

## **MINUTES**

### **Meeting of the Board of Overseers for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award**

#### **National Institute of Standards and Technology**

Tuesday, December 9, 2021, Via videoconference

#### **Attendees**

*Overseers:* Gerry Agnes (Chair), Ray Floyd, John Jasinski, Brian Lassiter, Theresa Meadows, Janet Souter

*Judges:* Patricia Skriba (Chair), Cary Hill, Kevin Johnson

*NIST:* Jamie Ambrosi, Mojdeh Bahar, Dawn Bailey, Rebecca Bayless, Jacqueline Deschamps, Robert Fangmeyer, Robert Hunt, Elif Karakas, Darren Lowe, LouAnn Scott, Christine Schaefer, Robyn Verner, Kelly Welsh

*Guests:* Al Faber, President and CEO, Baldrige Foundation; Stephanie Norling, CEO, Communities of Excellence 2026

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Robert Fangmeyer and Gerry Agnes welcomed and thanked the overseers for their participation and support of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP). Fangmeyer encouraged them to share their insights, concerns, and thoughts throughout the meeting.

Fangmeyer gave an update on the 2021 award process notification delay:

The Department of Commerce and NIST are still engaged and working together to evaluate the Judges Panel recommendations and identify the winners of the Baldrige Award; we look forward to notifying the winners as soon as the process is complete. We understand participants are eager for results and appreciate their patience.

#### **Approval of the June Minutes**

Unanimous approval.

#### **Report from the Judges Panel**

Pattie Skriba gave a synopsis of the judging process. It begins in August by deciding which organizations should receive site visits. They chose seven organizations for site visits. Organization names of those seven were then revealed to enable a determination of any real or perceived conflicts of interest between each judge and any of the applicants selected for site visits. Any judge who has a conflict with an applicant does not receive any information about that organization and is not a participant in the discussions about or voting on that applicant during the November meeting. Site visits occurred starting the last week of September, and teams produced scorebooks that captured the teams' findings, evidence, commentary, and scoring. This documentation becomes the primary focus for the judges who each spend about 40 hours independently reviewing and preparing for their November meeting. Each applicant was assigned a lead judge who facilitates the conversation among the judges and with the site visit team leader during the meeting. The conversations focus on (1) obtaining clarification and (2)

understanding the applicant's best practices and role-model characteristics. Judges vote anonymously, and a recommendation for the award requires a majority plus one.

## **Baldrige Program Update**

Fangmeyer reported on recent BPEP activities, starting with the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. He said everything shared today is aligned to sustain the program, increase reach and impact, and strengthen the Baldrige Enterprise.

## **2021 HIGHLIGHTS**

### **2021/2022 Award Process and Examiner Training**

Due to COVID, the entire award process, including examiner training, was virtual this year. Examiner training sessions were one hour in length, once a week, from March 29 to May 14 (a total of six sessions). In addition, master examiners were paired with new and Baldrige Examiner Training Experience (BETE) examiners for individual coaching and feedback, and the learning management system Rise was used to deliver online content. Due to the overwhelmingly positive response to the virtual approach by examiners (and the lack of conference room availability at NIST), this model will be largely repeated in 2022.

The seven 2021 site visits were conducted virtually, with the continuation of best practices from the virtual site visits in 2020. The site visit plan for 2022 is a hybrid approach that includes document review and virtual interviews, followed by a short on-site visit to test deployment and conduct follow-up interviews with demonstrations, as appropriate.

### **Baldrige Executive Fellows**

Dawn Bailey gave an overview of the Fellows Program—a professional development program for executives from all sectors to explore and address the challenges of leadership using the Baldrige Excellence Framework as a foundation. There are typically five on-site meetings; three of these at Baldrige Award recipient locations to witness best practices in action. The other component of the program is a capstone project, for which Fellows are encouraged to choose something of strategic significance at their own organizations or work that they have always wanted to improve or innovate. Fellows use the year-long program to gather peer and coach feedback and gather best practices to support their efforts.

### **Job Quality Framework**

Kelly Welsh shared that the new administration tasked BPEP with leading the development of a job quality framework, which would also increase the reach and impact of Baldrige and expand Baldrige-based offerings.

A video was shared of Secretary Gina Raimondo discussing the importance of a job quality framework during the kickoff meeting: <https://youtu.be/XQy277A2hRE>.

Kelly said that, through multiple meetings with key stakeholder groups, job quality experts, and job quality advocates, BPEP has developed a draft of the framework. Additional focus groups are planned to obtain specific input from business and industry representatives as well as experts in diversity, equity,

and inclusion. The goal is for the framework to help managers and leaders understand the importance of improving the quality of the jobs they offer; establish a widely accepted definition of a high-quality job; and provide practical, adaptable, non-prescriptive guidance around how to improve the quality of the jobs in organizations of all kinds, especially small and mid-size businesses.

### **Engagement with Manufacturing**

BPEP, in collaboration with Florida Makes (a Manufacturing Extension Partnership [MEP] program), the (Baldrige-based) Florida Sterling Award program, and the Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center (which houses the Illinois Performance Excellence program), has developed an assessment process and tools to enable MEP center staff to provide feedback to manufacturers on their preparedness for and adoption of advanced manufacturing technology solutions.

The assessment tool is being piloted now. The goal is for a minimum of 100 organizations to be assessed, and then the tool will be revised as needed and made available to other MEP centers. From a Baldrige Enterprise perspective, success for this initiative is an ongoing assessment program that introduces businesses and other organizations to Baldrige principles and draws them into the Baldrige community.

### **2022 LOOKING AHEAD**

#### **33<sup>rd</sup> Quest for Excellence Conference**

BPEP is planning to be back in person at its next Quest conference (April 3–6, 2022). Planning is being done in close coordination with the Foundation, ASQ, and others. Registration is now open. Contingency planning is part of the discussion.

#### **2023–2024 Baldrige Excellence Framework**

Work begins in early 2022 on the next revision of the framework to ensure it remains on the leading edge of validated leadership and management practice. Feedback, inputs, and recommendations will be gathered/solicited, from literature review, industry experts, social media and other methods, partner organizations, examiner training, the Quest for Excellence conference, and topic-based virtual focus groups. Draft copies of the Criteria by appropriate sector (business/nonprofit, education, or health care) will be sent for review to Baldrige overseers and sector experts (typically over the summer).

#### **Redesign of Baldrige Award Process to Roll Out in 2022**

The award process redesign has been delayed for two years due to the COVID pandemic, but it will be rolled out in 2022. BPEP is currently developing training, resource materials, and a new online examination tool.

The 2022 redesign has four objectives: (1) reduce the cycle time between application submission and receipt of feedback; (2) lean out the evaluation process to better utilize examiner resources and enhance value added to examiners and applicants; (3) provide more accurate, easier-to-produce, and easier-to-read feedback reports; and (4) improve the timeliness, clarity, transparency, and overall quality of feedback to applicants.

## **Report from the Alliance for Performance Excellence**

Brian Lassiter gave an overview of the Alliance. Mission: “Enhancing Our Members’ Ability to Grow Baldrige-based Performance Excellence.” Vision: To be the premier resource for a thriving Baldrige community. To find your local Baldrige-based program, visit <http://baldrigealliance.org/programs>.

Lassiter shared that Baldrige is the common thread that ties all Alliance programs together, and the scale of the Alliance is quite large with an estimated \$9 million combined budget. Lassiter also reminded the overseers that the Alliance is the feeder system for BPEP. He shared updates, including the dates and location for the 2022 Fall conference: October 19-20, in San Diego.

## **Report from the Baldrige Foundation**

Al Faber said it has been a busy six months in terms of the Foundation’s four strategic imperatives: advocacy, fundraising, board development, and operations. The Foundation had a successful award cycle for its individual leadership awards, which included the E. David Spong Lifetime Achievement Award, Harry S. Hertz Leadership Award, Foundation Awards for Leadership Excellence, and Dr. Curt Reimann Baldrige Scholarships. Recipients will be announced in a few weeks, and they will be honored at a Quest conference luncheon.

Faber shared the following updates:

- The Foundation fundraising goal was exceeded last year by 162% through pledges and donations. Foundation has raised close to \$500,00 in first half of fiscal year.
- Upcoming webinar will feature About Healthcare, which is active in 982 hospitals across county.
- Podcasts, future webinars, and two virtual CEO roundtables are scheduled. An in-person roundtable will be held in Atlanta in March.
- The University of Charleston, WV, is a new partner, especially in the cyber space. It is offering deep discounts in training and education to members of the Baldrige community online.
- Internationally, the Foundation continues to strengthen relationships with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Tata, and Adani Group.
- The Foundation is planning a webinar specifically on the Alliance; it may be called “State-Based Programs: Your Gateway to Performance Excellence.” It will feature state director vignettes and success stories. The webinar will be recorded and shared with Alliance programs who can use it for marketing.

## **Strategic Initiatives**

### **Proposal to Re-Engage Large, Internationally Competitive Businesses**

Fangmeyer discussed some of the background and discussion that has already occurred in terms of re-engaging with big business to apply for the Baldrige Award. BPEP has been attempting to re-engage businesses of all kinds for many years through various product offerings, process changes, and strategic initiatives. In 2017, BPEP had a very similar conversation with the overseers that ultimately resulted in the current award process redesign changes, which are being implemented in 2022 after a two-year delay due to COVID.

Barriers to participation appear to be largely the same across sectors and industries and center on the time, effort, and complexity of the award criteria and award process, as well as the loss of Presidential participation in the award ceremony.

Following in-depth discussion, the Overseers recommended forming a small task group to reconsider the proposed changes to the application and evaluation process to address the barriers to participation. Proposed changes would need to be socialized (input would need to be gathering from previous award recipients, current applicants, Criteria stakeholders, consultants, etc.) and thoughtfully rolled out in 2023 or beyond.

### **Communities of Excellence (COE) 2026**

Stephanie gave an overview of COE 2026. She said the vision, mission, and envisioned future drives the work. In 2017, she said the overseers asked for evidence of COE and an expansion plan that showed how COE work was integrated with components of the enterprise, as well as an evaluation that integrated with the Alliance. COE came back in 2018 with evidence, and COE has returned every year with a plan to show progress.

This new discussion is intended to look at the scale of opportunities for COE; the COE Board agreed that it was the right time to do that. COE has begun the effort to create a new five-year plan that includes significant increased investment in COE and partnership with the Baldrige enterprise.

Stephanie said COE has a refined purpose and big, hairy, audacious goal (BHAG):

- **Purpose:** Every person in America is living their best life in communities that are thriving.
- **BHAG:** Communities and the organizations within them that adopt Baldrige-based tools and practices, including the COE framework are the top-performing in the nation.

She presented five-year operating plans for organizational health, financial health, sustainable community impact, and knowledge management. She also discussed a learning collaborative franchising project where the Alliance can take on assessments. There will be more exploration regarding regional learning teaching collaboratives and the Alliance. COE is also exploring how to capture promising practices and pursue how to adapt the framework.

### **Report and Recommendations to NIST Director and Secretary of Commerce**

Fangmeyer said this is an opportunity for the overseers to convey what they want to say to the NIST Director and Secretary of Commerce. The overseers presented the following recommendations to NIST.

#### **Recommendations**

- Encourage White House involvement and Presidential recognition of Baldrige Award recipients. (This is urgent. Baldrige is the premier award program for the United States.)
- Help us determine the overall “why” of Baldrige that would enhance Presidential and Congressional support of the program.
- Seek increased financial Congressional support.
- Continue to support COE and “Community” as the seventh award category.
- Expand the impact of Baldrige by leveraging new and existing offerings such as the Baldrige Cybersecurity Excellence Builder.

- Support Baldrige efforts to refine the Framework, Criteria, and Award process to evolve in a changing environment. (This is part of the discussion of why large businesses are not participating.)

**New Business**

- Confirm dates of future meetings: June 16, December TBD (BPEP will propose a date).
- Confirm preference for virtual or in-person meetings: Overseers preferred being in-person in June when judges may join them, but being virtual in December when the weather may impact travel.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.



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for Gerry Agnes  
Chair  
Board of Overseers  
01/28/2022