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**MONTANA STATE FUND
OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

December 9, 2021

The Montana State Fund (MSF) Operational Excellence Committee meeting was held December 9, 2021 in MSF's Board Room at 855 Front Street, Helena, Montana 59601 and via Zoom.

Committee Members Attending

Dexter Thiel, Sidney

Michael Marsh, Billings – via Zoom

Jan VanRiper, Missoula – via Zoom

MSF Staff Attending

Laurence Hubbard, President/CEO

Kevin Braun, General Counsel

Verna Boucher, Spec Asst to Pres/CEO

Mark Burzynski, Corporate Support VP

Julie Jenkinson, Insurance Operations VP

Will Anderson, Interim Operations VP

Rick Duane, Human Resources VP

Richard Miltenberger, Board Chair

Rene Martello, Controller

Patti Grosfield, Internal Auditor

Al Parisian, Chief Information Officer

Darcie Dunlap, Internal Actuary

Matt Mandell, Interim Operations Support VP

I. Meeting Preliminaries

A. Call to Order

Chair Thiel called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm. He clarified for Mr. Marsh that the issues he had brought up would be addressed under Item C.

Chair Thiel asked Board Chair, Richard Miltenberger, since the committee structures were his idea, to provide a review of what exactly the committee will be trying to accomplish so that all members are on the same page.

Chair Miltenberger said ultimately what he was hoping to accomplish was to provide an opportunity for the Board to get to know the company and what we do as a company better. He said by breaking into some compartmentalized groups, he believed the Board could have some not necessarily subject matter experts because that Board simply will never be that; however, at the least they can become more familiar within the concentrated areas of each committee. He said part of his goal is enabling some greater expertise and getting to know some of the key staff people a little better. He noted that at the Board meetings they hear from the staff but there is not as much free interchange as can hopefully happen in a committee over time.

He said that he viewed Operational Excellence as having two components: 1) to have operational excellence in the direction of injured employees – assuring that if injured employees have a disagreement with the company and those follow a normal course of action, that the Board get enough involved to have some understanding of the level of, and number of claims, that are being turned down or denied. He would like to see the number of claimants that feel they are aggrieved in some fashion. He clarified that some injured employees would not be represented by counsel and some would, so these disclosures to the Board would include not just the employee but their representatives as well. He added that this will assure that as an organization, we as a Board can look the public in the face and say “we have looked into this and we think that though there is room for improvement, we have really delved into it and we think the company is taking care of these injured employees appropriately.”

He said the other side of the coin is the employers. He noted that there are some employers that feel their employees are miscategorized; for instance, an employer whose employee never climbs a ladder; however, is in a code that indicates from time to time, they are engaged in more dangerous work than they are. He said this a very complex matter of how the employees are organized which affects the premium that the employers pay. That is one example of employer friction with any workers' compensation company which is the whole issue of the audit and how the employees are categorized. He added that another employer area of friction is the flip side of assuring that correct payments for injured employees are issued which is that employers may feel that MSF is a pushover and is paying injured workers too much, which affects their rating and mod factor. He said he thinks that sometimes the employer and employee have interests that are not the same. He added that he believed that most employers do want their injured workers taken care of and does not believe that employers not caring about their employees is a common thread; however, there is sometimes a divergence of interest. He said these two measures for the employee and the employer are things that he hopes this committee can, over time, sink their teeth into. He said the committee members certainly have expertise in those areas.

Mr. Miltenberger said lastly, based on the expertise of the Committee members, part of the Operational Excellence Committee could be the efficiency of our services, the speed to answer calls or the timeliness of paying claims. He said not just the lowest cost but also are we getting the best bang for the buck for what we are charging administratively? He summarized that he would like the committee to concentrate on those three areas: the employer, the employee and efficiency and value of the operations to gain a better understanding as a Board. He added that it's not because the wheels are coming off, not because MSF is doing a terrible job, but because it is the Board's responsibility to know these things.

II. Committee Chair's Items of Discussion – Dexter Thiel

A. Committee Introductions

Chair Thiel noted that his Committee was comprised of three members, himself, Jan VanRiper and Michael Marsh. He said his professional life is in building things and that world can be very confrontational and competitive and he is quite used to being addressed very bluntly and welcomes that approach should anyone chose it. Additionally, he offered that if he is too blunt in return, please let him know and he will tone it down.

B. Committee Name Discussion and Engagement

▪ *Powers/Duties*

Chair Thiel asked Ms. VanRiper and Mr. Marsh to take a turn and provide an overview of where they think the Committee can be of value and also, if there are some areas that they believe the Committee should stay away from.

Ms. VanRiper said that going into this, she is a little bit stymied about the scope of the Operational Excellence Committee and how much into the weeds the members need to get. She said she was reviewing the charter/committee responsibilities that were passed and upon reflection, she has some questions about that as well. She said the charter begins with a purpose from the claims and employer perspective looking at technologies and services and so forth. She said further in the particular duties, there is one, for example, that calls for the committee to "review and approve goals and objectives relevant to the operations and quality improvements, discuss metrics directly with staff." She said that seems pretty broad and said she was not sure they wanted to be discussing with staff. She added that it seemed to her that one of the Committee's first orders of business would be to be more explicit about the scope and boundaries of their responsibilities.

Chair Thiel sought clarification about when the Committee members speak with staff and noted that he believed Ms. VanRiper would like some boundaries on how that will occur.

Ms. VanRiper said she is not used to, as a Board member, chatting with staff, though there may be a time and place to do that but she was not sure what the thinking was behind that particular duty even though she voted to pass the charter. She said now that she is getting into the meat of this, it is not as clear to her as she originally thought.

Chair Thiel said he agreed and noted that this was somewhat of a “shot gun” approach and the Committee needs to assure they are not splattering everything.

Ms. VanRiper added that the duty/responsibility to “review and advise the Board concerning industry best practices” was also concerning. She said she did not know what the best practices are anymore and was not very inclined to do a lot of research. She said she was just raising some questions about the Committee’s charge.

Chair Thiel called upon Mr. Marsh for his input.

Mr. Marsh said he thought the charter was a good starting point. He said he goes to the highest level, following what Mr. Miltenberger said, having a number of different focuses. Injured employees and their experiences with the company, employers who pay all of our bills and their experience with the company and for best practices, there are certain measurements. He said when he learned about the workers’ compensation business, he learned that the devil was in the details in many cases which can make tremendous financial impacts depending on how they are addressed. He said he was not looking to work with this Committee to tell the staff what they are supposed to do, he is more interested in finding out first what they are doing, and then look at that and look for improvement opportunities that we can take back as a matter of inquiry. Look and see if there are areas that can be improved and right now, he does not know, he has a whole list of things that are areas of financial impact depending on how they are handled. He said frankly, as they sat there, he did not know specifically what they are doing so the first order of business for this committee is to lay out what we think we would like to hear about and then begin to, in small pieces, look at that and get back with the CEO and staff to see if there are areas of improvement. Have they been trying to do something, have they not done something on purpose, we just do not know. He said he thinks it is more of an investigative effort to start with and then the Committee can look for improvement opportunities further.

Chair Thiel called on President/CEO Laurence Hubbard for his input.

President Hubbard said he thought this committee had the broadest scope of educational needs of all of the committees. He said this committee hits a pretty wide swath with everything from claim management to safety management to underwriting and policy services. He encouraged the Board to remember the admonition of the Chair regarding “Noses in and fingers out”. He said he is concerned that this could be the area where that line could be crossed from time to time. He said he agrees the full Board should be involved in policy setting for the MSF; however, there are a lot of day-to-day decisions/transactions that are the responsibility of the CEO and the management team and claims examiners for example. He said he is hesitant to go into the weeds with regard to any one particular area other than as an educational process for how MSF handles these items. For instance, what is the complaint management process, what are the guidelines for handling complaints. He noted there are a number of statutory and regulatory requirements for complaint handling that the Board should know about and should understand how MSF completes that and what the recourse is for an employer or injured worker who is aggrieved by the actions

of MSF. He encouraged dialogue on the approaches that are taken by the management team for the operational aspects of the company. He added that he thought this could offer very rich conversations with lots of information and education primarily. He said at such point, for example, that the Board collectively determined that our reserving philosophy needed adjustment, that would require an open meeting discussion at the Board level. The committee could be a good resource for the full Board; however, again this is the first meeting and he said he thought the Committee should explore the kinds of needs this Committee has and how it can aid the Board in its discharge of its responsibilities that are laid out in statute for rate making, budget approval, and for all the things the Board is directly responsible for, including business planning. He offered a caution to remember that individual rights to privacy have to be protected for injured workers and policyholders. He said the Committee needs to be careful to not get too far into the weeds.

Chair Thiel then sought clarification from Ms. VanRiper and Mr. Marsh as to their preferred process for placing agenda items on the Committee agenda, do they prefer call or email? He noted that his intent was to first send the agenda to Chair Miltenberger and then to President Hubbard.

Ms. VanRiper and Mr. Marsh indicate they were good with either option.

Chair Thiel noted that he provided his personal email, phone number and cell phone number and encouraged committee members to call him anytime. He called for additional input from the Committee members and Mr. Miltenberger.

Mr. Miltenberger said he believed he made a mistake and that each of the committee charters all have a provision that the Committee should review the charter every year. He said one thing to keep in mind is that the charters have started off rather broad but he believed over the course of the year, the committees should be determining how to make them more refined and reflective of reality. He said it is currently a shot in the dark and as the year goes on, they will gain more comfort and can refine the charter because it was done in a bit of a vacuum and he said he thought it was better to be rewritten after the Board has had some experience.

Chair Thiel noted that he was trying to cover all of the agenda items, except Members of the Public, under Roman Numeral II as a group which included anything in:

- A. Committee Introductions
- B. Committee Name Discussion and Governance
 - Powers/Duties
 - Motion Process
 - Reporting
- C. Communication Protocols
 - Board Members
 - MSF Staff
 - Member of the Public

He said he viewed this meeting as a “get to know each other” meeting rather than an actual accomplishing much kind of meeting and he called on Committee members to bring up the items they wished to discuss further.

- *Motion Process*

Ms. VanRiper sought clarification about the bullet for “motion process” and asked if that was the preferred process if the committee wants to pass a recommendation?

Chair Thiel said he had a question about that too. He asked President Hubbard if their recommendation would just be brought to the Board?

President Hubbard noted there had been a motion at the Finance and Audit Committee meeting which will be a recommendation to the full Board as the committees cannot decide for the full Board of Directors. He said any items that require full Board decision making, which are most matters, will be reviewed by the committee and then, endorsed or not, a management recommendation will be advanced to the full Board. He clarified the reason this is important is because public participation/input is required for any actions taken by the Board of Directors. President Hubbard asked for further input from Kevin Braun, MSF General Counsel.

Mr. Braun clarified that in the committee charter “no action of the Committee shall be valid unless approved by at least two members of the Committee which leads into the motion practice. He said a majority (which is two) of the three committee members will be needed to make a recommendation to the full Board.

Chair Thiel asked if there were any restrictions on what the Committee reports to the full Board?

President Hubbard said that was not the case and added that the Committee could ask management for reports which will help the staff communicate with the Committee on the subjects that the Committee is interested in. The reporting to the full Board is like an update regarding the educational process of the Committee while they gather a deeper understanding of the various functions of MSF. He said motions regarding the committee reporting are not necessary.

- *Reporting*

Chair Thiel asked if the minutes would be a report to the other members as well? And if minutes would be available for the Board meeting the following day?

President Hubbard said the minutes would not be available the next day due to the time staff will need to properly prepare them.

Chair Thiel asked if he would be providing a verbal report to the full Board.

President Hubbard indicated that Chair Thiel was welcome to ask staff to review their notes and provide input on an update that he could prepare for the full Board meeting.

Ms. VanRiper suggested that it could help to have the Committee meetings more than a day before the Board meeting in order to have the minutes available at the Board meeting but also added that if travel to the meetings was expected that could be problematic.

C. *Communication Protocols*

Chair Thiel called for additional items under A, B or C.

Ms. VanRiper asked for a discussion regarding the communication protocols for the Committee members.

- *Board Members*

She said she was assuming that Committee members could speak with other Board members; however, the Board does not speak with MSF staff except for President Hubbard or if a member decides they need input from a management staff member.

Chair Thiel said he would like to understand the chain of command. He said he had spoken to President Hubbard earlier and their discussion noted that each committee should go to the Chair who will then go to the overall Board and then to President Hubbard.

- *MSF Staff*

President Hubbard noted that in this context staff refers to Executive or management staff and not line staff. He said it would be potentially disruptive if Board members were engaging in calls with Claims Examiners or Underwriters which could cause particular confusion for the line staff as to the role of the Board member in that situation. His recommendation was that for anything that comes up through the Board or through contacts with the public, the Board members notify the Committee Chair, who then engages with the Board Chair, and he will then decide how to marshal communication to President Hubbard and/or other management staff. He said he has no concerns that his Executive Staff members will provide him with notification that they have been contacted by a Board member and Board members are free to contact management with questions.

Chair Thiel asked if his communication style with Mr. Miltenberger was okay at this point?

Mr. Miltenberger said he does tend to attend a lot of meetings during the day and he encouraged them to contact him via text. He said telephone calls are fine and noted that evenings also work well.

- *Members of the Public*

Chair Thiel addressed communications with members of the public and stressed that every organization has to mature and go forward to get better and he believed that MSF would get stronger if it has better communications with the public, which he views as one of this committee's responsibilities.

President Hubbard noted that he is typically the chief spokesperson for MSF due to the engagements with legislators and customers with disputes that could involve litigation and it could be a slippery slope for Board members to begin communication directly to one of those constituencies without authority to act upon the behalf of the Board through the Chair. He said Board members must be very careful that any official action on behalf of the Board or as a voice for the Board be done as a Board and through the Chair. He added that all day-to-day items that come up with customers or stakeholders should be directed to the President/CEO. He noted that MSF has a communication function designed specifically for complaint handling processes and judicial and legal processes which has worked very well in the past.

Chair Thiel asked if the committee meetings were open to all of the Board members for their input and discussion?

President Hubbard said that was accurate. He clarified that if there were an issue raised by a member of the public, that could be brought to management to help get the issue addressed in the committee or Board meeting.

Chair Thiel called for additional questions.

Mr. Marsh said he believed President Hubbard's direction on communication between Board and Committee members and staff was the proper way to achieve that. He added that the charter does say to speak with staff; however, he said he has no intention of speaking directly with a Claims Examiner or Nurse Case Manager or to one of the staff legal people. He said he did not think that was the place of the Board. He said he thought their place is to set the tone for the CEO on how the concepts are to be implemented and then work with management and staff to come up with

metrics so that we can monitor how they are doing to see if they are within or outside of the concept.

III. Committee Processes

A. *Board Members Contributions to MSF Excellence*

Chair Thiel asked Committee members to provide input on what they thought their contributions would be toward excellence both as individuals and as a Board?

Ms. VanRiper said our primary responsibility as Board members is to read everything we receive, attend Board meetings and make sure we know what is going on and participate in the decision making. In terms of excellence for the committee, she said she thought those responsibilities include items spoken about already, self-education as Board members about some of these areas and assuring knowledge of the metrics if there are some, and encouraging development if not, and then monitor that.

Mr. Marsh said he would take this to the highest level. He said his vision of this Committee would be to work with the CEO but interactively frame the conversation. He said he has a number of issues that will be discussed shortly, which are not so the Board members can get in and begin running the company, but more to find out what they really do, how they measure up and how do they change over time, and are they changing positively or negatively. Rather than just listen to staff presentations, we'll help frame those conversations.

B. *Process for hearing customer concerns*

Chair Thiel said

- Identify customers
- Determine process to educate and develop better relations
- Determine the Board's role in customer service process
- Explore MSF's treatment of and relationship to policyholders
 - Culture
 - Training

Chair Thiel said he would like to determine who exactly is the customer of MSF? He said there are employers and injured workers.

President Hubbard said that in terms of his experience and tenure as the last 18 years as CEO, he said without policyholders, there would not be an MSF business. He said the policyholders, in his view, are the prime customers. He said MSF needs to help provide the coverage that is necessary for their business operations and to help them navigate the workers' compensation system from an employer's perspective because it is mandatory for all employers. He said he sees them as MSF's primary stakeholder group and the next customer is the injured worker because they are the beneficiaries of the contract of insurance between MSF and the employers. Our long-term financial obligation is to pay each and every claim what is due in a prompt and effective manner and to improve or provide support for as optimal outcomes for injured workers as possible under the circumstance. He said he would consider the injured worker as the second most important stakeholder. He said providers, the people who are treating and caring for injured workers are also very critical to the process. He added that the vendors such as rehabilitation consultants and nurse case managers, all of the people who provide that support to help the injured worker are also our customers. He said MSF's agency partners are also customers because they are the ones who have the communications and directly support the decisions that employers are making. He added that legislators and Governors are also MSF's customers. He said that

demonstrates the depth and breadth of who MSF's customers are. He said the internal customers are also important and MSF staff support each other to success. He noted that if customer service is not working internally, it is hard to expect it to work externally.

Chair Thiel said his perspective is that his company must purchase worker's compensation insurance, yet he doesn't always feel that the provider of this insurance understands what he does. He said for an organization to go forward, it must be constantly updating and reevaluating and understanding its customers.

President Hubbard said that expectation is appropriate. He noted that MSF has used an international firm to conduct injured worker and policyholder surveys for those purposes. He said the last one conducted was prior to the great recession and indicated that it would be appropriate for MSF to budget for and conduct surveys of our stakeholders. He said MSF does this informally now, with obviously greater interest in the injured worker's experience. He said one such small-sample informal survey was just completed and the results will be available to the Committee and the Board. He added that MSF should probably plan for a more statistically valid survey.

Chair Thiel asked what the role of the agents was.

President Hubbard explained that the agencies and agents play a key role as they own the expiration of the policy and they are the ones with the close relationship with the individual customers. He said workers' compensation is MSF's world but insurance for a business involves a myriad of insurance coverages and exposures. Businesses work with their insurance producer to address their needs and assure the right coverages are in place. He said workers' compensation is just one slice of the service the agents cover for their business customers; though it is an important slice. The agents provided perspective for MSF to understand what our customer's needs are.

Chair Thiel asked if MSF has ever taken a select group of agents and formed a committee to provide feedback to MSF.

President Hubbard said MSF has an Agency Partnership Committee which meets regularly, at least twice a year, and is comprised of six to eight agents. This committee has existed since the early 2000s and staff meets with the group of representatives to discuss individual and global issues with that committee and get their advice.

Chair Thiel noted that materials are the number one cost for a construction company and then labor. After that is insurance which is almost as much as labor or materials and workers' compensation is the most variable of the insurance packages. He said in his world this is a really big deal and sometimes people in his world are not sure that people on the insurance side understand how big the impact is on his side. He said it is not just a policy, it is a major issue for them.

President Hubbard said he believed MSF acutely understands and feels the pain which is why we have worked so diligently in improving efficiencies, outcomes for injured workers and investing so much in taking care of our customers. Rates are 53 percent lower than they were in 2007 which is only because MSF has paid attention and has tried to address that issue for our policyholders. He said we understand it is a pain point for business - any kind of cost is a pain point. More importantly, we feel it is important to stabilize those costs so they are not volatile for the business, which is probably the greatest concern and has been one of MSF's primary objectives over the

last decade or two. He said MSF does need to always be out there and MSF's marketing specialist's sole job it to be out there in Montana finding out the pain points and how MSF can do better.

Ms. VanRiper said she believes we only have one customer and that is the employer. She said as a result of providing their worker's compensation insurance, we have a fiduciary relationship and duty towards their injured workers; however, we also do workplace safety education which is not for an injured worker, but for our customers, the employers. She said she does not believe injured workers are customers.

Mr. Marsh said, based on his more than 40 years of experience in this business, he has a little bit more of a different take on it than Ms. VanRiper. He noted he spent 15 years in California and the rest in Montana involved in workers' compensation for many years. He said in order for the system to work appropriately and efficiently, he views them not as customers but as stakeholders. He said workers, employers and producers are the three legs on which the table stands because without any one of those three, we cannot be successful. He said he understands medical providers, the legislature, the attorney community and internal staff as all being customers in a way but the three legs of the stool are the ones who control the business. He added that he would hope that we could focus somewhat toward each of those three legs not to the exclusion of medical providers or vendors or the legislature, but with an eye towards them as a secondary concentration.

C. *Determine Committee Focus*

Chair Thiel added that what concerned him most as a business-person as introduced by President Hubbard was that he can deal with any expense as long as he knows for sure what it is. It is the variables that get the businesses. He said the thing he sees as the greatest problem with injured workers is now there is the chance to get money in the equation and not everyone is as scrupulous as they should be and he said that is the problem that we end up with. He said a lot of the process, he thinks stands to who gets to manage it. He added that where he lives, they are way out on the edge of the world and if he has a property claim, he cannot get an adjuster for four or five days. He said his organization does a lot of that kind of thing, stepping in to maintain the relationship with his customers and to keep the costs under control. His organization does a lot of their own insurance management simply because of where they are located and that is what they have to do. He said one of the upsetting things is that when you observe, for instance in the medical field, there are some people who just milk the blazes out of these claims which is a really unfortunate situation. He said there are some workers that want to milk the situation all they can and then there are a lot of people, most of the people who are pretty honest and upright and just want to get taken care of so they can go back to work. He added that is what most of his experience is. He said he is always concerned about how well we are managing that in Montana which is a huge state and has travel limitations. He mentioned a recent MSF case in the roofing business where MSF detected the fraud and got that taken care of and he offered MSF a pat on the back for that.

President Hubbard said what the company really needs to appreciate is what can be controlled and what cannot. He said a number of the things Mr. Dexter touched upon cover the benefit system as it's been written into the statutes in the State of Montana, which define what is available for workers when they are hurt on the job or experience an occupational disease caused by the employment. He said MSF's responsibility as a carrier, per regulation, is to ensure that the benefits the workers are entitled to are delivered. He noted that the benefit levels are not established by MSF, unlike a private health co-op where it is negotiated between the employer and the carrier. He said all workers' compensation carriers must provide the same benefits and that is a large portion of the litigation factors for MSF. He added that there are best practices that

can be utilized to address a case that could become severe or complex and the examiners experience and systems support can help identify and perhaps mitigate those claims. He noted that actual fraud in the system is very small and MSF has a dedicated unit within the company that is charged with investigating, detecting and referring to the Department of Justice anything that is suspected fraud. He said he agreed with Mr. Thiel, that most injuries are legitimate and it is MSF's job to get people moved through the system as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Chair Thiel asked if the legal components of MSF, such as procurement, would be part of the Operational Excellence Committee's charge to oversee?

President Hubbard said the Committee could certainly be educated on how MSF complies with procurement statutes. He said MSF is a public entity and is subject to the rules and regulations of state entities and sometimes, those can be impediments to our rapid response to what we believe our customer wants and sometimes, they are appropriate. He noted that legal matters are a bit different as there are attorney/client communications to consider and lawyer work product that is privileged and should not be shared in a public meeting like this. His recommendation for questions about legal or litigation situations, would be to close the meeting of the committee if there are any issues dealing with specific cases or general legal practices.

Ms. VanRiper noted that when her tenure began the reports the Board received did not cover the claims numbers, number of cases that go to court and how many end up in mediation. She said staff now prepares this report twice a year for the Board and it could perhaps be helpful to offer non-statistical feedback from a claimant's attorney to come speak to the Board or just to the Committee. She said there is some handle on that information; however, she believes it could be improved upon.

Mr. Marsh asked if this was the correct time to provide his list of items to address MSF's treatment of and relationship to policyholders?

Chair Thiel said that when Mr. Marsh's list was presented, the Committee would go into closed session. He said the question of the culture inside MSF and its reactions to its customers as well as the culture of the customers as they react the other way is important and should be discussed in the closed session. He asked what MSF does to educate our customers so they understand better what is needed. He said he has been an MSF customer for a long time and does not recall getting any education from MSF.

President Hubbard said MSF provides a tremendous amount of education to policyholders in terms of publications, documents and brochures, advertising for workplace safety, and there is a Bill of Rights that is given to injured workers when they are injured. He said MSF does a lot to provide information for customers to navigate this very complex system though most of MSF's customers only deal with us to pay the bill once a year as small businesses do not typically have claims and when they do, they need additional guidance which is then provided by the customer service specialist, claims examiners and auditors.

Chair Thiel noted that his business is very insurance expensive and his company deals with all aspects of insurance regularly. He said no one cares about insurance until they need it and then it is too late. He asked if MSF reaches out to associations to provide education to their members. President Hubbard offered to have staff prepare a summary of the MSF touchpoints for the Committee, if they so wished.

Chair Thiel asked if the MSF Marketer reached out to associations that are in the construction industry or high-risk groups.

President Hubbard noted that MSF has a number of group association safety programs and members of those programs tend to have a direct relationship to their association executive and the safety professionals within the association and they receive a first-class touch. He said it is more difficult with the small employer – they don't need us until they have an accident.

IV. PBRI Update

A. *Introduction – Notice of Closure of Meeting – Richard Miltenberger, Committee Chair*
Chair Thiel closed the meeting for this update.

B. *Reopen Meeting*
Chair Thiel reopened the meeting at 5:05 pm.

V. Old Business/New Business

Chair Thiel called for old or new business. There was none.

Chair Thiel asked the Committee members if there were items they wished to add to the agenda for the next meeting? He said they could be sent to him later if they wished but he welcomed input now as well.

Ms. VanRiper said she would like to chat about small employers and her sense that they are getting hit from every direction. She said it may not be in the Committee's ballpark, it may be in Finance and Audit but she would like an opportunity to chat about it.

President Hubbard asked for more specifics.

Ms. VanRiper said she was talking about the dividends and rates and all of that. She said it seems like they get hit from so many directions. She said she has raised this before and has had various answers but she would like to look at it a little more rather than at a big Board meeting.

President Hubbard asked if staff could have an opportunity to refine that so some specific data and topics could be gathered before the Committee meeting.

Chair Thiel said he agreed, small companies really take a beating these days and said that will be put on the next agenda.

Mr. Marsh said he had items that he will email to Chair Thiel.

VI. Public Comment

Chair Thiel called for public comment. He said that anyone who has a public comment can do so; staff confirmed there were none submitted.

The meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m. The next scheduled Board meeting will be held on Friday, March 12, 2021 at Montana State Fund, 855 Front Street, Helena, Montana in the first floor Board Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Verna Boucher
Special Assistant to the President/CEO