

FEDERAL PREVAILING RATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

599th FPRAC

SHELDON FRIEDMAN, Chairperson, Presiding

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Room 5526

Office of Personnel Management

Washington, D.C. 20415

ATTENDANCE:**Members/Alternates:**Management Members:

Mark Allen, OPM
Jim Davey, DoD
David Pedersen, Navy
Gary Buck, Army
Stephanie Boyd, VA

Labor Members:

Bill Fenaughty, MTD
Jacque Simon, AFGE
Candace Archer, AFGE
Sarah Suszczyk, NAGE
Steven Landis, ACT

Staff Specialists and Visitors:

Brenda Roberts, Designated Federal Officer, OPM
Madeline Gonzalez, OPM
Robbins Byrne, OPM
Jim Brady, DoD
Christopher Lynch, DoD
Luis Lynch, Air Force
Arleen Romba, VA (via phone)
Dennis Phelps, MTD
Johnny Kiser, Army COE (via phone)
Matt Pierce, Army COE (via phone)
Carl Upchurch, Army COE (via phone)

Recording Secretaries:

Mike Eicher, 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 599th meeting of the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee. My name is Sheldon Friedman, Chair of the Committee.

As usual, why don't we go around and introduce ourselves. Mark, can you start for us today?

MR. ALLEN: Mark Allen with OPM.

MR. DAVEY: Jim Davey with DoD.

MR. PEDERSEN: David Pedersen with Navy.

MR. BUCK: Gary Buck with Army.

MS. BOYD: Stephanie Boyd with VA.

MR. FENAUGHTY: Bill Fenaughty, MTD and NFFE.

MS. ARCHER: Candace Archer, AFGE.

MS. SIMON: Jacque Simon, AFGE.

MS. SUSZCZYK: Sarah Suszczyk, NAGE.

MR. LANDIS: Steve Landis, ACT.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: And if other folks in the room could please introduce themselves, I'd appreciate it.

MR. (Luis) LYNCH: Luis Lynch, Air Force.

MR. BRADY: Jim Brady, DoD.

MR. (Christopher) LYNCH: Christopher Lynch, DoD.

MS. GONZALEZ: Madeline Gonzalez, OPM.

MR. BYRNE: Robbins Byrne, OPM.

MR. EICHER: Mike Eicher, OPM.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Can we ask the folks on the phone to please introduce themselves?

MR. KISER: Sure. You've got Johnny Kiser, Chief of Project Resources Management Branch with the Vicksburg District.

MR. PIERCE: Matt Peirce and Carl Upchurch with the Vicksburg District, Mississippi Project Office.

MS. ROMBA: Good morning. This is Arlene Romba, the second alternate for VA.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay, thank you.

So as everybody can see, we're at the opposite end of the room today for technical reasons. I won't belabor the reasons, but hopefully, we'll be back to normal very soon. The recording equipment still is not installed in this room. Hopefully, by the next meeting, although -- do we have any update on the recording equipment?

MS. GONZALEZ: No, nothing new.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: No, all right. We've been saying for a while, we hope we'll have it for the next meeting, so I hate to say that yet again.

I would like to let people know that Terri Wallace, who is usually here at our meetings, is off on maternity leave and doing well.

Anything you'd like to add, Madeline, to that?

MS. GONZALEZ: She had a baby girl on the 13th, last Thursday, and everybody is doing very well.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay.

MS. SIMON: What's the baby's name?

MS. GONZALEZ: Caroline, I think.

[Laughter.]

MS. GONZALEZ: Last I heard, it was going to be Caroline.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I know we always finish by noon. Today, we must because the Director -- it's her room, she needs it, so I will just let people know that.

Also, the working group meeting which we normally have in the Small Pendleton Room is going to be in here because the Director needs the Pendleton Room today too.

If we need a caucus today, we have a special procedure for that as well. Why don't we see if we have one before we tell you about it?

I would like to mention one more thing. We do have Committee rules that require us to submit any New Business items a week in advance. We have been a little flexible on that lately. I would appreciate it if people could try to adhere to that going forward.

So announcements. I have circulated a copy of the FPRAC Fiscal Year 2014 report that is required under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. For your information, this is the report that goes to the GSA. There is nothing exceptional in it, just for your information. Any questions, let us know.

I thought people would be interested in a couple of the tables from the latest Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey dealing with pay satisfaction where you can compare FWS workers with other Federal employees on that dimension, and also there is a question about whether people think that pay raises are determined fairly and -yes?

MS. SIMON: Why is there a question on this as if that is a matter of opinion or engagement? Why are employees asked if pay raises depend on how well employees perform their jobs? I mean, we have a pay system, and the pay raises depend on whatever Congress does and/or the surveys recommend plus step increases based on performance. Those are facts. They aren't opinions. And it's kind of a measurement of the ignorance or

understanding of the Federal workforce, of their pay system, rather than a measure of their engagement. It's so ridiculous.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Or you could even say that explains why people answer that question the way they do.

MS. SIMON: I mean, if people think it does depend on those things, it shows a very partial understand of their pay system.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Yes. I think that's a good point. From my standpoint, the other question is more important.

MS. SIMON: It's so ridiculous to ask that question.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Well, you know what, you should send that —

MS. SIMON: They've been asking it for years.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Yes. It's the same question every year. It's one of the few that's pay-related where there's a breakout for FWS, so that's the reason I circulated it. But I agree with you.

But I should also add that it might be possible for us to request more breakouts if we want to do that. We don't know for sure. So, for example, if people are curious about FWS pay satisfaction by agency, it's possible we can request that. I'm not promising, but we might be able to. Or if, for example, the

same way that they now present pay grades for GS in high, medium, and low groups, we could get that for FWS too. Those are examples of things we could ask for and perhaps get.

Also, you have an overview of the Federal Wage System employment with breakouts by occupation and agency. Just an update. I think the last time we presented these data to the members of the Committee was 2010. If this is something that people are interested in, we might be able to extend and expand a bit, not on a quick timetable. If it's useful data, we may be able to get you some more of it.

Any questions about any of that?

Oh, we have a couple of newcomers to our meeting. I'd appreciate if they would please introduce themselves. Thank you.

MS. ROBERTS: Brenda Roberts, Designated Federal Officer.

MR. PHELPS: Dennis Phelps, the Metal Trades Department.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Thank you. Thank you to both of you as well for attending.

So next up is the review and approval of the minutes from our last month's meetings. Are there any changes that people have beyond those we've already heard about from you?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: If not, is there anyone who dissents from approval of the transcript from the last meeting?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Hearing no disagreement, the transcript is adopted. Thank you.

That brings up Old Business. So the last item (e) relates to a New Business item, which is also the one for which we have our guests on the phone from Army Corps of Engineers. Let me just quickly ask if there is anything on (a) through (d). I think if there is, I'd ask that we hold it until after the discussion of (e), so that our guests don't need to spend more time than necessary. So can we move to (e) on Old Business?

What I suggest is we group that with (a) and (b) under New Business. They are all tied together. We've got an incoming letter from AFGE regarding the lake employees of Army Corps of Engineers in these two counties in the Northern Mississippi wage area. We have an analysis of the application of the regulatory criteria to those counties done by OPM staff, and we also have a history of FPRAC recommendations regarding counties or portions of counties where our decisions were made based on the closely related or closely located nature of the Federal activities that were affected.

So let's group those together, and I will present a quick overview before I ask Mark to summarize the document that OPM staff prepared.

This has been an issue that has recurred a number of times. We heard from folks at the Northern Mississippi lakes in 2010 and from their then—Member of Congress. Now we've heard again from their Member of Congress, and basically, we've got four lakes that are in very close geographic proximity, all administered out of one office, and the workers there feel that there is an awful lot of interchange between them or assignment of workers between them — I don't know how frequently, we need to find that out — to work at a lake different from their normal duty station where they end up working alongside somebody, getting paid differently from them, even though they are doing exactly the same work, so we hear.

To address this issue, it seems to me there are three basic approaches we could take as a Committee. Maybe there are others, but the three that have occurred to me are, first of all, is this still a viable wage area? It's a rather sparsely populated one in terms of FWS employment. However, DoD assures us that the wage area is viable in terms of survey adequacy, and there is good local participation in the survey. So the survey

adequacy question from the DoD standpoint and OPM staff standpoint is that it's an adequate survey.

Application of regulatory criteria, we have a new report on that.

And then the third potential issue, in view of the activity being really very closely related and closely located, is whether there some basis for considering the four lakes as a single activity.

And I wonder if it would make sense, since we have the folks from Army Corps of Engineers on the phone, to jump directly into that. We did receive some questions ahead of time from AFGE pertaining to that. I'm happy to proceed either way. We can talk about the application of regulatory criteria first.

MR. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, I can just very briefly go over 599-MGT-1. There's not really much new information in there since we reviewed this wage area not too long ago.

Basically, what we have here is an update to a document that this Committee considered a few years ago and by consensus recommended just a couple of changes in how the wage area be defined.

The two counties that are currently under consideration for whether they should remain in the Northern Mississippi wage area are Grenada and Yalobusha Counties, and

the reason for that is because they contain two lake projects, and the employees who work at those lake projects, I believe there are 10 in total, have expressed concerns over the years. This is something that's gone back for decades about why the lakes under the lake project system in the area are divided between two separate wage areas, Memphis and -- it used to be the Columbus-Aberdeen wage area, and now it's the Northern Mississippi wage area.

About the only new information we have here is that we've updated the employment numbers, and we find that there are 5 Army Corps of Engineers' employees and 54 Army National Guard employees and 3 Department of the Interior employees in Grenada County, and there are 5 Army Corps of Engineers' employees and 2 Department of Agriculture employees in Yalobusha County.

We did not have access to updated commuting patterns information the last time we did this review, so those commuting patterns have been updated, but just by themselves they would not lead to a different conclusion than we reached when we did this review a few years ago.

So, basically, at this point, Management's recommendation is for no change under the regulatory criteria for defining wage areas for either Grenada or Yalobusha Counties.

MS. ARCHER: I'm sorry. I may have missed it. Can you clarify that issue about the commuting patterns? You have put new information in here, or this is the same information as from 2010?

MR. ALLEN: In 2010, we would not have had commuting pattern information from the 2010 Census, so we've got some new commuting pattern information in here. But it's not really surprising that we wouldn't see changes because the counties we're talking about are 80 to 100 miles away from either Memphis or Columbus, Mississippi.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Mark, can you also summarize pages 3 and 4? You have a section there on the history of the pay practice for FWS employees at Army Corps of Engineers reservoir projects. Apparently, earlier on there was an exception for a couple of the administrative areas within the lake system, but then that was abolished by FPRAC in 1976. So it appears there is some precedent for considering a group of lakes as a single installation for pay purposes. So that history is in the report.

Anything you want to add to that?

MR. ALLEN: No, that's something that was discussed many years ago. I'm not sure at this point. We'll have to hear from the Army Corps of Engineers' staff people about their

perception of how the Federal Wage System policies are working in their particular circumstance.

MS. ARCHER: I have actually one question tied to that. It seems like there has been a recent -- a construction of the headquarters facility. Was that after 1976? Do you know? I mean, it seems like the headquarters has been consolidated into a more impressive --

MR. ALLEN: I can't speak to that with authority, but it's my understanding, based on what we heard last time when we went through this review, that the headquarters for all of the lakes -- it's one lake project system -- was established at the lake that was in the county that we redefined to the Memphis wage area during the last review.

MS. ARCHER: Yeah.

MR. ALLEN: So what we don't know is whether the employees at all of the lakes actually report out of that project office or whether their official duty stations are appropriately assigned to each of the four lakes independently.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: So how would people like to proceed? My thought is since we have Mr. Kiser on the phone, we ought to have a discussion with him and at least begin to get the information that we need. Does that seem reasonable? And

then we don't have to tie him up longer than necessary at our meeting.

Mr. Kiser, are you there?

MR. KISER (via phone): Yes, sir. I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Would you be able to give us a very brief overview? I'll just suggest this might be a good starting point of the four lake discussion. The number of FWS employees, Mark had indicated there are five each at the two lakes in the Northern Mississippi wage area, and a little bit about what work they do, how much interchange there is between the lakes for those workers.

And I believe you have an actual list of more specific questions. Did you receive that list?

MR. KISER (via phone): Yes, sir, we did receive the list, and on the phone also, we have Matt Pierce, who is the operations project manager, and Carl Upchurch who is the deputy, so they can help me fill in anything we miss here.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: The floor is yours, if you care to proceed.

MR. KISER (via phone): Okay. Yes, sir.

Well, in Arkabutla and Sardis, we currently have 10 field positions. Those are in the Memphis wage area. We have 4

vacant positions that we do plan to fill down the road, so there will be 14 total on those two lakes.

Then in Enid and Grenada, which are in the Northern Mississippi wage area, we have 10 field positions, and also we have 4 vacant positions. So they're essentially equal, and under that structure, we have very similar positions. We have equipment operators, maintenance mechanics, electricians, at all of those projects. So, essentially, all of those guys are doing the same work.

All of the positions are currently WG-10 positions, with the exception of -- we have one wage leader, and we also have one WS-11 wage supervisor.

Now, we went through kind of an organizational readjustment a couple of years ago, and once those people retire, then they will all be at the WG-10 level, all of our wage grade will be.

So one thing that we've added since 2010 is about three maintenance mechanic positions at each lake. We did some reassignments and made some changes, and just from the standpoint of those positions, they're a lot more versatile, and they're able to do more than one function.

One of the questions that you guys had was where do they -- where is the work orders handed out. So if you're

familiar with that area, the Sardis project office is at Sardis, Mississippi, and essentially, what it is, the project office oversees the operation of the four North Mississippi reservoirs. So for the sake of consistency, we have that oversight before it comes into my office.

And we have a similar structure across the Vicksburg District. In Arkansas, it's very similar where a project office oversees three lakes.

As far as where the work orders are handed out, it is at the local level. It's at each lake. The wage grade personnel answer directly to the facility manager, who is their first-line supervisor, and so the work is handed out at that level. However, you do have that oversight of consistency and structure to keep in mind at the Sardis project office level.

In the past, years ago, we have had those -- you know, since this is considered a project office, we do use those employees to assist in other projects. So what you can have is cross-pollination, if you will, of people at Grenada or Enid, working at Sardis or Arkabutla or even vice versa.

In the past, that has created issues because those people work side by side doing the same job. It creates animosity, if you will, amongst the employees, and it creates morale problems. So, really, in the past 3 years, other than

having to cover for OCO deployment, we have limited that just due to that fact.

MS. ARCHER: Can you explain what you mean by limited? It doesn't exist at all now, or it's just less frequent?

MR. KISER (via phone): It's very infrequent, is what it is. So to really answer your question, from 2011 to 2014, we have only utilized two water treatment operators from Sardis, from the higher wage area, to actually cover for an OCO deployment at Enid, which is in the lower wage area. However, you know, we've had a number of projects we could have used them on, but we've just -- we've used our O&M contractor, or we've used people from the same wage area, so we wouldn't have that conflict.

MS. SIMON: Thank you, sir. You have just answered the question that has been on my mind. There have been many instances where the least costly and most efficient management decision would be to utilize workers from both of these different wage areas on the same job, but you haven't done so because the wage disparity creates such animosity that the most efficient decision becomes an inefficient decision because of conflict over the wage disparity.

MR. KISER (via phone): That's correct.

MR. ALLEN: This is Mark Allen.

Speaking from the local level, from your perspective, do you think it makes sense to have all four lake project employees -- all four lakes under the same wage schedule? Would that be more efficient for your purposes of trying to manage your workforce locally?

MR. KISER (via phone): It certainly would be more efficient. It would certainly also give us the opportunity to utilize those employees across the board, if you will, versus whereas now we have to use them in more confined areas within their wage areas, because it does create the animosity, the hard feelings.

And also we have to answer or we have to try to answer, management does, the questions of why is he getting paid \$3 more per hour versus what I'm getting paid, so --

MS. SIMON: Another question. When you use contractors, I am not asking about the wage received by the contractor, but the cost to the agency of using a contractor rather than your own Army Corps employees. Is that -- the overall cost, is that more expensive?

MR. KISER (via phone): Well, I may have to ask the other guys there, but I'll tell you -- that's on the line with me, but my thought is -- see, we have a big O&M contract that's a cost-plus-type contract --

MS. SIMON: Uh-huh.

MR. KISER (via phone): -- at all four of the four Mississippi lakes, and so I would assume that the cost is not a lot more, but I'm going to ask Matt or Carl if they'll jump in here.

MR. PIERCE (via phone): This is Matt.

I'm going to say where your cost increase is, is you're already paying these wage grade employees to work at the lake, and you're basically paying somebody else to come in and do a job where we could pull the other folks off, move them to the big project, and get it done. So, essentially, in my mind, you're almost paying double. You're paying for the contractor, and you're still paying for your wage grade employees to do other stuff.

MR. UPCHURCH (via phone): This is Carl Upchurch.

And what you get with these wage grade positions are the skill levels, and I'm not sure that an O&M contractor has that level of skills for these particular jobs.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Just for background, could you mention the geographic distance between the four lakes, proceeding north to south, how far they are apart from each other, roughly?

MR. ALLEN: I think it's about 80 miles from north to south.

MR. KISER (via phone): Okay. From Sardis -- we're going to do everything from Sardis, from the project office. Sardis north to Arkabutla is probably 40 to 50 miles. Enid is about 15 to 20 miles, and Grenada is probably 35 to 40 miles. And those are rough estimates. We can get you all exact distances, if needed.

MS. ARCHER: It sounds like from top to bottom, around 80 miles? Well, actually, I guess -- I don't know where Grenada or Enid is. It might not be laid out north to south.

MR. ALLEN: Grenada is the southernmost.

MS. ARCHER: Okay.

MR. KISER (via phone): It is. They're pretty much laid out north to south, Arkabutla being the northern one, and they're all situated either east or west of I-55. And they're just -- you know, they're real close to the Interstate. So from north to south, Arkabutla, Sardis, Enid, and Grenada is the most southern.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Do we have any other questions for Mr. Kiser or his colleagues?

MR. DAVEY: This is Jim Davey from DoD.

So far, I've heard that the reason that you don't interchange employees is a morale issue between the employees. Are there other reasons besides that?

MR. KISER (via phone): Not that I'm aware of.

Matt, do you have anything to add on that?

MR. PIERCE (via phone): No. That's the biggest issue, is the morale and conflicts that arise with folks working side by side with different wage rates.

MR. DAVEY: Do you think that that's uncommon, that people would go TDY from one city to another, and they'd have folks side by side with different wages? I would think that would be common. I could go to Mississippi, and I'd have a different wage while I was working there than the people there.

MR. KISER (via phone): Well, the only difference I would see is knowing that you are getting a different rate, you know -- it's a temporary assignment, but it does create issues. There's no doubt. I mean, we've got a proven track record that it creates issues.

MR. DAVEY: How long did the assignments last when you were doing them? Was it 2 days or a month?

MR. KISER (via phone): Some of them, we may -- in the past, prior to 2011, we may have had up to a month, you know,

especially when we've got some big dirt-moving projects going on.

MR. DAVEY: Do you happen to know -- other employees are listed as Army National Guard employees in Grenada County. Do you happen to know where their location would be in relation to the lake employees that we're talking about?

MR. KISER (via phone): They're at Camp McCain, which is about 3 miles south of Grenada, and it's probably, roughly 6 miles from the field office at Grenada Lake.

MR. DAVEY: So they're pretty much collocated, for all intents and purposes?

MR. KISER (via phone): Yeah.

MR. DAVEY: Okay.

MR. ALLEN: I have kind of a theoretical idea. I'm not sure how this might be received by anybody, but one of the things that I was thinking about when we made a recommendation a few years ago to move one of the lakes that had the lake project office attached to it into the Memphis wage area was that that could theoretically be determined to be the official duty station for all of the lakes. Is there really an obstacle to doing that for all of the four lakes? Is the only way to make all four lakes under the Memphis wage area possible by

redefining the remaining two lakes in the Northern Mississippi wage area to the Memphis wage area?

MR. KISER (via phone): Well, the latter one would be better for us because if we make -- if we take -- and I'm just thinking out loud here, but what would be required to do the prior is take -- move the duty stations, essentially, and so we would have the guys from Enid and Grenada duty station being Sardis.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Are you saying that's a problem? Could you just elaborate a little bit on that?

MR. KISER (via phone): Well, I'm trying to think through how it would work, but it would look a little bit odd to me if we made their duty station, which becomes their reporting station, Sardis and then had them report to Enid and Grenada, just like they've been doing. I don't know. I'd have to ponder on that a little more.

Otherwise, what it would be doing is have them drive to Sardis and get in a government vehicle and go to Enid and Grenada, which would to me waste a good bit of time on the road.

MR. ALLEN: That also sounds an inefficient way of managing your workforce.

MR. KISER (via phone): Yeah.

MR. DAVEY: You may end up having to pay them TDY expenses that way.

MR. KISER (via phone): Yeah.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Dennis, you had a question?

Come up here to the mic.

MR. PHELPS: A few years ago, some of our employees on the locks and dams down in Arkansas wanted to see about moving part of that wage area over to Texas where it was a couple dollars higher, and we were told at the time that because they were out of Vicksburg, they were all paid the same, and it didn't matter. But they were in the Vicksburg wage area, so they were all paid the same, regardless.

It seems to me like it would be an easy thing because, administratively, they were under Vicksburg district. It would seem to me that, administratively, you wouldn't have to actually change their duty station to accomplish that.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: There are two pay practices for the Army Corps of Engineers. One is the lake employees, and the other is the what? What is the other one called, Mark?

MR. ALLEN: It's a special wage schedule for lock and damn employees.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Lock and dam. So the lock and dam are treated differently, right, than the lakes?

MR. ALLEN: It's possible to not redefine the wage area and still put the four lakes under the same wage schedule by establishing a special wage schedule for those four lakes.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: And that would be analogous to what was done in a couple of cases before 1976, right, as outlined in your paper where there were some exceptions then.

Are there any more questions for Mr. Kiser or his associates?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I assume we can send you -- Mr. Kiser, if we have some follow-up questions, I assume we can contact you with those, is that right?

MR. KISER (via phone): Oh, yes, sir. Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay. Is there anything else you want to leave us with, further information beyond what you have presented so far?

MR. KISER (via phone): No, sir. I can't think of anything.

Matt? Carl?

MR. PIERCE (via phone): I can't think of anything. I just appreciate your time.

MR. KISER (via phone): Yeah.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Well, thank you.

MS. ARCHER: Thank you.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you.

MS. SIMON: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: By the way, if we're going to discuss this now, you guys are welcome to stay on the phone. If we're going to discuss it, it would be helpful for you to stay on the phone in case there are any more follow-up questions.

MS. ARCHER: I would like to discuss this.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay.

If you can hang on for a bit longer, that would be great, Mr. Kiser.

MR. KISER (via phone): Sure. I can stay on a few more minutes. I've got some other meetings that are lined up.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay.

MR. KISER (via phone): But before I hang up, I will let you know.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay, thanks.

MR. KISER (via phone): Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Candace.

MS. ARCHER: I guess I wanted to ask some questions. I don't know if this is the appropriate time to move on to this, but I am going to ask some questions on the OPM document that deals with the counties redefined, not defined, or split due to organizational relationship.

I presume you put this together or --

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I think Madeline might have.

MR. ALLEN: Madeline put this together.

MS. ARCHER: I think there is a compelling case made here that when there is a similar organizational relationship that counties have been moved to keep that relationship together. So I don't know if you want to comment on that, Mark, or if we want to talk through this, but it looks like there have been several times at least that the organizational mission has moved the counties into a different wage area.

MR. ALLEN: What's tended to happen over time is that we have had had a group of employees who have been closely related working with another group of employees, so OPM has moved that group of employees into a neighboring wage area, so that all the employees are working together.

What that's done, though, is result in counties being split because we haven't moved in all cases every employee from a county into another wage area just because there are a small number of employees working with one installation that is associated with an installation that's in a neighboring county.

MS. ARCHER: Well, but there are cases here that are listed where they have been redefined, right?

MR. ALLEN: Usually been done because there are no other employees that would be affected by moving the entire county to another wage area.

In the case of Grenada County, there would be 54 Army National Guard employees who are in a county that's currently in a survey area, and the regulatory criteria, as the Committee determined in the past, would indicate that that county is appropriately defined in the Northern Mississippi wage area.

MS. SIMON: But that's not unprecedented.

MR. ALLEN: It's not unprecedented to --

MS. ARCHER: Well, in that specific county --

MR. ALLEN: -- move a county.

MS. ARCHER: And that specific county seems to have, you know, transportation facilities that favor the Memphis wage area and only a slightly different commuting pattern. So, I

mean, it looks like Grenada County, there's a better case for moving it than Yalobusha, if I am saying that correctly.

MR. ALLEN: That would be if you're only considering the transportation facility's criteria as the predominant factor, and this committee has a long record of saying the distance is the primary criteria considering --

MS. SIMON: And it's only marginal. It's such a marginal factor, though, Mark.

MS. ARCHER: What is the specific distance? I may have just missed that, but if you could highlight that for me? I mean, obviously, it's more southern, but --

MR. ALLEN: Well, if you consider it's the distance to Grenada County, Grenada County is a survey county, so you really can't get any closer to measuring prevailing wage levels and having a survey in the county. That's really what we're looking at and what we looked at when we made the recommendation a few years ago.

It's a difficult issue with this wage area because if there were only the Army Corps of Engineers employees, five employees in Grenada County, and there were no other employees there, we would not have Grenada County as the survey area county, and in my mind, it would not be as difficult a

discussion from an organizational relationship perspective to define Grenada County to the Memphis wage area.

The fact is we do have 10 times as many employees working for the Army National Guard as we have working for the Army Corps of Engineers, and we do survey that county to determine what the prevailing wage levels are.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Any other discussion right now that requires Mr. Kiser?

We could keep talking about the issue, but --

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Well, if you're still there, Mr. Kiser, thank you very much.

MR. KISER (via phone): Okay. Well, we appreciate it.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: We may have some follow-up questions for you. The information you have provided has been very helpful -- and your colleagues also, so thank you.

MR. KISER (via phone): Okay, thank you. We're out of here.

MR. PIERCE (via phone): All right. Thank you all.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Thank you.

MS. ARCHER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: It just seems to me there are two somewhat separate issues here. One is the definition of the whole county -- or counties, and how the regulatory criteria should be applied, and then there's another question of whether this does constitute, these four lakes, a closely related activity for which there ought to be some exception under the pay practice that is currently applied to lake employees.

Now, I have no idea what impact this precedent would have elsewhere around the country if it were to be set for these four lakes. Apparently, back in the late '60s and early to mid '70s, there were only two other areas where this sort of issue arose at lake projects of the Army Corps of Engineers, but whether that's still the case or not, I have no idea.

MR. ALLEN: We do have a couple of special schedules that were established years ago. One had to do with the Army Corps of Engineers employees who were working on locks and dams, and there was another one that was established for what we called at the time "overlap areas." It was established for the Department of the Interior where they had a parkway that ran through more than one wage area, and employees were required to work routinely along the entire parkway. So we have had a policy at OPM in the past of, if there are people who are routinely working at multiple facilities in a geographic area, for

efficiency sake, it makes sense to have all those employees reporting from one duty station or paid from one wage schedule to avoid the -- what we have seen today, the inefficient use of the workforce, trying to paper over a problem that's been created by a wage area definition.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Bill?

MR. FENAUGHTY: It seems to me that it's very similar to the lock and dam situation that we spoke about before, that the work that these people perform are across all of these areas at one time or another, and I think that may warrant it to get into a special category like we talked about for the lock and dam people and assign them all to one headquarters area.

MR. DAVEY: Well, the impression I have is that they are distinct facilities, and they have distinct workforces at those facilities. And on occasion, they may need to support one of the other activities, but they treat them as separate units unto themselves with separate workforces. That's the impression that I have.

MS. SIMON: But it sounds like Management would like to follow a different procedure and --

MR. DAVEY: Well, I think Management has the opportunity and the ability to do so now -- they shy away from it -- for a morale reason.

MS. SIMON: Mr. Davey, it's just maybe a weird coincidence, but we started out our meeting today talking about this Employee Viewpoint Survey, and the government has spent millions and millions of dollars surveying the workforce. And then since then, the Directors of OPM, Deputy Director of OMB, Director and Deputy Director of DHS, Assistant Secretary of DoD for Personnel and Readiness have expended more hours than I can count, holding meetings and focus groups and conversations and study groups and committees. How can we improve employee engagement and employee morale and the efficient functioning of our agencies?

And here we have somebody saying that this incredibly technical kind of designation that could be changed quite easily with not much exercise of discretion creates problems. Our most important criteria in our regulation distance is ever so slightly leaning in one direction for one of the counties. I mean, it's really, really, really easy to do the right thing for them. It seems like it's real easy and rational and cost saving and morale improving. Why wouldn't we want to do it?

MR. DAVEY: I think there are other criteria that speak the opposite. Grenada County and Yalobusha County are very dissimilar to the Memphis area that it is going to be assigned to.

MS. SIMON: Well, many counties that are areas of application are very dissimilar to the city that the wage area -
- that the wage area is named after.

Yeah, Memphis is a city, and it's surrounded by rural counties, and that's true in almost every wage area.

MR. DAVEY: And I think it's true in every wage area that people will interact with the people from the other wage areas at some point in their career at some point in time, and I'm finding it interesting that that's the major justification that I see, that an interaction with an individual in a different wage area is the major reason to do this. And I'm having --

MS. ARCHER: Well, it's not interaction. It's actually doing the same work side by side.

I mean, you heard him say prior to a few years ago, they would assign people sometimes for a month because they needed that expertise at a certain sight that the person wasn't contracted out of or that the person wasn't assigned to. So it's not just that they kind of bump up against each other or see each other in the highway and wave. They are actually working next to each other and sometimes, as it was said, for a month at a time. So that's not just sort of the casual thing. These could potentially be --

MR. DAVEY: Well, I didn't mean to imply casual. I meant to say that the interaction between the personnel -- in different wage areas, I have never known that to be a criteria to change a wage area.

MR. PHELPS: I think one of the important parts that you're not looking at, though, Jim, is these are people that are administratively under the same small little group there. It's not like you're bringing somebody from Chicago down to Mississippi and they are working next to them and, therefore, they are making different wages. These are people, one county next to another, and administratively, they are under that small little disparate group down there.

It's a lot more personal to people when you get like that than if you bring somebody from across the country and to give me a hand for a while.

MR. DAVEY: Well, I recognize that, and I recognize also that there are many organizations that are similar to that, where they have people in -- nearby wage areas, but they are managed through one office.

MR. PHELPS: Well, that's what I was bringing up about our Vicksburg area with the lock and dam earlier where we had this. They had some people there who were working with the people thinking they could go a half hour towards Texas, and the

wage area there was \$2 more, where if they go to the east, 100 miles, they are in the same work area and therefore paid the same. And they wanted to know why, and it was because administratively, they are under that disparate group.

MS. SIMON: Mark, are you okay with the idea of creating an exception?

MR. ALLEN: I don't think it's really in keeping with what we've done in the past to redefine a wage area. That's why we've again in our Management document said that it's not appropriate under the regulatory criteria to redefine the wage area, but having said that, I can see the sense that Dennis is making and that Bill was making also about a special schedule practice being possible. You would have to issue regulations to do that, but that's something that we could consider at OPM if the Committee recommended that.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: So we obviously don't have agreement on moving whole counties, but there does seem to be some receptivity to establishing a special pay practice that would affect the folks at these four lakes. How do we move ahead on that?

MS. SIMON: Well, I'd make a motion that we ask OPM to prepare a regulation that would create -- what's the right word?

A special exception, a special schedule to address the unique circumstances in this area.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: All right. We have a motion on the floor. Is there a second?

MS. SUSZCZYK: I second it.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: It might help to have the motion in writing.

MR. DAVEY: Discussion?

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Absolutely.

MR. DAVEY: As I understand the concept that you're bringing forth, OPM would do regulations that would require a special rate in this instance.

MS. SIMON: Create a special schedule. I don't think it's a special rate per se because it's not occupation specific.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Well, if we were to establish a special schedule, it would most likely be analogous to what OPM has done for decades with the Army Corps of Engineers' lock and dam projects or with various Department of the Interior activities that overlap wage areas. So we do have a precedent for doing this sort of thing.

Do we actually know the details of the special pay practice that was abolished in 1976 which applied to those two

groups of lakes? I am guessing we don't actually have that language handy, or do we?

MR. ALLEN: No. I don't have access to that.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Would that former pay practice perhaps be a basis for what might be proposed in this case? I guess we won't know until we see it.

MR. ALLEN: No. If we do it, it would be something that would be new, and it would be limited just to the four lake projects in Mississippi.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Do we know? I do think that is a research question. Well, there is a motion on the floor. Let's continue discussing it.

One question I have, if this were to be done for these four lakes, are there other groups of lakes around the country that are in a similar situation? I have no idea if there are or not and if there are, what would be the rationale for excluding those others?

I don't know if I'm phrasing that in a sensible way. Is that sort of clear?

Supposing in Upstate New York, there are four counties with four lakes, and they are split between two wage areas, with

the same sort of interchange of workers or the managers would like to have interchange and --

MS. SIMON: No, the criteria would probably be the interchange --

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Yes, or the need to have interchange for efficient operation --

MS. SIMON: Right.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: -- of the facilities.

MR. FENAUGHTY: I think that because this is an exception that you have to deal with every other request for an exception the same way, based on the merits of what's offered or what's out there. I don't know if it's right to say we can just group everybody together that's got --

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I mean, it's important to know, before we proceed too far on this, how many other places around the country are similarly situated.

MR. DAVEY: I think that is very important, and it sounds to me like it would undo what was undone in '76.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Yes. And I would note that at the time, it was apparently not a consensus recommendation to undo it.

MR. DAVEY: I would suggest that we have an opportunity to study the concept.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Do you feel we need a little more data and information before we actually vote on what you just proposed?

MS. SIMON: Well, as long as we study concepts, none of us might live long enough to complete the study.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Well, I am not suggesting deferring it forever.

MS. SIMON: But I don't necessarily think that this -- a decision on this case requires a simultaneous decision on every other case that may have some similarities. I think we can do it for this location, and then subsequently consider doing it for other locations that may or may not have similar management challenges.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Yes. But if OPM wrote a regulation, presumably, it wouldn't -- would or would not specifically --

MS. SIMON: Well, I think it creates --

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: -- narrow --

MS. SIMON: Mark, you tell me. It creates a new schedule for this location. It doesn't create anything more than that.

MR. ALLEN: No, it would just be a special wage schedule for the four lakes --

MS. SIMON: For this location, exactly.

MR. ALLEN: -- in Northern Mississippi.

MS. SIMON: This wouldn't be an overarching policy.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Oh, so you could write the regulation narrowly.

MS. SIMON: It would be the creation of a new schedule for this location, and it would be up to other locations to let us know so we can investigate whether or not those other locations would benefit from a similar special schedule.

MR. ALLEN: In the 23 years I have been working with the pay system, I have never heard employees at other lake project offices complaining about working side by side with employees this closely.

We have had concerns expressed from employees who would like to be redefined to a different wage area but not on the basis that --

MS. ARCHER: But this one has been a consistent problem that's come up over and over and over.

MR. ALLEN: 40, 45 years probably.

MS. ARCHER: So my guess is, if there were other consistent problems, then we would have heard about them. So this may very well be a unique situation.

MS. SIMON: And it's a money saver to the government, which is always nice.

MR. DAVEY: Well, I don't think that this special schedule will make it a money saver. I think Management had the opportunity to do exactly what they're going to do tomorrow. If they have the opportunity to do it today, it's just a morale problem that's created by having people side by side.

MS. SIMON: The man on the phone told us they were hiring contractors. They were ultimately paying twice. They were paying the contractors, and then they were paying idle Army Corps of Engineer employees. This is a small wage increase for a small, teeny, tiny group of workers that would eliminate the need to hire contractors.

MR. DAVEY: I think we've got 54 people near them who don't have the same issue, and there may be a cascade effect here whether for --

MS. SIMON: No, it's separate. Very specifically -- I mean, I think that's really not fair, because had we proposed a redefinition of the county, then we would be addressing the

whole county. But we are very explicitly proposing a solution just for the affected employees, the new special schedule.

MR. DAVEY: I understand that, and --

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Go ahead.

MR. DAVEY: I presume that the Army National Guard is going to have WG-10 maintenance members as well who are 6 miles away from this facility that we're talking about --

MS. SUSZCZYK: But are they working together on the same projects, side by side over time? Can they come to us for a redefinition of the county?

MR. DAVEY: The concept that I have in my head is equal pay for equal work in the same area. So if I am 5 miles away at the Army National Guard, my question then is going to be, why did you not include me in this revamp that you did?

MR. PHELPS: For the same reason that other FWS employees are not in the same special schedule as lock and dam employees in the area. It's all throughout the country.

MR. DAVEY: But I think the pay is the same, though, between a regular schedule and lock and dam.

MR. PHELPS: You've got a special schedule for lock and dam.

MR. ALLEN: No. We have had some complaints and congressional inquiries from employees who are under a lock and dam wage schedule where they're paid from a wage schedule that's lower than what they would be paid under if they were paid by their official duty station locally. That has been problematic from the perspective of employees at the locks and dams who are in what are lower paying wage areas than what they think they should be. So Dennis is correct on that.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: You guys have time to write out your motion?

MS. ARCHER: Probably we don't.

MS. SIMON: Probably not.

MS. ARCHER: But we can certainly submit it after the meeting.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Oh, so we can defer it -- oh.

MS. ARCHER: I mean, we have it verbally.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I am not cutting off discussion, but I just wanted to know.

MS. ARCHER: Right. My guess is we probably need to just -- potentially, it will leave one member, so -- because of another commitment.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Any more discussion now?

MR. DAVEY: Could I make an alternate motion?

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: You can.

MR. DAVEY: I make a motion that the criteria for wage area definitions don't include interactivity between members under the same command as a primary basis. I don't think that's clear enough yet.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Is that a motion, or is it more of a statement of your understanding?

MR. DAVEY: I'd like to make a motion to be considered along with the motion that's being considered there.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay. I don't quite -- it sounds more like a comment or a discussion of the motion than a motion.

MR. DAVEY: I am trying to get the words on my motion better here.

MS. ARCHER: Are you then proposing that the lock and dam exception be removed? Is that what you are suggesting here?

MR. DAVEY: No. The criteria that people who have coworkers in different wage areas not become a criterion for wage area redefinition.

MS. SIMON: It isn't. It already isn't. It's not, and you'd have to make it one in order to eliminate it.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Mark, is there something in regulations that mentions this issue of the relationship among closely related or closely located Federal activities?

MR. ALLEN: It's not in --

MS. SIMON: They are not talking about human relations.

MR. ALLEN: -- anything in the regulations.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: It's not in any of the regulations?

MR. ALLEN: No. We've never put something in regulation. It's always been an FPRAC policy to consider organizational relationships, but those are only in regulation in that wage area definitions themselves have been adjusted in such a way to accommodate organizational relationships. But we don't have a regulatory criterion that speaks about whether organizational relationships should be considered.

MS. SIMON: But, Mark, aren't organizational relationships operational relationships? They aren't whether people like each other. They are whether or not they engage in joint activities.

MR. ALLEN: Yeah. And what we've --

MS. SIMON: They don't have to do with personality.

MR. ALLEN: What we've done in the past is, say there's a national park that overlaps two wage areas, it just makes common sense to have that national park in the same wage area.

MS. SIMON: Right.

MR. ALLEN: But we don't actually have a regulatory criterion that says --

MS. ARCHER: But you have precedent, essentially. I mean, that's what I got from this document that this type of thing had been done before where people had worked together.

MR. ALLEN: So what Jim is saying is that he would like FPRAC to adopt a policy where organizational relationships among closely related Federal activities is not the primary criterion that's looked at, but also you're looking at distance and transportation facilities and geographic features.

MS. SIMON: I don't understand why we would need such a motion because it doesn't exist, and so to have a motion saying we should get rid of it, how can you get rid of something that doesn't exist?

MR. DAVEY: I think we're on the verge of changing a wage area precisely for that reason, because of interactivity between the people from one wage area to another wage area under the same commend.

MR. PHELPS: But you're not on the verge of changing the wage area. All you are doing is making this special schedule for the Army Corps employees in the wage area.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: You would really be taking those lake employees out of the wage area, as I understand it.

MR. DAVEY: I think the consideration that I would just like to make clear is that -- what's on the table is our major reason, as I understand it, for having this discussion at all -- some people go TDY or travel down the road and interact with some coworkers who are lower paid, and the lower paid employees are desiring to be higher paid, because these people come down the road.

And to me, that is not a criteria anywhere that we should consider as the primary reason to change this, to change the --

MR. PHELPS: But what about a lower employee who is sent up to the higher employees and working next to the guy in the higher employees on his job? He is still getting the lower pay.

MR. DAVEY: And I don't see the proposal that it's all that.

MR. PHELPS: Most regulations that I've seen in the government, if you work on two jobs, if I'm an electrician and

they put me on a carpenter's job and a carpenter happens to make more money than me and I'm working on that job for any period of time, I am supposed to get the higher -- or if it's an 8 and a 10 working in -- and you have an 8 and 10 working side by side doing the same thing while the 8 is doing that 10s job, he is supposed to be getting the 10 pay.

MS. SIMON: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Yes.

MS. SIMON: Can we please defer the discussion of this until a later date?

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Yes. Well, I was hoping we could get something in writing, maybe from both of you if you would like.

MS. SIMON: If we can just defer this for a little bit, if that's okay.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Yes. Till the next meeting perhaps?

MS. SIMON: Perhaps, perhaps.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay. Well, that's fine.

MS. SIMON: Okay.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Does that mean you want to withdraw your motion for now or defer it?

MS. SIMON: No, I don't want to withdraw the motion, but I would like to table it for the time being.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay. And do you want to keep yours on the table and keep discussing it?

MR. DAVEY: I have to still formulate mine. I don't have a motion on the table because it hasn't been formulated well.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I'm sorry to have to agree with you.

[Laughter.]

MR. ALLEN: You can write it down.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I am teasing.

Anyway, all right. So I guess we are going to kick this can down the road, but hopefully not for too long. So if not at the next meeting, very soon I hope we can reach some resolution on this, because it seems like there is some -- maybe not unanimity among you, but some potential for getting a resolution of this.

All right. Well, are there any other Old Business items that people want to talk about?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: If not, we do have another New Business item, which Steve has brought to us. Steve, the floor is yours. I'm guessing we're not going to resolve this today, but you certainly may speak on it if you would like.

MR. LANDIS: All right. Our proposal, it's nothing that just about everybody here hasn't heard about a hundred times.

The quick background on it, in 2009, October 2009, McGuire Air Force Base, Fort Dix, and Lakehurst Naval Air Station were combined into a joint base. The Lakehurst, the eastern side of the new joint base, was in Wage Area 94, which was the New York and the western side which was McGuire and most of Fort Dix was in the Philadelphia wage area.

We have documentation from stuff that was posted at the time that's from OPM that stated that all the Federal employees would all be moved into one locality to the New York wage area. The GS portion of McGuire and Fort Dix were moved, but the FWS were not. And again, that was in October of 2009. It's something that we've been working on. It's been kind of put on the back burner for the last couple of years, waiting for the implementation of the report that we approved here a couple of years ago.

However, I think that this is something that needs to be taken care of. It's been over 5 years, and it isn't

necessarily a situation even of GS and FWS employees getting paid differently. You have FWS employees on one portion of the base being paid differently than FWS employees from the same base, just in a different area of the base.

So, again, you all have, I guess, a copy that was in the folder today. If I haven't -- like I said, I am sure everyone here knows the details of this very well. I don't want to even go into it any deeper unless anybody has any questions.

MR. ALLEN: Steve, if I understand correctly, what you are asking for is an independent analysis of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst from the October 2010 FPRAC recommendation. You want us to look at the Joint Base according to the regulatory criteria, independent of that other recommendation.

MR. LANDIS: Yes.

MR. ALLEN: Okay. It's going to take us a little while to put together the regulatory analysis like we normally do, but I think we can work on that.

MR. LANDIS: Okay. Would we need to vote a recommendation to do that, or that's just something you would do?

MR. ALLEN: No, we'll do it.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: They are saying they will do a regulatory analysis.MR. LANDIS: Okay.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: And we don't know quite when but hopefully not too long.

Any discussion on this issue before we --

MR. FENAUGHTY: So, Mark, just so I understand this, this is, more or less, a done deal? These people actually -- there isn't any question that these people should be in the correct FWS wage area? That isn't on the table, I guess is what I'm asking.

MR. ALLEN: Nothing has been decided yet. We need to do the analysis of the regulatory criteria for -- this would be Burlington County, primarily Burlington County, New Jersey, which is where McGuire Air Force Base and Fort Dix are located. It will just be a standard review that we do, so that everybody can see what the distance criteria looks like and all that kind of stuff. Nothing is really set in stone.

It did use to be the case up until the late 1990s that the activities currently comprising the Joint Base were all under the Philadelphia wage schedule, but there was some dispute back when FPRAC considered this issue. I think it was around 1997. There was a labor motion at the time that the entire --

what is now the Joint Base should be part of the New York wage area.

So this is another one of those issues that's been kicking around for decades, so we'll kick it around some more and hopefully come up with a right decision.

MS. ARCHER: And I just want to reiterate that it's a very similar situation that's going on with Monroe County, Pennsylvania, and it's been on our Old Business for a long time, and I want to suggest the Committee move on this, considering we're looking at a very similar thing with this proposal from ACT.

MR. ALLEN: Are you also asking for an analysis independent of the --

MS. ARCHER: I don't think we need another analysis on the Old Business. I would imagine that we have what we need there, but we need to be moving on this one.

MR. ALLEN: We don't really have an analysis of Monroe County that the Committee has considered by itself.

MS. ARCHER: Well, I am just suggesting we need to move on some of our Old Business.

MR. FENAUGHTY: Whatever it takes to do that.

MS. SUSZCZYK: So no analysis was ever done of AFGE's proposal, Meeting 564?

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Well, it was subsumed by the larger measure that we adopted in 2010 and reaffirmed in 2012. So we never parsed out Monroe County. This is part of the larger issue.

So, anything else this morning?

MR. DAVEY: One question, Mr. Landis, if I may. I might have not heard the statements that you were making totally, but I think you have the impression or you were providing the impression that the intent was to have Joint Base McGuire-Dix all in one wage area, that being the New York wage area?

MR. LANDIS: Yes.

MR. DAVEY: I guess I don't know where that -- can you tell me where the intent comes from?

MR. LANDIS: Well, the base commander, our congressman at the time, and there is actually a letter from OPM that says once the base is consolidated, all Federal employees will be moved into the one locality.

MR. ALLEN: That was for General Schedule employees.

MR. DAVEY: General Schedule? Okay. We are talking Federal Wage System here, right?

MR. ALLEN: Yeah.

MR. DAVEY: Yeah? Okay.

MR. ALLEN: OPM did issue regulations several years ago for the Joint Base, so that all of the GS employees would be paid from the same GS locality pay table, which was New York, but as Jim is referring to, it's a separate pay system, which would require separate regulations. OPM was acting on behalf of the President's Pay Agent at the time with the GS locality pay area. The definition of the wage area for the Joint Base or the components of the Joint Base would be OPM Director's decision.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Anything else? Any other New Business item that people want to bring up now?

MS. ARCHER: I just wonder if there is any sort of update on the issue of the North Dakota survey area. We spoke about it last time.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Right. Oh, yes. Thank you. I didn't mean to skip over that. Thank you, Candace.

We are going to have a table of the potential pay flexibilities for FWS workers that could address situations like North Dakota's. OPM cannot initiate requests for these pay flexibilities, the requests must come from the employing activities' agencies, but OPM must approve the requests before they can be implemented.

MR. ALLEN: I can give some background on activities that have been taking place just very recently.

Director Archuleta visited Minot Air Force Base and other activities in western North Dakota, as you know in the Bakken Region, and our Deputy Associate Director for Pay and Leave accompanied her on that visit and explained what pay flexibilities are currently available that could be used when needed -- such as the recruitment and retention incentives or special rates.

OPM doesn't currently have any requests for special wage rates in the North Dakota wage area, but we do understand that the employers in the area are looking into whether they need special rates. They do have the option independent of OPM of using recruitment and retention incentives.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: So we will have more information, we hope at the next meeting on that.

Is there any new information that you want to bring in on this?

MS. ARCHER: We know Director Archuleta visited, and we also know that in her remarks, she expressed various things that could have been done, and we were sort of assured that there were things in the works from the employers, but we are going on, I think, over a month, maybe more since she's visited, so

we're just wondering if there are things in the works from the employers or not. So there has been no request to OPM.

MR. DAVEY: I think it takes time to get any request to OPM, and I think things are in the works. It's a matter of getting it to this level.

MS. ARCHER: Do we have a timetable on what that might look like?

MR. DAVEY: We don't have a timetable, per se, but it's an item that certainly has the attention of DoD.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Hopefully, we will have more information at our next meeting. I guess no promises on that, but hopefully, we will.

MR. DAVEY: Well, even if we had a proposal at OPM, we don't have a promise that it would be approved, so --

MS. ARCHER: Well, Director Archuleta has been pretty clear about saying that she would move on these proposals. So it sounds from what we've heard and the statement she's made -- it sounds like she is just waiting for the proposal to show up.

MR. DAVEY: And we expect the proposal will show up. I cannot give you a specific date, other than it's a priority item in our offices, and it will get over here as soon as we can get it over here.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Anything else on this one?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Any other New Business issues that we need to discuss this morning?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: And I would just note that we have the dates for our 2015 meetings listed at the bottom of the agenda. I believe they are in all cases on the third Thursday of the month, and we do have a working group meeting, which is going to be right in here. It will be a short one. We'll take a break for 5 or 10 minutes before we start the working group.

And I would just like to mention, we have our not-to-be-missed Holiday Party right after the next FPRAC meeting.

MR. ALLEN: It will be the 600th meeting.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: It will be the 600th meeting, yes.

MS. ARCHER: Is that true? There really is --

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: There really is a Holiday Party.

[Simultaneous speaking.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I will say for the record that there is no expenditure of Federal funds involved whatsoever for this Holiday Party.

Anyway, so it would be in order for us to adjourn, unless there is something else we need to talk about. Any objection to adjourning?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Hearing none, see you all next month. Have a very good Thanksgiving, everybody.