

FEDERAL PREVAILING RATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

633rd FPRAC

DOUGLAS FEHRER, Chairman, Presiding

Thursday, July 16, 2020

Virtual Meeting by Teleconference
Office of Personnel Management
Washington, D.C. 20415**ATTENDANCE:****Members/Alternates:**Management Members:Mark Allen, OPM
Christopher Lynch, DoD
Gary Buck, Army
Kendra Atiz, Navy
Sheila Willis, VALabor Members:Dale Troll, MTD
Jacqueline Simon, AFGE
Richard Loeb, AFGE
Lee Blackmon, NAGE
Travis Kielty, ACT**Staff Specialists and Visitors:**Brenda Roberts, Designated Federal Officer, OPM
Jeanne Jacobson, OPM
Madeline Gonzalez, OPM
Rachel Tripp, OPM
Karl Fendt, DoD
Erica Abiera, DoD
Jerry Dollente, DoD
Jacqueline Ledoux, Air Force
Maureen Weber, Air Force
Mandy Laughlin, Army
Alethea Smalls, VA
Elizabeth Benjamin, VA
Matthew Beavers, AFGE
Carl Biscontini, AFGE
Anthony Ferreira, AFGE
Brenda Fiorani, AFGE

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 FEHRER: I want to do a roll call first to see who we have with us; we'll start with our members and then our visitors and then members of the public who are listening in.

Moving along, Mark Allen?

MR. ALLEN: Mark is here for OPM.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Chris Lynch with DoD?

MR. LYNCH: I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Kendra Atiz at Navy?

MS. ATIZ: Good morning. Kendra is here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Gary Buck with Army?

MR. BUCK: Good morning, sir.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Sheila Willis at VA?

MS. WILLIS: Hi. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Good morning. And then with MTD, Dale Troll?

MR. TROLL: Yes. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Jacque Simon with AFGE?

MS. SIMON: I'm here. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Good morning, Jacque

Richard Loeb with AFGE?

MR. LOEB: Present.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Lee Blackmon with NAGE?

MS. BLACKMON: Good morning.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: And then Travis Kielty with ACT?

MR. KIELTY: Good morning. Travis is here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: And then from OPM, Brenda Roberts, Designated Federal Officer?

MS. ROBERTS: Good morning. I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Jeanne Jacobson?

MS. JACOBSON: Good morning. I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Madeline?

MS. GONZALEZ: I'm here. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Ana?

MS. PAUNOIU: I'm here. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: And, Mike?

MR. EICHER: I'm here. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: And then is Mike Cogar on the line as well?

[No audible response.]

MR. ALLEN: We have a different person from our Communications Office who's going to join in.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Exactly. I have Rachel Tripp here in my office with me.

MR. ALLEN: Okay.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: And then with DoD, Karl Fendt?

MR. FENDT: Yes. Present.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Erica Abiera?

MS. ABIERA: "Abiera." Good morning.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: "Abiera."

MS. ABIERA: Yes.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Jerry Dollente?

MR. DOLLENTE: Good morning. I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: From Army, Mandy Laughlin?

MS. LAUGHLIN: Yes, I'm present.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: And from VA, Alethea Smalls?

MS. SMALLS: Good morning. I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: And then Air Force, Jacqueline Ledoux?

MS. LEDOUX: Yes, sir. "Ledoux." I'm here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: "Ledoux." Thank you.

Then in attendance, Louis LaBrecque?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Is Louis LaBrecque on the line?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: He may join us later. Maureen Weber?

MS. WEBER: I'm here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Rose Gesell?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Rose Gesell?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Okay. Brenda Fiorani?

MS. FIORANI: Yes, I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Thank you. Elizabeth Benjamin?

MS. BENJAMIN: Hi. This is Beth. I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Carl Biscontini?

MR. BISCONTINI: "Biscontini." Yes, I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Okay, Carl. Sorry about that.

MR. BISCONTINI: No problem.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Matthew Beavers?

MR. BEAVERS: Yes, I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Very good. Is there anyone else on the line, anyone that we did not call?

MR. FERREIRA: Yes. Tony Ferreira. I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: And, Tony, who are you with?

MR. FERREIRA: AFGE 1647, Tobyhanna Army Depot.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Thank you. Anyone else?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: If there's no one else on the line, I would just like to say that given we are doing this on the phone, for the sake of the transcriber who needs to get the minutes right, please identify yourself prior to speaking. We do appreciate that.

This is the 633rd meeting of the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee, and it's now 10:26 a.m. Based on a roll call, we have a quorum. We are attempting to record this meeting, and the minutes will be provided to members, as always. Again, we are requesting that members of the public and the press and anyone joining in from the public side, curtail your participation to listening only, and if you have questions, comments or issues you would like to

have addressed, please put them in writing and submit them to our offices. Press questions or inquiries will be addressed through OPM's Office of Communications, and we'll respond to all of those in writing or at our next meeting, as appropriate.

Did someone just join us on the line?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Was there someone that just joined in?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: It's possible somebody just dropped off.

On to Announcements. First, I just want to say thank you all for participating in our meeting today. These are certainly challenging and unsettling times, and on a personal note, I do hope and trust and pray that you and your families are all doing well and will continue to do well.

With that, are there any other announcements?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Hearing none, I would like to move on to item II, the approval of the minutes of the 631st meeting of the Committee, which was held on Thursday, February 20th, and the 632nd meeting held on Thursday, March 19th. OPM received no edits to the transcripts. Are there any final edits offered here today on either of those transcripts?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Hearing none, do we have a motion to accept the minutes?

MR. ALLEN: I move to accept the minutes for both meetings.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Do we have a second?

MR. BUCK: Second.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Is there any opposition to accepting the minutes?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Hearing none, we will make a note that the minutes were accepted by consensus and approved, and now we will move on to Old Business.

Under Old Business, we've carried over items (a) through (d) from our past meetings. Item (a) is the letter from AFGE requesting FPRAC to review a proposal to not allow Federal Wage System wage area boundaries to split GS locality pay areas and a proposal to redefine Monroe County, Pennsylvania, from the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre wage area, Pennsylvania, to the New York, New York, wage area. And that is item 620-AFGE-1.

Jacque, do you have anything new on this? I believe you were considering having guests make a presentation at some point.

MS. SIMON: Yeah. There are two representatives of the Local at Tobyhanna on the call, Mr. Biscontini and Mr. Ferreira. If either or both would like to speak to this proposal, now would be the right time.

MR. BISCONTINI: Okay, thanks. This is Carl Biscontini, president of AFGE Local 1647 at Tobyhanna. I also have, Jacque, Matt Beavers here with us, our chief steward, along with Tony Ferreira. So they're probably going to speak a little bit too on this subject.

But, what I'd like to say is I've been president here for a while, but prior to—you know, I came to Tobyhanna probably around 2007 as a process improvement person. The morale problems here—the first thing I heard when I came here was not "Oh, welcome to Tobyhanna." The first thing I heard when I went down on the floor to work with the WG workforce is "What about the WG pay issue? What about the WG pay issue?" I had to actually go up to the Union to

find out what's going on here with this pay issue here at Tobyhanna.

It's very divisive. I'm sure we're all aware of that. The morale, it really hurts. I can't stress that enough, but some of the issues that we have, we have our WG workforce—they want to transfer over to the GS. You know, we lose a lot of our expertise, our experience. We want to be here as one team. There's no justification for it. We lose our highly skilled workforce.

We do a lot of—our quality work here is outstanding what we do here. I looked at some of the letters from Mr. Kester, and I see some of his bullets, you know. I'm only doing this job until I get a GS job. I would never apply for a WG position here at Tobyhanna. It just—it's a delicate situation. Then we'll talk about the electronics repair work that we do here, and I'll let—you know, Matt is one of the electronics workers here. I'll let him speak a little bit and then Tony's thoughts too.

Thank you.

MR. BEAVERS: Good morning. This is Matthew Beavers. I am one of the WG employees down on the floor. I have done multiple deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. I have also—I am going to say I've been in—I want to say war zones. I have a clearance, and I'm one of the least paid people in the depot.

Another thing with my position, it has up to 25 percent or more travel, where I am not here at Tobyhanna, where I'm somewhere else either in the Continental United States or somewhere else in another country.

I'm going to say the skill set for most of the electronics that we do here at Tobyhanna are very complex, and the repairs that we do on the road, that's another complexity at Tobyhanna. It's largely the new age of the world that we're doing, the complexity in the systems that we're doing. We need higher skill sets.

Tony, do you want to fill in some more?

MR. FERREIRA: Hi. My name is Tony Ferreira. I retired from the depot after 34 years, and I've been with the Union since 1999. And this pay disparity goes back over 15 years. Like these fellows said, the morale here is very bad, and what's happening, between the people that we hire out of the military and the people we hire out of tech schools that have the skills to do this equipment, the high-skilled equipment and trades that we have here, are leaving WG and taking GS jobs. And it's not only here. It's across-the-board in DoD.

We work on border patrol surveillance, radars, fire finders, satellite communications, missiles, all high-tech equipment, and if our work isn't correct, people die. If we're working on fire finders and we're identifying where the fire is coming out of, if that fire finder is not working properly, you could end up taking out a church full of civilians versus where the fire is coming from.

When this first started, the percentage of GS employees was a lot greater than today. Today the percentage is almost 50-50 WG to GS, and the argument was that our rates were going to go up if the WGs got this raise. Well, the rates actually have gone down, so that argument is false.

There are 50 buses that leave the Mount Pocono area every day and go to New York City because people are going there to do the same work that they could be doing here, but they're getting paid more. Now, I'm not sure that the 50 buses are leaving today because of the coronavirus, but that's what usually leaves this area to go to New York.

And electricians, as an example, if they can't—when they aren't able to get the electricians to come here, they end up contracting that work out, and it costs over two times as much to bring in a contractor. And when war strikes, we take an oath and have to go. Contractors

could be on strike and not have to go. So this is a real problem across the board.

MS. SIMON: Thanks, Tony.

I think that, you know, some of the people on the Committee haven't heard from the Local before to get a sense of the kind of work that's done at the depot, what's at stake when the blue-collar workforce takes a GS job that's at a higher salary, the loss of expertise, and the difficulty the depot has in recruiting people to replace them. All that experience and expertise is lost, and the people who are doing the transfers to GS positions are only doing it to get the higher pay. It's a travesty, the inequities.

Like Tony said, it's not white-collar people who are going to New York City on those buses. It's a lot of people in the skills trades too. It is a fallacy to believe that the labor market for skilled trades is very small and, therefore, white-collar positions is very big. If anything, the opposite might just be true.

So there's just really a tremendous argument, even if you aren't compelled by concern for equity. There is a strong argument to rectify this situation because of the high stakes involved in the loss of expertise in the kind of complex electronics repair that our Tobyhanna WG workforce performs.

So I hope that the testimony of these guys helps people understand what's at stake on this issue.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: I have a quick question. We'll continue looking into this, and we appreciate your statements.

I forget who said it, but one of you said we have GS and Wage Grade employees working side by side. What are the differences in those jobs based on that statement?

MS. SIMON: Carl, do you want to answer that, or do you want me to? Go ahead.

MR. BISCONTINI: Go ahead, Matt.

MR. BEAVERS: I was going to say a lot of the times, there is no difference in jobs. Basically, it's the same job. It's just the different pay.

MS. SIMON: I mean, I think that certainly the administrative work is GS. So, you know, you've talked about the floor of the depot, and then there's some offices where administrative work is handled. I mean, I think that's—

MR. KIELTY: Jacques?

MS. SIMON: Yes.

MR. KIELTY: This is Travis Kielty with ACT.

I have a lot of people and myself included that used to work for DoD as a technician like those gentlemen, military member, Title 32, and it's true. We don't just turn wrenches all day long. You're working on paperwork, administrative stuff, and most of the GSs, the inspectors, are just running main programs out of main offices, where they are just really doing paperwork, if not a little bit hands on, but specialty trade, 90 percent of the job is maintenance. And nowadays it's probably more 50 percent with 50 percent programs and paperwork and following up in emails. It's not like it was back 20, 30 years ago where technology wasn't really around, and with this GS FWS separation, that's what it was built on was a separation of non-paperwork to actual hands-on work.

So all my people, we work for with ACT, Title 32 technicians, running the same thing from the Army to the Air to all the mixes, including the Title 5 that we now help represent too in the similar groups.

Thank you.

MS. SIMON: Yeah. I think that's a great point. Certainly, the Wage Grade jobs

involve administrative work as well. I was thinking really clerical work, HR work. I don't know what—you guys tell me what else is—I mean, supervise, some supervisory work. What else does GS do at the depot—

MR. BEAVERS: Well, I was going to say—

MS. SIMON: Acquisition? Personnel? I mean, I—you know, you tell me.

MR. BEAVERS: I was going to say a lot of the work leaders, they're WGs, and they're doing just as much paperwork as a—I'm going to say a clerical person.

MR. ALLEN: There was an in-depth analysis of the Scranton Wage Area several years ago. We also looked at the distribution of GS employees, and the last time that I looked, as Jacque had indicated, there were acquisition personnel at the depot, as well as a lot of engineers. Those people, of course, would be covered by the General Schedule because that's how the GS classification system works. The Federal Wage System operates under a different law for determining market pay levels than the General Schedule, and it covers different occupations. The Wage Grade employees would be covered by the Federal Wage System job grading standards, and the benchmark jobs used for the Federal Wage System, of course, would be different than the jobs that are found in the General Schedule.

Doug, I hope that kind of answered your question.

If there's a desire to look at the distribution of employment at the depot, I think we're happy to take a look at that again and share that at a future meeting with the Committee members.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Thank you Mark. I think that probably would be an interesting thing to look at, and I couldn't help but think from just a Federal HR standpoint, if there are folks—from what I'm hearing, it doesn't sound like the hands-on electronic work would

typically be part of a GS employee's work. I was kind of wondering if there are some GS folks doing that same work as WG employees.

And if so, is that something for management to really look at—to do a review and job audits, and potentially reclassify positions if they have morphed or changed over the years?

But again Mark, I think it would be interesting to look at those numbers.

MR. BEAVERS: This isn't about changing GS, WG. This is about change of locality because the GSs are in one locality.

MR. FERREIRA: We have husbands and wives working here that are riding on a van, and when they get home, they're buying stuff for their family—gas, milk.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: I can totally understand that, and I think—as Mark mentioned, we can pull together some additional data and see where things stand, but I do appreciate your insights. It has, once again, piqued my interest in these pay differences, and it is important too to know and understand how the whole FWS wage areas are set up and constructed versus the GS locality pay areas. For lack of a better way to say it, there are a lot of formulas involved, but it is something we will go back and look at and hopefully review them at our next meeting.

Do we have anything else at this time on this agenda item?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: If nothing else right now, again, thank you, gentlemen.

Jacque, I wanted to ask you as well about item (b), which was the request for FPRAC to recommend redefining San Joaquin County, California, from the Stockton Wage Area to the San Francisco Wage Area, and that was 627-AFGE-1 in your packet. Anything else?

MS. SIMON: Well, it's the exact same issue, only on the other side of the country.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: You had mentioned—

MS. SIMON: A virtually identical situation.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: And you had mentioned in the past that you did want to have some guests make a presentation on that. Is that still the case?

MS. SIMON: Absolutely, yes. Obviously, they had planned to come to D.C., and, you know, everybody's plans are on hold until this pandemic subsides. And nobody knows when that's going to be.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Understood.

MS. SIMON: I mean, I haven't talked to them about participating in a remote meeting like this, but I guess we'll investigate that possibility.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Yes, we may have to, just depending on how long this goes on.

That being said, thank you, and we will continue to carry this as one of our agenda items.

MR. FERREIRA: One more thing. We would like to extend an invitation to you all to come to Tobyhanna Army Depot and do a tour and actually look at this firsthand, and all these questions that you have, we could show you what the difference between some of these GS and WG jobs are and show you where the inequities are and show you how our people have to travel, deploy, go with the military. And most of us are veterans. We've been there.

Chuck Brooks has been here years ago to see what we do, and we'd really like to have you.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Thank you for that invitation, and that may be something that we could work out.

Again, this pandemic in the mix, we'll have to sort all that out.

I do want to say too that I salute you guys for your work and for your past service as well.

MR. BEAVERS: Thank you.

MR. FERREIRA: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Moving on to item (c), which was the letter from NAGE requesting FPRAC reexamine the placement of Wage Grade employees working in the Salinas-Monterey, California, Wage Area, and that was 628-NAGE-1 in your packet. And then tied to that was our Management review. That was item 629-MGT-2 in your packet.

Does NAGE have anything new on this? If I recall, you guys indicated you would like to have a presentation made.

Lee, anything new on that?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Lee, I don't know if you heard me or if it's coming through to you, if you're still with us.

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: I guess we will just move on.

MR. ALLEN: I understand that we were waiting on some kind of testimony or Local presentation in person or on the phone for the Salinas-Monterey Wage Area. That's the last I recall on that one.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: If Lee has dropped off, we'll carry this over as well.

And then our final item under Old Business is ACT's request for FPRAC to consider moving the Puerto Rico Wage Area into the Special Appropriated Fund Schedule for

U.S. Insular Areas, and that's item 629-ACT-1 in your packet.

We did have a presentation at our February meeting. That seems like a long time ago. I thought it was a very good presentation. How would you like to move forward on this one?

MR. KIELTY: I need to talk with the National and that Local again, but I do understand Management wants to keep it the way it is, even though they are both—I mean, Puerto Rico and its surrounding territories are in different pay scales, being so close together, but I just need to figure out how the Local feels, if they want to just go ahead and just put it to bed—or the National—or consolidate a few more information pieces. So if we can hold on to this, I'd appreciate it.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: In that conversation, perhaps confirm that they are using all the existing pay flexibilities and special rates and schedules, but yes, please let us know and—

MR. KIELTY: Yes. I'll bring it to their attention, the option of submitting paperwork for special pay rates, depending on the positions and stuff and all that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Thank you.

MR. ALLEN: I'd like to second that idea that it's really important for local activities to think about using recruitment and retention incentives or considering requesting special rates from headquarters for situations where an agency is having difficulty filling positions. I think that is especially true in Puerto Rico. We last heard on that in the technology field, and there did seem to be some problems with keeping some jobs filled in Puerto Rico because of the decline in the economic environment.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Yes. Thank you for that too, Mark.

Let's move on to new business. Item (a) is the letter from Steven Kester regarding the pay disparities at Tobyhanna, and that is item 633-OC-1.

Does anyone have anything to say about this letter? It obviously ties back to item (a) under Old Business, and we'll certainly be keeping it as part of that file. But anything else to say on that?

MS. SIMON: I just think the notable thing about the letter is that it provides an example of the financial loss this inequity has exacted over a decade. It's substantial. It's not minor, as you can see, which is why people take drastic steps to change their jobs, because it is such an enormous pay differential for work that's not substantially different work, and I think that that's why this is such a difficult issue for anybody to swallow because it's such a clear violation of the principle of equal pay for substantially equal work.

And, you know, two jobs that paid roughly the same 10 years ago and now have a \$10,000-a-year difference, so I think that was a very good illustration of this inequity.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Thank you for that, Jacque, and we will keep that letter as part of the record here.

Also under New Business, we have the abolishment of the Special Wage Schedules for Ship Surveyors in Puerto Rico, and that's item 633-MGT-1.

Mark, do you want to give us your report on this one?

MR. ALLEN: This one is fairly simple. The special wage schedule for ship surveyors was established around the beginning of the Federal Wage System. I believe these are probably employees who would have otherwise been under a WD or WN pay plan code. They're planning and laying out work for making ship repairs at naval facilities. So there's a special schedule established in Section 532.275 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, and there's been nobody paid from that schedule since way back in 2001. DoD would like to discontinue having to maintain that special schedule. They see no possibility in the future of having positions paid

from that schedule. From the Management perspective, it just makes sense to go ahead and delete this one from the regulations, so DoD no longer has to issue this special wage schedule.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Is there any opposition to the abolishment of this schedule?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Hearing none, can we agree to consensus?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Okay. That seems the right way to go.

On to item (c), which are the amendments to 5 CFR, as listed, and this is item 633-MGT-2. Again, Mark, would you like to give us an overview of this?

MR. ALLEN: Sure.

Since the very start of the Federal Wage System, the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee has made recommendations on how local wage surveys should be conducted. The law requires that all participation in the wage surveys and contacts with private-sector companies be done by Labor and Management teams in partnership, and the regulations that OPM established for conducting local wage surveys have always required in-person visits for full-scale wage surveys.

The way that works is that a local wage survey committee would establish who would contact private-sector companies. A Management data collector and Labor data collector would team up, get in a car and drive to the private sector, usually the compensation manager position, and then they would request that the compensation manager provide information on benchmark jobs that were agreed to and established in OPM's regulations for conducting local wage surveys.

That's always been the policy. For full-scale wage surveys, the data collection teams would have to go in-person to collect the information that would be sent back to the local wage survey committee, and from there, it would be sent back to the Department of Defense for analysis. And wage schedules would be established from that.

Over the years, the Management members have, off and on, thought about better ways of using technology to sort of streamline the processes of getting information for full-scale wage surveys. It's always been the preferred method to do job matching, to sit down face-to-face with a compensation manager at a private-sector establishment and get information that way.

It's different for wage change surveys, which take place every other year in between full-scale wage surveys. Those have most often been done over the phone. On occasion, a Labor and Management member may want to go out and talk to somebody face-to-face, but usually, it's information collected over the phone or by email or by fax machine.

The main thing that brings this to the Committee at this time is, of course, the pandemic, and it makes absolutely no sense for people to put themselves at risk by getting together and driving in a car to a private-sector company and trying to get the compensation manager to agree to provide information on a face-to-face basis.

What the Management members here are recommending—and this would be a time-sensitive proposal, given that the local wage surveys are still an ongoing requirement—that the regulations for conducting local wage surveys be amended. And if you all have the attachment to 533-MGT-2, what we are recommending, starting in section 532.201, is that as well as contacting establishments and getting information by a personal visit of data collectors, we are also recommending that the regulations allow for getting information on a full-scale wage survey by telephone, mail, or electronic means. And there are other edits to the other sections of

regulation in that attachment that indicate where it would be necessary to add those words, "telephone, mail, or electronic means," Section 532.207, 532.235, 532.247, and those would be the changes that the Management members recommend to, in a way, modernize how the data collection process works.

I do want to reiterate that all of these contacts would continue to be done jointly by Labor and Management teams and would be reviewed by a local wage survey committee.

As such, the only thing we're recommending here is to make some commonsense changes in the regulations to accommodate something that's really necessary to keep the wage surveys on track, at least for the full-scale wage surveys.

Does anybody have any questions about the proposal?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: If there's no discussion—

MS. SIMON: Excuse me. I didn't have any questions, but I think there is a need for some discussion. I know for AFGE, I'd want to check in with several of our Locals that are up for wage surveys and make sure that we have their buy-in for this before we pass it.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Mark, maybe I'll put this back to you as a question because your comment on commonsense changes, it does seem like this would be a good way to move forward and to keep these wage surveys going.

But you did say, Mark, that the data that's collected would still be reviewed by the local committee, correct?

MR. ALLEN: Yeah, that's correct. That's a matter of the law underpinning the Federal Wage System that Labor and Management need to work together in collaboration on the wage surveys when they're collecting information, planning for the surveys, and then reviewing

it afterwards.

MS. SIMON: I don't have any objections on the face of it. I'm not sure, but I really—before we enact something like this, I really want a chance to talk to several Locals.

MR. ALLEN: I'm fine with that. Are the other Management members okay with deferring until the next meeting?

MR. LYNCH: I'm okay with that, but I do have a question, Mark. How are the pay increases being determined now for the current FWS schedules?

MR. ALLEN: Yep, that's a good question. The wage change surveys, from what I understand, those are operating as normal, and as I mentioned a couple of months ago, I think under an announcement, we had said that what we thought was going to have to happen when DoD collected wage data or attempted to collect wage data would be that they would do the best that they could, given that their data collectors are not going to be able to travel, and that private-sector companies would most likely not be accepting any kind of visitors.

So I believe what's happened is that DoD has been placed in a position currently where they are only able to issue wage schedules with the floor increase provision going into effect, which in most wage areas that would be what the increase would be, regardless of what the survey results found. But there are some instances where wage schedules are being issued with the floor increase that could potentially be below what wage survey would actually find.

Did that answer your question, Chris?

MR. LYNCH: Yeah, it does, Mark. Thanks. I appreciate it.

MR. ALLEN: You're welcome.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Jacque, are you comfortable in being able to send that out to your folks and get their input by the next meeting? It seems like that should be—

MS. SIMON: Yeah. I think that would be fine.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: I appreciate you wanting to do your check-in with them.

So we'll carry this over, but hopefully, we can move forward on it at our next meeting.

Was there anything else on this item or anything else before we move on?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Well, last but not least, future meeting dates. As always, the Committee meeting dates for the year ahead are listed on your agendas and have been published in the Federal Register, and with that, God willing, our next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 20th, at 10 a.m., hopefully here in the OPM Executive Conference Room. If not here, we'll do another call like today.

I guess that covers our agenda items for today, but before we close, I just want to say to all of you, definitely stay well and stay safe. I'd like to ask if there is a motion to adjourn.

MR. BUCK: Move to adjourn.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Do we have a second?

MS. ATIZ: Second.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: All are in favor of adjourning, so we'll just sign off at this time.

[End of recorded session.]