

## FEDERAL PREVAILING RATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

592nd FPRAC

**SHELDON FRIEDMAN**, Chairperson, Presiding

Thursday, March 20, 2014

Room 5526  
Office of Personnel Management  
Washington, D.C. 20415**ATTENDANCE:****Members/Alternates:**Management Members:Mark Allen, OPM  
Seth Shulman, DoD  
Pamela Sokol, Army  
Carmen Montgomery, VA (via phone)Labor Members:Bill Fenaughty, MTD (via phone)  
Jacque Simon, AFGE  
Adair Gregory, NAGE  
Steven Landis, ACT**Staff Specialists and Visitors:**Brenda Roberts, Designated Federal Officer, OPM  
Madeline Gonzalez, OPM  
Gary Buck, Army  
Luis Lynch, AF  
Jim Brady, DoD  
Karl Fendt, DoD  
Becky Chaves, DoD  
Stephanie Boyd, VA (via phone)**Recording Secretaries:**Mike Eicher, OPM  
Terri Wallace, OPM

[Transcript prepared from digital audio produced by FPRAC.]

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## P R O C E E D I N G

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the 592nd meeting of the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee. My name is Sheldon Friedman, Chair of the Committee, and as we usually do, let's go around and introduce ourselves.

Let's start with you today, Jacque.

MS. SIMON: Jacque Simon, American Federation of Government Employees.

MR. GREGORY: Adair Gregory, National Association of Government Employees.

MR. LANDIS: Steve Landis, Association of Civilian Technicians.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Bill, are you on the phone?

MR. FENAUGHTY: Yes. Bill Fenaughty, Metal Trades Department, with NFFE.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: And do we have anyone else on the phone?

MS. BOYD: Yes. Stephanie Boyd from Veterans Affairs.

MS. MONTGOMERY: Carmen Montgomery from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Thank you.

Mark?

MR. ALLEN: Mark Allen with OPM.

MR. SHULMAN: Seth Shulman, Department of  
Defense.

MS. SOKOL: Pamela Sokol, Department of Army.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Thank you, and good morning  
again. If everyone else in the room could also introduce  
themselves.

MS. GONZALEZ: Madeline Gonzalez with OPM.

MS. LYNCH: Luis Lynch, Air Force.

MS. ROBERTS: Brenda Roberts, OPM, Designated  
Federal Officer.

MR. BUCK: Gary Buck, Department of Army.

MR. BRADY: Jim Brady, DoD.

MR. FENDT: Karl Fendt, DoD.

MS. CHAVES: Becky Chaves, DoD.

MR. EICHER: Mike Eicher, OPM.

MS. WALLACE: Terri Wallace, OPM.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay, thank you.

I'll start off with a couple of announcements.  
You have in your packets a copy of the charter for the

Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee. The charter has to be renewed every 2 years. The only changes made to this new charter from 2 years ago is an update to item 7, which has a dollar figure for FPRAC's budget, and a couple of sentences were rearranged from paragraph 11 to paragraph 12, so there were no substantial changes. Charter renewal is something the General Services Administration requires of all statutory committees.

The other item in your packet by way of announcement is the final version of what we approved at last month's meeting, which is our Annual Summary of Recommendations and Discussions for Calendar Year 2013, with a nice cover and everything. It's very pretty.

That brings up the transcript of our last meeting. Are there any edits beyond those we have already heard about from you?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: In that event, if there is no objection, we will adopt the transcript. Any objection?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Hearing no objection, the transcript of our last meeting is adopted.

That brings up Old Business. There were two items we talked about last month that we hoped we could move on with this month, the first of those being item (b) under Old Business, the special wage schedule pay practice for ACE lock and dam FWS employees.

We have a report back from the Work Group on that item. We wrestled with it for quite a while. We recognized that the pay system isn't perfect, but the Work Group members could not find a way to improve upon it that wouldn't cost money that we suspect won't be forthcoming. So, therefore, the recommendation from the management side is simply to reaffirm the current pay practice for the lock and dam employees. Is there any discussion?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Is there consensus to do that?

MS. SIMON: I think I need to have my memory refreshed about the options that we looked at in the Work Group. There were at least three alternatives that we considered.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: One option would be to move employees to the regular wage schedule of the wage area in

which their primary assignment is located. That moves some people up and some people down in wages from where they are now.

And I'm not sure what other option wouldn't -- was there some other option that we considered in the Work Group? Anybody remember anything else we considered in the Work Group?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I mean, it would be nice, I suppose, to pay the greater of the rates to people as they move around the lock and dam system. I don't believe the Army Corps of Engineers would be interested in doing that.

MR. SHULMAN: No.

MS. SIMON: Okay.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: So we have consensus on this then to reaffirm the existing pay practice, and get that off our plate?

MS. SIMON: Yes.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay, thank you. Then we've adopted 562-MGT-1, reaffirming the special pay practice for ACE lock and dam FWS employees.

MR. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, in the Work Group, we

heard from the Army Corps of Engineers that they did not have recruitment and retention problems that could be solved by changing the pay practice, but this recommendation coming from FPRAC does not really preclude OPM from continuing to look at the pay issues of lock and dam employees. If there appear to be problems in the future, we can take another look at this item.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay. That would be, I think, useful to do, because one thing I do recall is there are, in some cases, very large disparities in pay in both directions for people in this system versus what they would be getting if they were just paid off the regular wage schedule for their wage area, based on the location of their primary duty station.

The other topic we talked about trying to accomplish today is item (f) under Old Business, which is the need to do something about the Portland, Maine, wage area, which has fallen in employment and has lost its host activity, I believe. However, after the last meeting, I was informed that OPM staff is working on an update of that analysis to reflect the latest commuting data and perhaps any changes in the definition of MSAs that might affect

Portland.

I believe that update will be ready for our next meeting?

MR. ALLEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. It should be ready for the next meeting, hopefully.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay, so unless people feel an urgent need to begin the discussion on that one, we may as well wait for this additional document that we will receive next month. Is that okay?

MR. SHULMAN: Yes. It is better to have the total package.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Yes, all right.

Any other item of Old Business that people would like to bring up this morning?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay. I don't have any New Business items today. Does anyone else?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay. We have a Work Group meeting directly after this meeting to discuss the issue of FWS folks who make less than \$10.10 per hour.

If there is no objection, we can adjourn and

reconvene in about 10 minutes for our Work Group meeting.

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Hearing no objection, we are adjourned. Thank you very much.