

**General Services Administration
FEDERAL CIVILIAN AGENCIES HOUSEHOLD GOODS RELOCATION COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
April 11, 2000
Washington, DC**

Attendees:

Allison, Elizabeth, GSA
Baily, Scott, USFS
Ballantine, Rossana, DOE
Bania, Noreen, DOS
Bardwell, William, VA
Beard, Brenda, FAA
Bembenek, Ted, GSA
Blue, Velvet, GSA
Brown, Betty, GSA
Bucksell, Ralph, GAO
Crowell, Ann, FAA
Evans, Jakob, FBI
Fouts, Bill, USCS
Gore, Barbara, GSA
Hill, Charles F., NOAA
Johnson, Mary E., DOE
Manchester, Carol, GSA
McFarland, Carla, GSA
Oden, Les, DOI
Pate, Clara, GSA
Pate, Connie, GSA
Pratt, Susan A., BOP
Roque, Luis, DOS
Smith, Gary, USDA
Stewart, Joanie, GSA
Stone, Kay, USGS
Tucker, Larry, GSA

Noreen Bania, Executive Director of the Committee opened the meeting at 9:15 a.m. and welcomed attendees.

Larry Tucker, Chief, Transportation Programs Branch, GSA, outlined the meeting agenda and introduced Elizabeth Allison to speak about retirement of the Government Bill of Lading (GBL).

GBL Retirement--Elizabeth Allison, Program Analyst/Team Leader, GSA's Transportation Management Policy Division, Office of Governmentwide Policy (OGP)

Ms. Allison discussed alternatives available to agencies once the Government Bill of Lading is retired for domestic shipments on September 30, 2001. The alternatives are an automated optional form GSA is developing for Internet application which may be printed, or a commercial bill of lading. Terms and conditions associated with protecting the Government's interest must be incorporated in the selected alternative. Agencies may obtain sets of numbers for their selected alternative from GSA in Fort Worth (currently there is no charge for the numbers), or an agency may develop its own unique numbering system. An agency must get approval for a numbering system it develops from GSA's Office of Transportation Audits to ensure the numbering system is unique.

Fuel Adjustment Charge--Ted Bembenek, Jr., Director, GSA's Transportation Management Policy Division, OGP

Mr. Bembenek provided an overview of OGP and its objectives. He informed attendees of an April 11th afternoon meeting scheduled with representatives from GSA's Federal Supply Service, DoD, and the Department of State to discuss the feasibility of a uniform Governmentwide fuel surcharge policy. He extended an invitation for interested HHG Committee members to participate.

Mr. Bembenek also shared with the Committee that OGP's revision of the HHG definition is in process. It currently is among a number of revised regulations awaiting OMB's approval for implementation. Questions about a specific regulation may be directed to Jane Groat at 202-501-4318 or Jim Harte at 202-501-0483.

Carla McFarland of GSA's Heartland Region in Kansas City, MO provided Committee members a copy of a letter from the American Moving and Storage Association (AMSA) explaining how the Household Goods Carriers Bureau determines the fuel surcharge percentage.

Status of the HHG Industry's Single Factor Tariff

Larry Tucker reported that AMSA's Scott Michael informed him that the Carrier Committee met and approved the new single factor tariff to become effective June 1, 2002. The single factor tariff applies only to the commercial sector at this time, however. AMSA will work with GSA to do what makes sense for the Government. Rates in the single factor tariff are based on 3-digit zip codes. Accessorial charge application is greatly simplified in the tariff.

ITMS Improvements

Larry provided attendees a handout (copy enclosed) detailing the steps GSA is taking to vastly improve the Interagency Traffic Management System (ITMS). He briefly discussed progress highlights since the last quarterly meeting.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES--Carla McFarland, Heartland Region, Kansas City, MO covered the following issues:

Sharing Meetings with the Carrier and Move Management Services (MMS) Industries

Carla shared, based on past experience, that meetings run much more smoothly when the agency and carrier meetings are held separately unless there is a special occasional need to combine the two. In the past, agency HHG Committee meetings were conducted in the morning followed by an afternoon Carrier/Forwarder Industry meeting. The carrier meetings were suspended during the controversial transition of broker-provided MMS to the Governmentwide Employee Relocation Services schedule. GSA plans to begin the industry meetings again in the near future. The industry has been invited to attend the Committee meeting scheduled for May 23rd at GSA's Expo in Orlando, FL. After some discussion, the Committee decided to combine the quarterly agency and industry meetings only when there is a special need.

A Committee member shared his agency's extreme dissatisfaction with its move management services provider from the Schedule, especially in regard to the level of administrative services provided. The member thought it would be a good idea for the rest of the Committee to share such experiences at future quarterly meetings so they may learn from each other. The member is willing to share his agency's experiences with its provider at a forthcoming quarterly meeting once the agency has reconciled the problem. The Committee was unanimously in favor of the idea.

High Cost of Shipping Unaccompanied Baggage

GSA auditors have notified the Heartland Region that carriers have been rating household goods as unaccompanied baggage (UAB) (refer to the January 2001 minutes). Noreen Bania described UAB as items needed by the employee and family immediately upon arrival at the duty station. She shared a suggested list of items that State Department recognizes as acceptable. Committee members present voted in favor of GSA's incorporating State's UAB definition in GSA's next Request for Offers (RFO) and ultimately in the Household Goods Tender of Service (HTOS).

Agency Specific Requirements for next RFO

Carla announced that GSA will incorporate the transit timetable the FBI currently uses in the next issued RFO. She asked that agencies notify her office of any agency-specific requirements they may have for the next RFO.

Availability of May Rates

GSA has processed and is in the process of testing carrier rates scheduled to become effective May 1. The CD-ROM and Web-based versions should be available within the next 7-10 days.

Carriers Placed in Non-use Status

With the transition of ITMS to a web environment it has become easier to place carriers in a non-use status. As of now 60 carriers have failed to meet HTOS requirements and have been either placed in non-use status or removed from CHAMP. Carriers ultimately removed for failure to perform or comply with HTOS provisions must reapply for participation in CHAMP and go through the entire evaluation/approval process.

Someone asked if GSA can remove a carrier that does not pay the industrial funding fee (IFF). Carla responded that her office is in the process of preparing a letter to send to carriers that are not complying the IFF submission requirements. In accordance with HTOS provisions, those carriers can be removed and the Heartland Region is establishing a standard procedure to effect this action.

Another attendee asked whether a carrier may hold an employee's household goods hostage until it receives payment for the move from the agency. The response was no, the shipment is considered Government property and may not be held hostage.

Agency HHG Shipping Guide

Carla said the Heartland Region currently is revising the Agency Guide for Shipping Household Goods. She indicated there are not as many changes to this guide as there were to the Employee Guide.

Clara Pate, GSA's Transportation Programs Branch, reported that the printing contractor is scheduled to send a print-ready copy of the Employee HHG Shipping Guide to GSA for review and approval before the end of May. Once approved and printed, the guide will be available on the GSA's Web Site as well as in hard copy format. Details for obtaining the guide will be publicized in the near future.

HTOS Rewrite Project

Larry informed the Committee that GSA has completed about half of the voluminous and time-consuming HTOS rewrite project. The document will meet Government plain language guidelines when it is finished.

Larry thanked Committee members who submitted agenda items. Based on telephone and e-mail inquiries GSA receives prior to quarterly meetings, however, it appears many representatives may not be reading information GSA mails out and posts to the Web publicizing an upcoming meeting. Larry encouraged the Committee to carefully read the notifications since they transmit important information and request agenda items.

The Committee voted to have the next quarterly meeting on Wednesday, July 11, 2001, in Crystal Mall Building 4, Room 1129 from 9:00 a.m. until approximately noon.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:40 a.m.

April 11, 2001

GSA's on-going effort to vastly improve the Interagency Traffic Management System (ITMS):

- ?? A lot of new transportation systems have evolved, along with rapid advances in technology, that offer (or are coming close to offering) seamless transportation solutions to shippers. However, there are:
 - Wide disparities in cost; and
 - Wide disparities in effectiveness.
- ?? GSA is actively exploring this arena to identify how we may best satisfy our customers' current and future freight and household goods needs. Should we stick with ITMS as it currently exists and add additional service enhancements? Or would it be in our customers' best interest to tap into a commercial off-the-shelf "total" transportation system?
 - Want to do what's best for our customers; and
 - At a cost that won't cause the IFF to double or triple.
- ?? We believe the ultimate transportation system would:
 - Provide a complete seamless "end-to-end" web-enabled transportation solution;
 - Allow customers/vendors to manage all transportation transactions in real time from receipt of shipping request to final delivery, including payment and settlement via the Internet; and
 - Be flexible enough to allow choices for our customers as well as provide the capability for some customization.
- ?? The FSS "Systems Office" sent experts to meet with ITMS operational managers in Kansas City to prepare a "requirements document", i.e., to determine the requirements for a "total transportation system" capable of meeting both the freight and household goods needs of our customers in today's automated environment. They identified the following requirements:

?? A Transportation Management Services Solution (TMSS) that will totally integrate (within an electronic environment) a full composite of transactions required in shipping freight or household goods (including privately owned vehicles and unaccompanied baggage) from generation of a cost comparison for use in selecting a transportation service provider to payment (and prepayment audit of) transportation charges and the furnishing of agency and transportation service provider required reports. Specifically, a new system must include at a minimum the following functions:

- ?? Ability to collect transportation rates for services solicited from vendors.
- ?? Ability to provide cost comparisons to customers that require transportation services.
- ?? Ability to book transportation services on-line.
- ?? Ability to electronically generate a bill of lading which can be printed out in hard copy.
- ?? Ability to track the status of services requested and provided, including tracking and tracing of shipments in transit and proof of delivery
- ?? Ability to pay for services on-line.
- ?? Ability to resolve service and billing disputes on-line.
- ?? Ability to electronically file and settle loss and damage claims.
- ?? Ability to perform prepayment and post payment auditing of transportation services, or the ability to provide data to separate systems that perform audit functions.
- ?? Ability to provide data analysis through on-line or batch queries and to provide reports.

?? This project is on a fast track.

?? The systems office currently is finalizing the requirements document and will engage a major IT consultant (e.g., Arthur Andersen (AA) or LMI) to assess (within weeks) the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the following alternatives for meeting both freight and household goods requirements and make a recommendation:

- Purchase/lease of an off-the-shelf total transportation system or of individual compatible software components that can be integrated into a total system; versus
- Enhancing the existing ITMS via in-house programming, purchasing compatible off-the-shelf software that can be integrated into the existing system, or a combination of these two alternatives.

?? Following is the project timeline:

- Wednesday, December 20, 2000: Approved the contractor's (CTA's) proposal for the statement of work on the project design;
- Friday, December 22, 2000: Scheduled kickoff meeting with CTA;
- Wednesday, January 3, 2001: Held kickoff meeting with CTA;
- Thursday and Friday, January 18-19, 2001: CTA in Kansas City gathering final requirements;
- Wednesday, February 21, 2001: CTA sent draft version of requirements document to GSA;
- Thursday, March 1, 2001: Comments on draft document due back from Kansas City, the Office of Transportation and Property Management, and Office Of Federal Supply Service, Chief Information Officer (FI);
- Friday, April 27, 2001: Statement of Work due from Chief Information Officer--forward to consultant for price quote;
- Wednesday, May 2, 2001: Price quote due back from consultant;
- Wednesday, May 9, 2001: Award task to consultant;
- Friday, June 8, 2001 - Tuesday, September 11, 2001: Draft version of risk assessment due;
- [2 weeks after receipt of draft risk assessment]: Final version of risk assessment due.