

**MINUTES**  
**Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award**  
**Joint Board of Overseers/Judges Panel Meeting**  
**National Institute of Standards and Technology**  
**Thursday, June 16, 2022, 9:00 AM**

**Attendees**

Overseers: Angela Brandt (candidate), Ray Floyd, Greg Gibson, Rand Jerris, Brian Lassiter, Theresa Meadows (candidate), Michelle Mejia, David Morales (candidate), Janet Souter, Matt Watson (candidate)

Absent: Gerry Agnes (candidate), Michael Garvey

Judges: Cary Hill, Keith Everett, Kevin Johnson, Lynda Johnson, Jennifer Niswonger (candidate), Amy Pugh, Bruce Requa, Meridith Wentz, Gary Wilson, Allyson Young (candidate)

NIST: Jamie Ambrosi, Mojdeh Bahar, Dawn Bailey, Rebecca Bayless, Jacqueline DesChamps, Robert Fangmeyer, Robert Hunt, Elif Karakas, Darren Lowe, Michelle Pena, Christine Schaefer, Robyn Verner, Kelly Welsh

Guests: Al Faber, Stephanie Norling, Pattie Skriba

Begin: 9:00 am

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Robert Fangmeyer, Mojdeh Bahar**

The Baldrige Program's director, Robert Fangmeyer, started the meeting by welcoming everyone and encouraging their participation (for those attending in person as well as virtually). Fangmeyer proceeded to share information about National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST's) new executive director, Laurie Locascio.

Mojdeh Bahar, associate director for Innovation and Industry Services at NIST, then spoke about the Baldrige Program's mission (including improving the nation's competitiveness, economy, and quality of life), applauded everyone's incredible efforts and dedication, and expressed excitement for all of the great work that is underway and the meaningful impact this will have on the future of Baldrige.

**APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2021 MINUTES: Board of Overseers**

Everyone expressed their agreement and acceptance with the minutes.

**BALDRIGE PROGRAM UPDATE, INCLUDING 2022 AWARD PROCESS: Robert Fangmeyer**

Fangmeyer discussed program updates, including the 2021 Baldrige Award recipients, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Quest for Excellence Conference, the pause on the 2022 award process, and the comprehensive external program review. The purpose of the review will be to assess how the program can best advance U.S. competitiveness and address the challenges most relevant in today's business environment, as well as examine how its impact and accessibility could be increased.

Such a review is in alignment with the Baldrige Program's strategic objectives, the recent award process focus group initiative requested by the overseers in December of 2021, and the award evaluation process changes that the program was prepared to roll out with the 2022 award process. The plan is to build upon the work of the program and the focus group, while also taking into consideration the recommendations and input of other key stakeholders. The output of this process will inform how the program can best be positioned for maximal future impact to our nation.

NIST and DOC want to ensure that the Baldrige Program is positioned to best advance U.S. competitiveness. With so many change initiatives under way, it made sense to take the time to do a thorough review and combine those efforts, rather than roll out incremental changes that may not be sufficient to ensure the program's desired impact; therefore the decision was made to also suspend the award process until recommendations from the external review could be considered and included as appropriate.

In an effort to provide the 2022 award applicants the benefit of an evaluation and feedback, the program is offering a feedback-only assessment at a discount. Approximately 60% of the award applicants have chosen to continue with the feedback only evaluation. This will benefit their improvement efforts, keep them and the volunteer examiners engaged, and preserve a portion of the revenues.

The goal is to have the contract in place sometime in July and the review completed in two phases. The first phase, related to changes to the award process, would ideally be complete by Nov. 1, 2022. The second phase addressing the program overall and its offerings would be complete by Jan. 31, 2023.

Dialogue following the presentation reflected the following:

- Broad support for leaning into the opportunities presented by the external review
- Broad concern for the efficacy of the external review if the contractor does not have sufficient knowledge of Baldrige and the Baldrige ecosystem. Various recommendations were made to ensure the contractor either has or obtains such knowledge.
- Broad concern for the ability of any contractor to accomplish a rigorous/effective review within the proposed timeframe, yet...
- Broad recognition of the need to have the review completed quickly to enable an award process in 2023 or else we risk losing all interest in the award

#### **ISSUES FROM THE JUNE 15 JUDGES PANEL MEETING: Cary Hill**

Judges Panel Chair candidate Cary Hill emphasized that this was a challenging—though also very exciting—time for Baldrige to show the power of its framework. He recapped the variety of information that was covered in the judges' June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting and thanked the Baldrige staff for their support.

Cary referred to the trend data in the number of award applicants over the last few years, which he felt was partially due to lack of funding and the COVID 19 pandemic. Cary also shared that the judges discussed last year's award process, potential perceptions of bias when evaluating and judging prior award winners, and the judging process itself; however, he emphasized that the decisions involved with evaluating and recommending Baldrige Award recipients (BARs) were made with great confidence.

Following are some comments on the judging process:

- Prior award recipients must wait five years before reapplying and are held to the same standard as others
- We have examples of prior recipients not winning the award
- Repeat award winners show that they've institutionalized continuous improvement and the core concepts imbedded within the Baldrige framework.

#### **ETHICS BRIEFING: Laura Trevisani**

Laura Trevisani, Attorney-Advisor, Ethics Law and Programs Office at DOC Commerce, gave the Judges and Overseers their required annual ethics briefing.

#### **OVERSEERS WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS: Robert Fangmeyer, Pattie Skriba**

Fangmeyer shared background on Baldrige Award applications by sector since 1988, including impacts due to the loss of federal funding in 2012 and COVID, as well as presidential participation

Fangmeyer noted that an Overseers' working group was formed to initially focus on how to re-engage with large, notable, globally competitive businesses, but the group shifted to a broader focus on the barriers to participation across all award categories.

Fangmeyer then introduced and thanked Pattie Skriba for facilitating the working group. Skriba shared that the working group is not recommending final solutions, but presenting concepts and ideas to consider. A summary of the group's analysis and recommendations is below.

- Focus group consisted of representatives from a broad array of key stakeholder groups, including Judges, Overseers, award applicants, award recipients, former applicants/users, state programs, Baldrige consultants, and non-users/non-applicants. They followed a systematic approach to identify barriers and potential solutions.
- Top contributors to low numbers of applications
  - The Baldrige definition of "excellence" may be too broad and not seen as relevant to users; unclear what we're trying to recognize. Need to consider what are the core/mandatory characteristics of role model excellence
  - Award criteria are too broad, complex, and difficult to understand and implement within an organization
  - Application, process to apply, and evaluation is difficult, time consuming, and resource intensive (people, time, and money)
- Possible solution elements
  - Utilize narrower, more accepted requirements of excellence – ones that resonate with organizations
  - Develop a core set of criteria upon which excellence is defined and assessed. Determine the industry specific KEY results required for excellence and core set of processes critical to achieving excellent results. Also evaluate performance on any additional organization specific key success factors.
  - Meet applicants where they are – one size doesn't fit all. Consider offering tiered evaluations and levels of recognition
  - Require fewer results and consider greater emphasis on results, then explore the maturity of the processes that drove those results
  - Utilize online application - submission of existing information, process graphic, and only short written responses to enhance accessibility and user-friendliness
  - Provide more prescriptive feedback
- Next steps
  - Determine appropriateness of continuing to explore the potential solution set given the pending external review
  - As appropriate, vet the proposed elements with key stakeholders
  - As appropriate, share all of this work with the external contractor

The overseers and judges recommended moving forward while considering the following

- Competitor analysis
- Value proposition
- Continuation of the focus group's work
- The priorities of (1) defining excellence, (2) complexities of the Criteria, and (3) simplification of the application process.

#### **REPORT FROM THE BALDRIGE FOUNDATION: Al Faber**

Faber said he is spending a lot of time on Capitol Hill, speaking with legislators. He said everyone he talked to was very supportive of Baldrige. The Foundation continues to work for presidential recognition in 2024, as well

as Quest sponsorships and fundraising. Despite the late award announcement last year, the Foundation was successful with its fundraising, including for the Alliance.

Faber shared that the *Chronicle of Leadership and Management, Volume 2*, will be out this summer. White Paper opportunities are always available for any who are interested in submitting proposals. The Foundation will have a white paper coming out next year on health care, based on learnings from their CEO Roundtables, podcasts, and webinars.

Faber referenced the 2021 Foundation leadership awards, which went to leaders inside and outside the Baldrige community. He encouraged everyone to nominate worthy candidates. They anticipate the 2023 awards will take place in April at the Quest for Excellence conference.

Fangmeyer shared that Quest for Excellence 2023 planning has started. It will be different than in prior years as there will be no new award recipients to highlight. Some ideas are to bring in thought leaders outside the Baldrige community, look at tracks such as innovation or Communities of Excellence to broaden the scope of Quest, include more state high-level award recipients, and find ways to modernize and reimagine Baldrige.

### **REPORT FROM THE ALLIANCE FOR PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE: Brian Lassiter**

Lassiter gave an overview of the Alliance for Performance Excellence, the network of state and local programs. All programs are independent organizations with two exceptions—Hawaii and South Carolina.

Alliance: The Baldrige “Front Door”

- Purpose: Founded in 2005, the Alliance for Performance Excellence is the network of Baldrige-based programs and other interested members throughout the United States
- Mission: Enhance our members’ ability to grow Baldrige-based performance excellence
- Vision: To be the premier resource for a thriving Baldrige community

By the Numbers

- 29 Baldrige-based programs serving all 50 states and U.S. territories
- 679 Applications received (from 1662), including 55, full, 50-page (down from 167)
- 1,194 Examiners trained (from 1243)
- 409 Recipients (down from 981), including 12 top level (down from 18)
- 11 Conferences (hosted 3,351 attendees)
- 37 Paid staff (up 4) and 757 volunteers (in addition to examiners)
- ~\$9 million Combined budget

Fall Conference in San Diego, CA, October 19-20, is a mini-Quest conference. Save the date website is now live.

Most Alliance organizations are membership based. They offer comprehensive webinars, workshops, and benchmark services. Lassiter presented the Alliance plan-on-a-page, focusing on infrastructure/rebuild and the value proposition, as well as rebuilding processes, strategic planning, and marketing.

### **COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE 2026 (COE): Stephanie Norling**

COE uses a Baldrige-based Criteria, with less questions than the Baldrige framework. Biggest difference in frameworks is that the COE framework looks to apply Criteria across the organizations in a community, which adds a lot of complexity especially around leadership. Translating the Criteria language for communities is one of the biggest challenges, Norling said, and the need to rebrand is becoming more important, as 2026 is coming up.

Norling shared the COE purpose, mission, and vision, as well as an update on current activities and initiatives:

COE Foundation statement: For America to sustain its vitality, promote opportunity, and create a more equitable society. During its second 250 years of existence, we must improve the performance of communities and the people who lead and live in them.

Why We Exist: To ensure that every person in America has the opportunity to live their best life in communities that are thriving.

Envisioned Future (big hairy audacious goal [BHAG]): Communities that adopt the Baldrige-based Communities of Excellence Framework are recognized as the top-performing in the nation and are catalysts for our country to again lead the world in educational attainment, economic prosperity, health and wellness, and quality of life

COE supports communities through the National Learning Collaborative, a primarily online, three-year learning curriculum that is primarily virtual, but everyone comes together once a year. The goal is to make communities and peoples' lives better.

COE also provides assessment and recognition for communities participating in the learning collaborative. There are fifteen community applications for 2022, five at highest current level. Six Alliance programs and sixty-one volunteer examiners are involved.

**JOB QUALITY TOOLKIT: Kelly Welsh**

Welsh shared that the Baldrige Program has been working in partnership with the DOC for about a year and a half on the job quality toolkit. There has been engagement with 60+ national experts, nonprofits, businesses, academics, and government leaders. Goals of the toolkit include helping organizations of all kinds, but especially small and medium sized businesses, become employers of choice by encouraging them to improve the quality of jobs provided. The toolkit offers an easy-to-use menu of vetted strategies and actions to increase the quality of jobs offered, introduces organizations to Baldrige principles, and encourages them to engage with local Alliance programs. Implementation plans include working within the Manufacturing and Extension Partnership (MEP) to distribute the toolkit through existing workforce development relationships, as well as through the Alliance programs. The toolkit will be officially launched by Secretary Gina Raimondo in July.

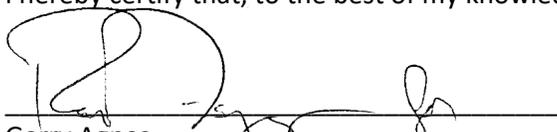
Welsh asked the overseers and judges to share their thoughts on how to leverage the toolkit and encouraged them to pay attention to this as a lever deeper into Baldrige.

**NEW BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**Future Board of Overseers Meetings:** Virtual: December 6, 2022; In-person: June TBD, 2023

Adjournment: 3:30 pm

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



Gerry Agnes  
Chair, Board of Overseers