



Editor's Note - to promote thought and discussion!

From WWW.WisOpinion.com Shine Light on Contract Process

By John Gard

The State of Wisconsin Elections Board enters into a \$13 million contract with Accenture to create a statewide voter registration system. Certain lawmakers and pundits go wild, accusing Accenture of incompetence and threatening a legal challenge to the Elections Board's action. Do these critics have a point? How did the Board settle on Accenture?

The state Department of Transportation awards a \$685,000 website design contract to two firms whose employees have given more than \$50,000 in campaign contributions to Gov. Jim Doyle. Critics complain that \$685,000 is a lot of money for a web site and assert that something smells fishy about this deal. Did campaign cash have anything to do with this contract, and how do you justify spending more than a half-million dollars on a web site?

A Milwaukee firm with close ties to a former lawmaker convicted of taking kickbacks for state work is found to have overbilled the state by more than a quarter million dollars on state contracts. Was this a case of sloppy bookkeeping or Capitol corruption?

All of these are good questions that the public has a right to have answered. But that may never happen, because of the way our state

contracting system currently works.

Under current law, if you want to change the fine for stealing a shopping cart or make the polka the official state dance, you must register with the Ethics Board and report all your activity. But if you are making a play for a \$93 million Medicaid contract, a \$13 million voter registration list, or a \$600,000 web site, you get to do it completely in the dark.

The individuals cutting deals for hundreds of millions in taxpayer-funded contracts or projects are allowed to do so in virtual anonymity. That is a gaping hole in Wisconsin's tradition of open government that I intend to close.

That's why I am introducing the Contract Sunshine Act. This bill is a comprehensive reform that will make Wisconsin's contracting and procurement system more open and accountable to the public.

It's really pretty simple. The bill requires those seeking to influence any state agency with regard to any state procurement contract to register and report their activity to the state Ethics Board, in the same

way that lobbyists or principals currently must do.

The problem with our current contracting system is not that it fosters corruption. The problem is that it fosters uncertainty. I am not saying that any of the controversial state contracts referenced above are illegitimate or a bad deal for taxpayers.

Unfortunately, though, because our current system has no disclosure requirement, I also can't assure you that these contracts were above-board and legitimate. That sort of secrecy breeds uncertainty; uncertainty breeds suspicion; suspicion breeds cynicism, and cynicism erodes the public trust in their democratically elected representatives.

The goal of the Contract Sunshine Act is to help restore that trust. I want to make sure that the next time there's a controversy over a state contract, lawmakers, the press and the public alike can go to the Ethics Board, follow the process from the start, and get complete and reliable information about who is trying to influence what decisions and how. With that informa-

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**Wisconsin Association
of Public Purchasers
Minutes
March 4, 2005
Milwaukee, WI**

Meeting was called to order at 11:39 a.m. by **President Dean Helwig**, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions.

Minutes

The minutes from the December 2004 quarterly meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report

Linda Dupuis The checking account balance is \$14,070.98 after receipts and expenses and the CD balance is \$6310.96.

Committee Reports:

Education

Frank Draxler indicated WAPP will sponsor the NIGP course "Sourcing in the Public Sector" on April 27-29th in Wisconsin Dells. **Frank** gave four choices for a one-day seminar and asked members to vote on the one they were most interested in. "Purchasing Management" appeared to receive the majority of votes. Frank also indicated there were additional nearby course offerings on the WAPP website.

Expo

Denise Charkowski indicated the 2005 Expo will be held Sept. 15-16 at the Country Spring in Waukesha. Vendor registration forms should be available on the WAPP website Wed, March 9th. **Dean Helwig** stated he would create a template to use for the back of member's business cards to hand out to vendors.

Public Relations

Dean Helwig is asking for a volunteer to chair this committee.

Old Business

Steve Martinelli stated that he did not feel we should waive the employment requirement for WAPP in general but instead handle on a case-by-case basis and made a motion to extend WAPP membership to **Chris Wilmot**. The motion was passed.

Dean Helwig indicated that he is still pursuing the issue of making our membership listing available upon request. He will bring a resolution to the December meeting.

Dean Helwig stated that **Carolyn Clow** has taken the lead on strategic planning for WAPP and asked for other volunteers. **Mary Lynn Seidl** volunteered.

Dean Helwig also indicated that we are still in need of a host for the 2nd quarter meeting in 2006.

Frank Draxler inquired about the status of the NIGP Forum to be held in Milwaukee. **Steve Martinelli** indicated that a decision was put off for a year and that it may not happen until 2009.

New Business

None

Announcements

Dean Helwig indicated that the location of the 4th quarter meeting in December has been changed from the Holiday Inn to the Sheridan Inn. The dates remain the same, December 1-2, 2005.

Future Meetings-2005

June 2-3.....Eau Claire
Sept 15-16 Waukesha
Dec 1-2Madison

Newsletter Deadline

Not available

Motion was m/s/p to adjourn at 12:02 p.m.

Submitted by:
Laura Forbes
Secretary

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tion, we will all be able to make an honest judgment about whether everything is on the up-and-up.

Having the state enter contracts with the private sector is always going to be controversial. Some groups, like public employee unions, will always seek to protect their own turf by opposing all contracting. Others, including me, believe that contracting often provides government a worthwhile way to provide valuable services while reducing state costs.

In the end, perhaps the controversial nature of contracting itself provides the strongest argument for the Contract Sunshine Act. On an issue this inherently controversial, why would we want to compound uncertainty and suspicion through a closed, secret process?

Passing the Contract Sunshine Act can help ensure that whoever is doing the work – state employees or private contractors – is giving taxpayers the best possible deal.

-- Gard (R-Pestigo) is the Speaker of the Wisconsin Assembly. Your Right to Know is a monthly column produced by the Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council, devoted to protecting public access to meetings and records.

WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC PURCHASERS
AGENDA – SECOND QUARTER MEETING
June 2-3, 2005
Plaza Hotel and Suites – Eau Claire
1202 West Clairemont Ave, WI 54701

Thursday, June 2

- 12:00 - 1:00 P.M. Registration (Lunch on your own)
- 1:00 - 1:10 P.M. Welcome and Introductions – Dean Helwig, WAPP President
- 1:10 - 2:10 P.M. Governmental Shared Services Overview, Ed Henchle from Virchow Krause
- 2:10 - 3:10 P.M. Discussion regarding Minnesota Cooperative Purchasing, Bernie Kopischke, State of Minnesota
- 3:10 - 3:25 P.M. Break
- 3:25 - 4:30 P.M. Wisconsin Cooperative Purchasing Meeting – Facilitators: Linda Dupuis, City of Green Bay and Carolyn Clow, Dane County
- 4:30 - 5:00 P.M. WAPP Committee Meetings
- 6:00 - 10:00 P.M. Eau Claire Express Baseball Game Outing, Carson Park (includes food and refreshments)

Friday, June 3

- 8:00 - 8:15 A.M. Registration and Continental Breakfast
- 8:15 - 9:15 A.M. Trends in Health Insurance, Debbie Svihovec, Associated Finance
- 9:15 - 10:15 A.M. Contract Administration, Part 1 - Bill Davidson of Stearns County MN
- 10:15 - 10:30 A.M. Break
- 10:30 - 11:30 A.M. Contract Administration Part 2 - Bill Davidson of Stearns County MN
- 11:30 - 12:00 P.M. WAPP Business Meeting - Dean Helwig, WAPP President
- Minutes
 - Treasurer's Report
 - Committee Reports
 - Old and New Business
- 12:00 - 12:30 P.M. Common Problems (If you have one, or more, this is the time to bring them up)
- 12:30 P.M. Lunch

**WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC PURCHASERS
FIRST QUARTER MEETING - JUNE 2-3, 2005
Plaza Hotel and Suites – 1202 W. Clairemont Ave., Eau Claire
715-834-3181
REGISTRATION FORM**

Hotel Information:

A block of rooms has been set aside for the evenings of June 1 & 2, with a special daily room rate of \$62/night for a single and \$79/night for a double. Taxes will not be charged with proof of exemption. You may reserve your room at the special rates through May 19, 2005. Rooms and special rates are not guaranteed after that date. Please make your reservation with the Plaza Hotel & Suites - Eau Claire by calling 800-482-7829 or directly by dialing 715-834-3181. Please make reference to group #3827 when you make the reservation.

Registration Information

- Member Retired Member Non-Member First-timer

Name: _____

Agency: _____

Email Address: _____

Registration Fees:

	<u>Member</u>	<u>*Retired Members</u>	<u>Non-Members</u>	<u>First-Time Non-Member**</u>
Both Days	\$40	\$20	\$50	Free***
Thursday Only	\$20	\$10	\$25	Free***
Friday Only	\$20	\$10	\$25	Free

* WAPP membership must be effective on or before February 18, 2005 in order to obtain member rates. **A first-time, non-member must be a governmental official whose responsibilities include or are related to public procurement. ***Except for Thursday evening Baseball Event – see below.

Thursday Evening Group Event:

A Thursday evening outing that includes all you can eat, free refreshments and a baseball game between the **Eau-Claire Express** and **St. Cloud River Bats** (Northwoods League), will be held at the Carson Park Baseball Stadium. It will be served up on a five-tiered deck located in the right field corner of Carson Park. This great evening will cost Members and Non-Members only \$12. Guests and First-Timer Non-Members must pay \$23. The Northwoods League is a college wood-bat league sanctioned by the NCAA. This should be a great night to enjoy with your colleagues.

- Attending (Add \$12 or \$23 to registration fee, as appropriate) Not Attending

Friday Lunch Selection: (If not attending, make no selection)

- Chicken Cordon Bleu, Tossed Garden Greens, Fresh Glazed Carrots, Herb Roasted Potatoes
 Burgandy Beef Tips Over Noodles, Tossed Garden Greens, Broccoli Spears

Payment:

Please make check(s) payable to **WAPP** and send registration form and payment **by May 16, 2005** to:

Scott Noffke
 Internal Services Manager
 500 Main Street
 Eau Claire, WI 54701

If you have any questions please contact Scott Noffke at 715-852-3012 or Email at snoffke@ecasd.k12.wi.us.

Directions from the South:

Take I-94 W to the Eau Claire exits (Hwy 37 is the 3rd of 4 exits)
Bear right onto off-ramp at exit 65 to WI-37 N (WI-85 E, Hendrickson Dr)
0.3 miles
Turn left onto US-12 W (Clairemont Av)
0.2 miles
You are at 1202 W Clairemont Ave, Eau Claire, WI

From the East

Take Hwy 29 West to Hwy 53 South to Eau Claire following Hwy 53 to Clairemont Ave., turn right on Clairemont Ave and continue for 2.7 miles to the Plaza Hotel.

Map of Eau Claire showing Clairemont Ave. at Hwy 37 and

Location of Carson Park



