

FEDERAL PREVAILING RATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

607th FPRAC

SHELDON FRIEDMAN, Chairperson, Presiding

Thursday, September 17, 2015

Room 5526
Office of Personnel Management
Washington, D.C. 20415**ATTENDANCE:****Members/Alternates:**Management Members:Mark Allen, OPM
Jim Davey, DoD
Dave Curley, Air Force
David Pedersen, Navy
Arleen Romba, VALabor Members:Randy Erwin, MTD/NFFE
Jacque Simon, AFGE
Candace Archer, AFGE
Robert Shore, NAGE
Lamar Elliott, ACT**Staff Specialists and Visitors:**Jeanne Jacobson, Designated Federal Officer, OPM
Madeline Gonzalez, OPM
Jim Brady, DoD
Kathryn Deibler, DoD
Rosemary Meriwether, Navy
Thurstan Hunter, VA
Emell Monlyn, NAGE**Recording Secretaries:**Mike Eicher, OPM
Ana Paunoiu, 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 our 607th meeting of the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee. My name is Sheldon Friedman, Chair of the Committee, and as always, let's please go around the room, and introduce ourselves.

Let's start with you today. Mark.

MR. ALLEN: Mark Allen with OPM.

MR. DAVEY: Jim Davey with DoD.

MR. CURLEY: Dave Curley with the Air Force.

MR. PEDERSEN: David Pedersen with Navy

MS. ROMBA: Arleen Romba with VA.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Randy?

MR. ERWIN: Randy Erwin with Metal Trades Department and NFFE.

MS. ARCHER: Candace Archer, AFGE.

MS. SIMON: Jacque Simon, AFGE.

MR. SHORE: Robert Shore, NAGE.

MR. ELLIOTT: Lamar Elliott, ACT.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Thank you. And if everyone else in the room could also please introduce themselves for the recorder.

MR. HUNTER: Thurstan Hunter with VA.

MS. JACOBSON: Jeanne Jacobson, OPM, Designated Federal Officer.

MS. MERIWETHER: Rosemary Meriwether, Navy.

MR. BRADY: Jim Brady, DoD.

MS. DEIBLER: Katie Deibler, DoD.

MR. EICHER: Mike Eicher, OPM.

MS. GONZALEZ: Madeline Gonzalez with OPM.

MS. PAUNOIU: Ana Paunoiu, OPM.

MR. MONLYN: Emell Monlyn, NAGE, Army.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Thank you, and welcome again, everyone.

I want to start with an announcement about our friend and colleague Bill Fenaughty who we regretfully heard has retired. Well, good for him, I guess, not good for us.

And, Jim, I think you wanted to say a few words about that.

MR. BRADY: Thank you. Jim Brady, DoD.

And I just want to take a moment to say how much I enjoyed working with Bill. I don't know if all of you know, but Bill also served on the DoD Wage Committee as well as on FPRAC for years. He's a great guy. I don't want to claim to be his best friend or anything like that, but working with him as a professional colleague, I really will always remember the time that he and I have worked together. He has tremendous integrity, and I certainly enjoyed working with him.

Those of you who will miss him like I do, please, if you know him, tell him we wish him well. I had the opportunity to talk to him by phone. Unfortunately, I missed his last Wage Committee, DoD Wage Committee meeting, and we had a thing scheduled for him, but he then missed what was to be his last meeting.

So I just wanted to say good words about him, and I welcome the new member. I'm sure NFFE and Metal Trades Department will miss him, and what a great guy to work with!

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Thank you, Jim. We will have to give him a transcript of this meeting, so he will see all the nice things we are saying.

MR. ERWIN: I would just like to say Bill is a great friend and mentor. At NFFE, we're going to miss him very much, and I'll absolutely pass along your kind words to Bill.

Thank you.

MR. BRADY: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I also want to welcome Ana to her first FPRAC meeting. I guess it would be correct to say she is Terri's replacement, Terri Wallace. Right, Madeline?

MS. GONZALEZ: Yes, correct.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: All right.

MS. SIMON: What happened to Terri? Did she move on to another job, or what?

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Tell us what happened to Terri, Madeline or Mark.

MR. ALLEN: Terri had her second child and elected to leave federal service, at least for the time being, and moved with her husband down to Charleston, South Carolina.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: She had been here for quite a while? Roughly how long?

MR. ALLEN: Five years?

MS. GONZALEZ: At least five, yes.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: A couple of quick announcements. Folks might be interested to see the one public comment that was received in response to the regulation on the four lakes in Mississippi, a proposal FPRAC dealt with, so you have that in your packet.

I also want to thank the staff for preparing and circulating 607-OPM-1, which I had never seen before, and found quite interesting. It is the breakdown by employment of the rather large number of different prevailing rate pay plans.

I suppose I should ask if there are any questions about that.

[No response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: If not, if you think of something later on, bring it up.

Why don't we move on to review the transcript from our last meeting? Are there any changes to the transcript that we haven't heard from you about already?

[No response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: If not, is there any objection to adopting the transcript of our last meeting?

[No response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Hearing no objection, the transcript is adopted.

That brings up Old Business. We heard from Steve Landis, who is unable to be here today, that he would like to have the New Jersey Joint Base issue put off in terms of discussion to the next meeting in October, at which time he wants to bring it up. It doesn't mean we can't talk about it today. I'm just passing on this message we got from him, and he will be back next month.

Is there any Old Business item, (a) through (e), including the Joint Base, that people want to bring up this morning?

[No response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: If not, we can move on to New Business. We have a couple of items.

The first item (a), Counties Redefined/Not Redefined or Split Due to Organizational Relationships, is an update of a document that was introduced a few meetings ago, 599-OPM-2. We had had a discussion about how FPRAC had dealt in the past with wage

areas that have closely related installations that straddle wage area boundaries. Documents 599-OPM-2 and 607-OPM-2 are lists that OPM staff has put together of how FPRAC has tackled those issues in the past. So that's what that is. Is there any question or discussion about that?

[No response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: If not, we can move on to (b) under New Business, Review of Greene County, Missouri, 607-OPM-3. It was prepared pursuant to a request from AFGE sometime back.

Mark, would you please summarize that one for us?

MR. ALLEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. This is 607-OPM-3. At a request from a member of the Committee, OPM has conducted a review of Greene County, Missouri, to see where it currently lies in relationship to criteria for defining Federal Wage System wage areas.

Greene County, if we look at the maps, which are in Attachment 1, the first map is for the Kansas City wage area, and the second map is for Southern Missouri. And on that second map, you will find that Greene County is currently a survey county, and it's also part of the Springfield, MO Metropolitan Statistical Area.

The host activity for the Southern Missouri wage area—and this is not all that unusual—is a military base that lies outside of the metropolitan area. It's actually Fort Leonard Wood, which is in Pulaski County. But the survey area does encompass six counties in Southern Missouri. That's why there's a separate wage area there. There are federal activities also in the Springfield, MO MSA, but the main reason for the wage area to exist separately is because of Fort Leonard Wood.

When we look at the regulatory criteria analysis for—well, let me back up a little bit. Greene County has also an Army installation there with around 115 employees. The

Department of Justice has a prison that's in Springfield, MO, an area in Greene County, and there are around 50 FWS employees there.

Now, because it is a survey county, it's kind of going to lead us through our regulatory analysis to say that Greene County, since it's part of the Springfield, MO, metropolitan area, is going to resemble the Southern Missouri survey area more than the Kansas City survey area. Kansas City is the other point of comparison we are using.

In terms of distance, the regulatory criteria would favor leaving Greene County in the Southern Missouri wage area. The commuting patterns and other criteria are indeterminate.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Any questions or discussion?

MS. SIMON: Well, I just want to thank you for preparing this. I'd like some more time to study it and discuss it with our members in the wage area.

MR. SHORE: Which county did you say Fort Leonard Wood was on?

MS. SIMON: Pulaski.

MR. ALLEN: Pulaski County.

MR. SHORE: Okay.

MR. ALLEN: So if there are 821 FWS employees in the Southern Missouri wage area and there are around 150, 160 just in Greene County, I think it's still safe to say that even without Fort Leonard Wood, there would still be a separate Southern Missouri wage area. There are enough employees even if Fort Leonard Wood would not be there.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: So it sounds like we're hearing from the Labor folks that they would like to defer this to the next meeting?

MS. SIMON: Yes, please.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay.

I actually don't see a clear statement in this one, Mark, about a Management recommendation.

MR. ALLEN: No. What we've been doing with these OPM reviews lately is providing the Committee with information that the Committee requests. We haven't presented a Management recommendation on this one.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: So what action does the Committee ultimately need to take on this one then?

MR. ALLEN: Since this is really just provided as information, the Committee doesn't need to make any recommendation on the OPM study document unless a member feels there's a need to make a motion for something.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay. Well, we can revisit this next time.

MS. SIMON: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: And that brings up item (c) under New Business, Review of Newburgh, New York, Federal Wage System Wage Area, 607-MGT-1.

Mark, please take us through this one also.

MR. ALLEN: Okay. Under 607-MGT-1, we do actually have a recommendation to present to the Committee.

We have undertaken a review of the Newburgh, New York, wage area, and identified that the two major employment counties in the Newburgh wage area are indeed now part of the New York-Newark-Jersey City metropolitan statistical area, and based on that, we don't see that there is a compelling need to continue having the New York-Newark-Jersey City metropolitan area split between Newburgh and New York Federal Wage System wage areas.

And in this kind of proposal, what we have gone through is an analysis of the regulatory criteria after we reached the decision that the Newburgh wage area can be abolished.

Based on the regulatory criteria, what we are recommending is that Orange County, NY, be redefined to the New York survey area; Dutchess County, NY, be redefined to the New York area of application; Delaware and Ulster Counties, NY, be redefined to the Albany-Schenectady-Troy area of application; and Sullivan County, NY, be defined to the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre area of application.

All of these recommended changes are primarily based on the distance criterion, except for the two counties that would be added to the New York wage area.

And when we look on page 3 of this document, you will find there are currently 2 Federal Wage System employees in Delaware County, 39 in Dutchess County, around 800 in Orange County, none in Sullivan County, which would be going to the Scranton wage area, and 12 employees in Ulster County, who would be going to the Albany wage area.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I have a couple of questions on this one, but I'll hold off for a minute and see if there are any questions or discussion from Labor's side of the table.

MS. SIMON: I think this looks like a reasonable proposal.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay. Then is there a consensus to adopt 607-MGT-1?

MR. ALLEN: If you have questions, Mr. Chairman, I'm happy to try to answer them.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Well, I think I will just hold off on them.

MR. ERWIN: Could you just repeat how many employees were in the counties that are not going into the New York wage area?

MR. ALLEN: It would be 2 in Delaware County that would go to Albany, and 12 in Ulster County that would be going to Albany as well. Those are all Department of the Army employees, but the ones in Ulster County are most likely National Guard since they're represented by ACT.

MS. SIMON: Sullivan County doesn't have any; is that correct?

MR. ALLEN: That's correct. There are no employees there.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: More questions or discussion?

[No response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: So is there consensus to adopt this?

[No response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay. If there is, we have adopted 607-MGT-1.

MR. ALLEN: The next course of action would be for OPM to issue a proposed regulation on this, and then after receiving public comments, issue a final regulation, so it is probably going to take, at a minimum, 6 months to make the change effective, as it normally would.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: All right. Is there any other New Business item that people want to bring up today?

[No response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: If not, it would be in order for us to adjourn. Is there any objection to adjourning?

[No response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Hearing none, we are adjourned.