

Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee 652nd FPRAC

Janice R. Lachance, Chair, Presiding

Thursday, May 16, 2024

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams
Office of Personnel Management
Washington, D.C. 20415

Attendance

Members/Alternates

Management Members

Mark Allen, OPM
Christopher Lynch, DoD
Mandy Laughlin, Army
Catherine Anders, Navy
Sheila Willis, VA

Labor Members

Craig Norman, MTD
Jacqueline Simon, AFGE
Travis Reuther, AFGE
Carissa Carmack, NAGE
Patrick Straka, ACT

Staff Specialists and Visitors

Brenda Roberts, Designated Federal Officer, OPM
Ana Paunoiu, OPM
Samantha Bono, OPM
Sharon Kwon, OPM
Karl Fendt, DoD
Erica Abiera, DoD
Charles Arnold, DoD
Kieu Nguyen, DoD
Christine Wlezien, DoD
Kimberly Eidson, Air Force
Brandon Anderson, Navy
Cynthia Bell, VA
Ralph Reels, VA
Edward George, Tobyhanna Army Depot
Dan Pulliam, Naval Support Activity Monterey

Drew Friedman, Federal News Network
Recording Secretary

Mike Eicher, OPM

[Transcript prepared from digital audio produced by FPRAC.]

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I. Opening Announcements and Introductions

a. Introductions

b. Announcements

- Update on the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee December 21, 2023, Recommendation to Amend Section 532.211 of Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations

Janice Lachance: Let me welcome everybody. This is the 652nd meeting of the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee. It's May 16th, and it's 10 a.m. I want to welcome everyone. We are virtual, and it is being recorded. A verbatim transcript is going to be provided to all of the members for review at the next meeting.

For those of you who might not know me or remember me, my name is Janice Lachance, and I have the privilege of chairing this committee.

We want to start with introductions and taking attendance so that we know who's here and so that we can add it to our official record. I'm going to start with the Labor members. Let's start with AFGE, and I know, Jacque, you have a new colleague who's joined the committee. I see he's on. Thank you for that, Travis. Jacque, why don't you go ahead and maybe introduce Travis to the group.

Ms. Simon: Okay. Well, I'm Jacque, and I'm here. And my colleague, Travis Reuther, is replacing Richard Loeb who retired, and he'll be a member of FPRAC going forward. And he's recently been hired by AFGE as policy analyst.

Chair Lachance: At some point, Travis we'll talk about your mom.

Metal Trades.

Mr. Norman: This is Craig Norman, Director of Collective Bargaining from the

IAM Machinist Union.

Chair Lachance: Great. NAGE?

Ms. Carmack: Carisa, I'm here.

Chair Lachance: Thank you, Carisa.

ACT.

Mr. Straka: Good morning. Mr. Straka on the phone.

Chair Lachance: Thank you. We'll move to the Management members. OPM.

Mr. Allen: This is Mark Allen for the OPM staff.

Chair Lachance: And DoD.

Mr. Lynch: Christopher Lynch, DoD.

Chair Lachance: Air Force?

[No audible response.]

Chair Lachance: Okay. No one from Air Force yet.

Navy?

Oh, here's Brandon.

Ms. Anders: Good morning. Catherine Anders is here as well as Brandon

Anderson for Navy.

Chair Lachance: Thank you. And the VA.

Ms. Willis: Good morning. Sheila Willis is here.

Chair Lachance: Great. Thank you all for being here.

And joining us here in person is Brenda Roberts. She is the Designated Federal Official under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Could the staff who are attending please introduce themselves?

Ms. Paunoiu: Good Morning. This Is Ana Paunoiu, OPM.

Ms. Bono: Good Morning. This Is Samantha Bono, OPM.

Mr. Eicher: Mike Eicher, OPM.

Ms. Bell: Cynthia Bell, VA.

Mr. Reels: Ralph Reels, VA.

Mr. Fendt: This is Karl Fendt, DoD, and we have various wage staff on the line as well.

Chair Lachance: Great, Karl. You've got a bit of an echo. I don't know if you have two mics going, but—

Mr. Fendt: Yeah, I'm trying to figure something out. My apologies.

Chair Lachance: No, it's all right, just wanted you to know.

And we do have a few people who registered to listen in. Would you like to introduce yourselves? I see Mr. George is here with us.

Mr. George: My name is Edward George. I'm the president of the AFGE Local 1647 at Tobyhanna Army Depot. And I thank you Chairman and the Board for having me today.

Chair Lachance: Great. Of course. Anyone else?

Ms. Friedman: Yes. Drew Friedman. I'm a reporter with Federal News Network just listening in here.

Chair Lachance: Great. Thank you, Drew.

LCDR Pulliam: Lieutenant Commander Dan Pulliam. I'm here. United States Navy. I'm the Public Works Officer for Naval Support Activity Monterey. Just listening in.

Chair Lachance: That's great. Thank you.

Anyone else?

[No audible response.]

Chair Lachance: Thank you all for that.

We do have under our announcement section an update about the recommendation that FPRAC made in December asking OPM to change the regulatory criteria for defining and maintaining FWS wage areas. And Mark can give us the latest on that.

Mr. Allen: The last time we met, I believe I mentioned that OPM staff were drafting a proposed regulation to be presented to the Director of OPM. That draft is working its way through the internal clearance process within OPM going through editing. It has not yet reached the Director. It should get to the Director in the coming weeks, but I don't have a definite time frame for it to clear our internal review processes yet. But it's moving forward. I can say that.

Ms. Simon: I was told that it would be early April and then later—end of April at the very latest, and here we are getting close to the end of May, and it's not even at the OPM Director's desk, let alone interagency review. What's going on?

Mr. Allen: All I can say is that it's still working its way through the internal clearance process, and I don't have any further information I can share on that. There are a number of processes we need to go through before it would reach the Director.

Ms. Simon: Well, I'm afraid of what the process might be for slowing this down. But in any case, can I formally ask our Chair, Janice, to please try to intervene and get this thing moving? Because it's just unconscionable how long it's taking.

Chair Lachance: I understand, and I will. Thank you. I will do that.

Ms. Simon: Thanks.

Chair Lachance: Anyone else? Any other comments or questions?

[No audible response.]

II. Review of the Minutes of the 650th Meeting

Chair Lachance: If not, we can move to review the transcript of the last public meeting, which was held on March 21st. Are there any changes that anyone wants to bring to our attention?

[No audible response.]

Chair Lachance: If not, is there any objection to adopting the transcript of the last meeting— Mr. George, I'm sorry. Your hand is raised.

Mr. George: Yes, ma'am. This was on the prior. This was on this. This was on the—I just want to state the frustration with the employees here at Tobyhanna Army Depot. This is a long, ongoing disparity that just seems to be every time we get it through this process, it's stalled in one way or another. It seems like there's a lot of roadblocks put in front of us when this is a process that's clearly stated on how it's supposed to be filed, and it's a little frustrating to the employees that this is disparities going on for 15 years. And every time we get it to this step of the process, it seems to stop when we've had positive reviews from the FPRAC board twice in the past, and there was either no OPM Director or no movement was made. It seems like this is just another stall tactic to not give what's fair and equitable to all employees involved.

Thank you.

Chair Lachance: Thank you for that.

Does anybody else want to weigh in?

Ms. Simon: I just second that emotion.

Chair Lachance: Thank you, Jacque. Okay.

On the transcript, I'm not hearing any objections to adopting it as written. Have you all had a chance to look at it, and are we okay moving ahead?

[No audible response.]

Chair Lachance: Hearing no objections, we'll adopt the transcript.

III. Old Business

- a. Letter from the American Federation of Government Employees, Dated March 22, 2022, Requesting FPRAC Review a Proposal to Limit all Non-Rest of U.S. General Schedule Locality Pay Areas to no more than one Federal Wage System Wage Area and a Proposal to Redefine Monroe County, PA, from the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA, Wage Area to the New York, NY, Wage Area, 637-AFGE-1
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Chair Lachance: There are still some older items that are on the Old Business part of the agenda that you all have asked to stay on the agenda, which has been maintained there, but rather than me reading through all of those, can we go ahead and move to New Business?

[No audible response.]

Chair Lachance: I'm seeing some nods, so I'll go ahead.

IV. New Business

- a. Definition of Saratoga County, NY to a Nonappropriated Fund Federal Wage System Wage Area 653-MGT-1

Chair Lachance: Under New Business, we do have a document. It's numbered 652-MGT-1, and it's the definition of Saratoga County, New York, to a nonappropriated fund FWS wage area, and Mark can introduce the item for us.

Mr. Allen: Sure. This is a fairly simple case for the committee to review and provide a recommendation on. OPM did receive a request from the Department of Defense on behalf of the Department of the Navy to add the Naval Support Facility Saratoga Springs in Saratoga County, New York, to a nonappropriated fund wage area, and the clearest way to look at this thing is that it would affect one nonappropriated fund employee.

If we look at the maps that are included in the package, you'd see that Saratoga County is just north of Schenectady and Albany in New York, and those two counties are already part of the Jefferson, New York, nonappropriated fund wage area. So we're recommending that Saratoga County be added to the Jefferson wage schedule, not affecting any impact at all on that employee, who has already been paid from that wage schedule.

We would propose regulations to fully document that it's the appropriate wage treatment for the employee there, and any future employees who are under the Federal Wage System on the nonappropriated fund side would be employed at that activity in the future.

Any questions about this one?

[No audible response.]

Chair Lachance: Is this something we can go ahead and adopt by consensus?

[No audible response.]

Chair Lachance: Again, seeing nods. So I think we can go ahead and accept this by consensus. Thank you all so much.

We don't have other items on the agenda. That was it. Do you all want to go ahead and adjourn, or is there anything else you'd like to discuss?

[No audible response.]

Chair Lachance: If not, can someone make a motion to adjourn?

Ms. Simon: I move that we adjourn.

Chair Lachance: Thank you, Jacque. Is there a second?

Mr. Allen: I'll second.

Chair Lachance: Thank you. Is there anyone opposed?

[No audible response.]

Chair Lachance: All right. Thank you all so much. We appreciate your time.

[End of recorded session.]