VIRGINIA
IT AGENCY

Information Technology Advisory

Annual Report

2023

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-2699.6(C), the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) respectfully submits this report, which provides an update "regarding the work of the Information Technology Advisory Council (ITAC) and any advisory subcommittee." This report covers ITAC's first year, from December 2022 through September 2023.

The Council met three times and has reviewed and discussed multiple presentations, which are summarized below. Copies of meeting presentations and other materials are available on VITA's website (under About => Councils & Committees, at https://www.vita.virginia.gov/about/organization/councils-committees/itac/).

ITAC'S PURPOSE

ITAC is responsible for advising and making recommendations to the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the Commonwealth and the Secretary of Administration regarding information technology in the Commonwealth.

Specifically, pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-2699.6, ITAC advises regarding:

1. Cybersecurity policies, standards, and guidelines, for

    a. assessing security risks,

    b. determining appropriate security measures,

    c. performing security audits of government electronic information,

    d. strengthening the Commonwealth's cybersecurity, and

    e. protecting against and responding to breaches of information technology security;

2. Strategies and priorities for information technology for executive branch agencies.

3. Information technology planning and projects;

4. Policies, standards, and guidelines for the Commonwealth's information technology and data; and

5. Information technology budgeting, investments, and expenditures.

ITAC MEMBERS

ITAC consists of up to 20 members, including:

- The CIO of the Commonwealth,

- The Secretary of Administration,

- The Secretary of Labor

- Four members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House,

- Three members of the Senate, appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, and

- An even number of non-legislative citizens appointed by the Governor.

The current ITAC members are as follows:

- Robert Osmond, CIO of the Commonwealth

- Lyn McDermid, Secretary of Administration

- Bryan Slater, Secretary of Labor

The following members were appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. Appointment coincident with Senate term:

- Senator Bill DeSteph of Virginia Beach
- Senator Jennifer B. Boysko of Northwestern Fairfax
- Senator John J. Bell of Loudoun County & Prince William County

Governor Youngkin appointed the following citizen members in July 2022:

- John A. Craft

- Goutam Gandhi

- Anthony T. Gitalado

- Cherif Kane

- James S. Kraemer

- Constantina "Dena" Kozanas

- Adam S. Lee

- Phea Ram

- Dr. Timothy M. Tillman

- Robert I. Turner

Initial appointments of ITAC terms were staggered, so that all appointments do not expire at once. Mr. Ram and Mr. Kane were reappointed to ITAC after expiration of their initial term.

House of Delegates appointments are pending.

FIRST MEETING December 8, 2022

During the first ITAC meeting several administrative items were covered by VITA staff. Joshua Heslinga provided an overview of the ITAC legislation, highlighting new legislation, member composition and its role as an advisory body. Mylam Ly discussed Robert's rules of order and the electronic participation policy, which were both unanimously adopted. Following this policy adoption, ITAC welcomed virtual members.

The meeting also included discussions on the Charter and Bylaws with Mr. Heslinga providing an overview. Both documents were unanimously adopted. Nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair positions took place. Mr. Craft and Ms. Kozanas were elected Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.

Presentations then covered the following topics: Cybersecurity in the Commonwealth and Information Technology modernization with ITAC members providing comments and observations.

SECOND MEETING – May 23, 2023

In the second ITAC meeting, which took place on May 23, 2023, the Council learned about the Commonwealth Strategic Plan, VITA's Zero Trust Strategy and Roadmap, and Website Modernization program.

The Commonwealth of Virginia Technology Strategy Presentation emphasized the importance of collaboration, cybersecurity and standardization among state agencies and stakeholders. They highlighted strategies such as zero-trust and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) cyber grant program to enhance cybersecurity. Data governance and analytics were also presented as crucial goals for improving decision making processes, while fostering statewide IT talent capability. The balance between various workforce elements and the importance of strategic planning were addressed along with topics including blockchain technology, generative AI, data privacy and measuring industry success and performance. ITAC members recommended the strengthening of privacy and emerging technology in the strategy.

In addition, ITAC reviewed VITA's Trust Strategy and Roadmap which is intended to establish a governing structure and promote collaboration among agencies. To ensure adherence to the Zero Trust Strategy and Roadmap, the committee advised that a third party be engaged to ensure the proper execution of the monitoring and alignment of the plan, and they suggested the conduction of audits and reviews of the implementation.

Lastly, the presentation on Web Modernization highlighted the need to improve digital real estate's structure and trustworthiness. The project seeks to foster a collaboration between VITA and state agencies in modernization efforts, thereby enhancing user experience and instilling more trust in the process. The Council advised that the private partners in the Web Modernization project be involved in the reviewing of the implementation of the plan.

THIRD MEETING – September 5, 2023

The Council convened, hearing presentations about and discussing artificial intelligence (AI) and government procurement transformation, addressing vital strategies and priorities for both domains.

One of the key areas of focus is the implementation of AI across both government and the private sector. The council learned about two main types of AI use: internal systems that enhance agency efficiency, and external systems that interact directly with citizens. There were four primary questions regarding AI implementation covering IT policy and standards, education considerations and legal requirements. Additionally, the council addressed various concerns related to AI such as job automation, privacy issues and ethical dilemmas. There was discussion of the current state of AI in schools.

Another presentation focused on effective government procurement. They aim to create a transparent, efficient, and accountable procurement process that serves the Commonwealth's interests.

CONCLUSION

With a deep well of collective knowledge and experience, ITAC members offer counsel to the Commonwealth CIO and Secretary of Administration regarding strategies and priorities that drive the effective use of technology. This year, ITAC's advisory role extended to critical areas such as AI governance, ethical considerations, and the safeguarding of data privacy and security, all of which are instrumental in guiding the Commonwealth toward a future marked by technological innovation and responsible governance. VITA thanks the Governor and the General Assembly for the opportunity to report on ITAC and looks forward to its future endeavors.