

normally considered first, was more or less a miscellaneous one. It included proposals for bond sales, public school construction projects, sanitary facilities sewerage loans, Mass Transit Administration real estate purchases and leases, wetlands licenses, and commitments to subdivisions under the Open Space Program. The General Services agenda consisted of construction and capital equipment contract awards and change orders, contracts for professional services, property acquisitions and leases, and a miscellany of other construction, contract, or property-related items. The Budget and Fiscal Planning agenda dealt primarily with items affecting the state's operating budget—requests for allocations from the board's general emergency fund, personnel matters, contracts funded through the operating budget (usually for services or supplies), disposition of state personal property, and all contracts for goods and services, except those pertaining to roads, bridges, and highways, for the Department of Transportation.

This last item—transportation contracts—was often the largest part of the Budget and Fiscal Planning agenda, at least in dollar volume. Inclusion of those items on the Budget and Fiscal Planning agenda came about because of a 1971 executive order,⁶⁷ and as DOT moved into the massive subway project it desired to have more direct access to the board. In 1980, at the behest of Governor Hughes, the format of the board agendas was restructured so that DOT now has its own agenda for board action and there is no longer a separate Budget and Fiscal Planning agenda. The nontransportation items formerly included on that agenda now appear on a special supplement to the board secretary's agenda.

These agendas are lengthy. The major items often contain hundreds of pages of support material—appraisals, reports, synopses of procedures used—and not infrequently they are supplemented by letters and statements from interested persons not associated with an agency. Several people work full time in the three agenda-producing agencies just preparing their bimonthly submissions.

To deal with this mass of material, the board has resorted to the practice of holding "preboard meetings," usually a day or two before the public meeting. Normally the governor does not attend the preboard meeting but may send a representative. The comptroller and the treasurer (at least the current ones) attend in person, along with one or more staff persons. The purpose of the preboard meeting is not to make final decisions but rather to familiarize the members with what is on the three agendas. It gives them an opportunity to review the items, ask questions, and seek additional information.

These preboard meetings usually last several hours. In addition, prior to the actual commencement of the scheduled board meeting the members normally confer for a few minutes in the governor's office, again to take a quick run-through of the major items. The public meetings are where the decisions are actually made. They are normally held in the governor's reception room in the State House and often last most of the day. The three members of the board sit at the head of a long table, accompanied by the board secretary and his or her assistant, and the secretaries of general services, budget and fiscal planning, and state planning and/or their assistants. At the foot of the table is a lectern for anyone wishing to address the board, and seated around the room are representatives of the news media and other interested persons.

In order to carry out the recommendations of all of the various study groups since the Sobeloff-Stockbridge Commission, as well as the apparent intention of the legislature, the task force appointed to develop regulations under the new procurement law recommended that the Board of Public Works restructure the content of its various agendas, develop some general procurement guidelines, and delegate to the four procurement agencies more or less final procurement authority over most small or non-

67. Executive Order 01.01.1971.14, 15 June 1971.