael, in fairness, I got confused myself.

ASHE: Would the Secretary read back to us what on earth it is we're voting on?

LYNTON: That would be very helpful.

ASHE: Mr. Secretary, would you read to us.

KOLLMER: I think what you're doing...you're moving to amend the budget decision made on August 17th to reflect the changes that have been proposed by Mr. Ensor and Mr. Korn and reflected in the submission that's in front of you from Maryjean Buhler.

LYNTON: And you want Maryjean...

ASHE: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

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LYNTON: Victor, Victor. I think rather than have Paul describe it, maybe it's best to have Maryjean describe it.

ASHE: Okay, I mean, I don't care who, but...

LYNTON: Yeah, no. I understand. I think but it's best, I think that's probably...

ASHE: A motion has to be in writing, typically on something technical so that we have some notion of what the hell we're voting on.

SONENSHINE: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: Sure.

ASHE: Not a motion.

MULHAUPT: You could.

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ASHE: Mr. Mulhaupt, or Ms...someone made a motion. All I'm asking is what does the motion say?

LYNTON: That's fair.

ASHE: And it can't be "I think."

LYNTON: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ASHE: I guess we write it out.

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

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MULHAUPT: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

SONENSHINE: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MULHAUPT: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: Yes.

MULHAUPT: Right.

BUHLER: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

KORN: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MULHAUPT: Yes.

BUHLER: Yes.

MEEHAN: You're too kind to do it without making it so painful, so thank you.

KORN: I mean, not a big deal.

ASHE: Procedurally, Governor Meehan...procedurally, Mr. Chairman, you have a motion on the table.

MULHAUPT: I'd accept.

ASHE: Made by Governor McCue, seconded by Governor Mulhaupt. If Governor Meehan is making a substitute motion, then it needs to be so described. It needs to be spelled out as to what the heck it is.

MULHAUPT: Okay.

LYNTON: That's fair. Victor, that's fair.

MULHAUPT: I will withdraw my motion, and Michael will offer a substitute... a substitute amendment.

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ASHE: Well, if you withdraw it, it's no longer there. So, it's no longer a substitute motion from Governor Meehan. It's an original motion, and then we still need to know, Governor Meehan, what it is that's in your motion.

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ASHE: And who is writing this down?

MEEHAN: Maryjean.

BUHLER: I think our Secretary is.

ASHE: Our Secretary doesn't seem to have a pen in his hand.

KOLLMER-DORSEY: Governor Ashe, this is being recorded. We can capture all this.

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

KORN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MEEHAN: Yes. What he said. Is there a second?

ASHE: Is that it?

MULHAUPT: Second.

MEEHAN: That's it.

MULHAUPT: Second.

MEEHAN: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ASHE: Pretty simple, isn't it?

MCCUE: That's pretty simple.

ASHE: Who is the second?

LYNTON: Dennis seconded it.

MULHAUPT: Alright, I second that.

LYNTON: Alright, let's take it to a vote.

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ASHE: And so, Governor Meehan, you feel this is consistent with what Strategy and Budget is set out? Or what?

MEEHAN: Yes, although Maryjean says we have two issues we need to address, so. Not in this motion though.

BUHLER: Not in this motion.

ASHE: Well, so we need to continue?

MEEHAN: We need to vote on my amendment.

ASHE: So, this isn't the end of our closed meeting.

MCCUE: So, there's a first and second, all in favor?

ASHE: Well, wait just a minute.

MEEHAN: I offered an amendment, and I'd like to have a vote.

ASHE: And that's fine. That's an original motion. You just said that Ms. Buhler said we have two other items that this Board needs to vote on before we leave. That's all I'm asking.

MEEHAN: Well I'd like to have a vote on the amendment that I have on the table. Can we have a vote, Mr. Chairman?

ASHE: Governor Lynton is the Chairman not me.

LYNTON: Okay, let's bring it to a vote. I move that we vote on this.

MULHAUPT: Second.

LYNTON: Call for the vote. All in favor?

ALL: Aye.

LYNTON: All opposed?

MEEHAN: Dana had to leave.

ASHE: Is Mrs. Perino on?

LYNTON: No, she's off. She had to do her show.

ASHE: So, we're back to a six-member Board. So, on this motion, it's unanimous.

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LYNTON: Yes.

MEEHAN: Unanimous.

ASHE: So, how about the next two items?

BUHLER: So, just to clarify to make sure I have it correct because I'm the one who has to make sure this actually happens.

LYNTON: Yes.

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

LYNTON: Yep.

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

LYNTON: Correct.

BUHLER: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ASHE: For what purpose?

BUHLER: David, you can address that.

ENSOR: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MULHAUPT: [REDACTED] GISA Exemption (9)(B)

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ENSOR: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ENSOR: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

BUHLER: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

MULHAUPT: Does the Committee have a view on this, Michael?

MEEHAN: Um...we can keep litigating a budget submission forever, but...

LYNTON: You know, I gotta say, David, we should just stick with the budget we have. We should just stick with the budget we have.

MEEHAN: Yeah. We'll have chances to fiddle with this between now and...

ENSOR: Can I just explain something?

LYNTON: GISA Exemption (9)(B)

ASHE: Mr. Chairman, I move to close the meeting and adjourn.

MEEHAN: Second.

LYNTON: I agree.

ENSOR: Can I just...

ASHE: Now, I've made the motion.

LYNTON: All those in favor?

ASHE: You have to proceed to a vote.

LYNTON: Let's vote. All in favor?

ALL: Aye.

ASHE: Opposed?

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LYNTON: Any opposed? Adjourned.