Cloud Transition Task Force

Meeting Minutes
July 27, 2021, 2:00 – 4:00 PM

1. **Welcome and introductory comments** – Mark Quimby

   Attendees:

Mark Quimby	Cindy Guertin-Anderson
Vinod Brahmapuram	Rose Feliciano
Michael Mattmiller	Sandra Toussaint
Camille Kruger	*Staff:*
Debbie LaCroix	*Sue Langen*
Omid Ghaffari-Tabrizi	*Derek Puckett*
Grant Rodeheaver	*Sheri Sawyer*
Franklin Plaistowe	*Jill Satran*

2. **Task Force Member Self-Introductions**

   The seven Task Force members, and four adjunct members introduced themselves. Staff providing support to the Task Force work were introduced.

3. **Task Force Charter**

   Staff reviewed the contents of the draft Task Force Charter. The scope of the work is described in the purpose and outcome statements. Roles and Responsibilities and decision-making sections were described. No issues or concerns were identified by the members. The charter will be finalized and distributed for final approval.

4. **Assumptions / Expectations**

   Task Force members discussed assumptions and expectations that they bring to this work effort.

   - Washington state government has and will continue to adopt cloud technology, and staff needs will continue to grow and evolve along with that transition. Our work should focus on how to best meet staff needs in this effort. There is not an expectation that fewer technology staff will be needed in the future, but rather that the shift in the types of skills that will be needed so we need to provide training to support current staff in making that transition.

   - We can draw a line to our target of what services we are transitioning. When we have a detailed understanding of that we can best plan for the future.

- The expectation is this work is collaborative, but the main focus is how to provide continued protection of the state's workforce.

- The shift of services to the cloud is a given. It is not "if" but "when" and "how." We have to navigate meeting customer expectations as we prepare. Technology is moving further to being an "evergreen" field, and change is constant, always evolving.

- There is an assumption that people are excited about migrating to cloud services. In-house knowledge will be critical to the success of the on-going migration.

- There will need to be an increased focus on service delivery. It will be important to understand how service contracts are changing and how best to vet the services being provided.

- The migration to the cloud will not happen all at once. Instead, it will be a steady migration.

5. How the Task Force will Operate

Staff provided a brief overview of the cadence of Task Force meetings, and how the work is expected to progress. The need for active member participation was stressed.

6. Background

WaTech's Deputy for Strategy and Management and the agency's Legislative Director provided a brief history of the legislation and work that led to the creation of the Task Force.

In 2019, a bill was introduced in the Senate that, if passed, would have required state agencies to migrate existing applications to the cloud and all new systems would be required to be cloud-based. While the bill did not pass it did prompt discussions that led to a legislative requirement for WaTech to complete a state Readiness Assessment. WaTech hired Unisys to complete that work and the report, released in January 2021, recommends a central organization to accelerate migrations and other preparatory projects.

In 2021, Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1274 was passed that articulates the legislature's intent that state information technology be moved to the cloud. Agencies are provided the option of moving state technology assets either into the state data center or into the cloud. The bill also created the Cloud Transition Task Force to review and provide recommendations on the impacts to labor of moving to third-party cloud services, retraining needs and optimal methods for providing that retraining.

Presenters reviewed some of the key highlights of the Readiness Assessment and the data presented in the report, including the need for workforce development and training.

Using the results of the Readiness Assessment as a foundation, WaTech has developed a five-year plan for moving state assets into third-party cloud services, equating to roughly 20% of the assets per year. It was noted that the plan assumes some savings associated with the reduced need for hardware.

There was discussion around the results of the CIO surveys presented in the Readiness Assessment. While 87% of CIOs reported their agencies plan to upgrade IT skills, 40% reported they have not evaluated the impact of cloud migration on their culture and resources. Also, 70% of agencies reported they have no staff with cloud certifications.

It was noted that 85% of CIOs have no plans to reorganize staff loads around emerging technologies, and they expect staffing levels to remain the same. Staff are already working at capacity. Without either reducing staff load or adding staff, staff will not have time to fit in the training they need to make this shift.

WaTech is establishing an Enterprise Cloud Computing team and have hired a manager to run it. The agency is finalizing an RFP for contracted services to support agencies in doing detailed assessments of their migration strategies. This team will be staffed initially with contractors but will be shifting to state staff in the future.

The chair noted that the timing of training is critical. It needs to be provided "just in time" to ensure the training does not get stale before the employee can apply what they've learned.

Concern was noted that it is hard for staff to make time for this type of training. Task Force members talked about methods, such as providing "Snackable" training (training that can be provided in small, i.e., one-hour, bites) and micro-credentialing that may make it easier to avoid business disruption.

It was noted that there is an opportunity to raise awareness of the large volume of training opportunities already available. These opportunities need to be communicated to supervisors and line staff.

The IT classification structure has nuances built into it that might be useful in this discussion. OFM's Human Resources group is talking with technology leaders about this. It was pointed out there are lessons to be learned in cultural and change management that may be applicable. While the best ideas are being identified and pursued, staff can be affected and significant change can prompt apprehension and fear.

7. Next Meeting and Wrap Up

Staff reviewed the plan for the next meeting, which will be held on August 17. The chair made final comments. There were no public comments and the Task Force meeting was concluded.