

## FEDERAL PREVAILING RATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

597th FPRAC

**SHELDON FRIEDMAN**, Chairperson, Presiding

Thursday, August 21, 2014

Room 5526  
Office of Personnel Management  
Washington, D.C. 20415**ATTENDANCE:****Members/Alternates:**Management Members:Mark Allen, OPM  
Seth Shulman, DoD  
David Pedersen, Navy  
Gary Buck, ArmyLabor Members:Bill Fenaughty, MTD  
Candace Archer, AFGE  
Adair Gregory, NAGE  
Steven Landis, ACT**Staff Specialists and Visitors:**Brenda Roberts, Designated Federal Officer, OPM  
Madeline Gonzalez, OPM  
Becky Chaves, DoD  
Karl Fendt, DoD  
Brian Bauer, DoD  
Luis Lynch, Air Force**Recording Secretaries:**Mike Eicher, OPM  
Terri Wallace, OPM

[Transcript prepared from digital audio produced by FPRAC.]

## C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
I. <u>Opening/Announcements</u>	
• Introductions.....	3
• Announcements.....	4
- Update on Director's Executive Conference Room Recording Equipment	
- Status Report on FWS Wage Area Map Book Update	
II. Review of the Minutes of 596th Meeting.....	6
III. <u>Old Business</u> .....	6
a. Review of Lee County, Virginia, 557-MGT-2	
- 2013 Update to Review Lee County, Virginia, 586-MGT-1	
b. Definition of South Bend-Mishawaka, IN-MI Metropolitan Statistical Area, 562-MGT-2	
- 2013 Update to Definition of South Bend- Mishawaka, IN-MI Metropolitan Statistical Area, 586-MGT-2	
c. Letter from the American Federation of Government Employees, dated June 6, 2011, Requesting FPRAC Review a Proposal to Redefine Monroe County, PA from the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA Wage Area to the New York, NY wage area, 564-AFGE-1	
d. Definition of Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area, 575-MGT-1	
- 2013 Update to Definition of Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area, 588-MGT-1	
IV. <u>New Business</u> .....	7
a. Letter from American Federation of Government Employees dated August 18, 2014, Requesting FPRAC Reexamine the Definition of Grenada and Yalobusha Counties, MS, 597-AFGE-1	

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

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to our 597th meeting of the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee. My name is Sheldon Friedman, Chair of the Committee.

We are in unusual quarters today because of continuing difficulties with the recording equipment in the Executive Conference Room downstairs. Hopefully, that will be resolved by our October meeting.

Meanwhile, why don't we go around the room and introduce ourselves, as we normally do? Let's start with you today, Mark.

MR. ALLEN: Mark Allen with OPM and also serving temporarily as the Designated Federal Officer until Brenda Roberts is able to join the meeting.

MR. SHULMAN: Seth Shulman, Department of Defense.

MR. PEDERSEN: David Pedersen, Navy.

MR. BUCK: Gary Buck, Army.

MR. FENAUGHTY: Bill Fenaughty, MTD and NFFE.

MS. ARCHER: Candace Archer, AFGE.

MR. GREGORY: Adair Gregory, NAGE.

MR. LANDIS: Steve Landis, Association of Civilian

Technicians.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Thank you all.

If the people around the edge of the room would also please introduce themselves?

MR. LYNCH: Luis Lynch, Air Force.

MS. CHAVES: Becky Chaves, DoD.

MR. EICHER: Mike Eicher, OPM.

MS. GONZALEZ: Madeline Gonzalez, OPM.

MS. WALLACE: Terri Wallace, OPM.

MR. FENDT: Karl Fendt, DoD.

MR. BAUER: Brian Bauer, DoD.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay. A couple of quick announcements.

So, as I mentioned, the recording equipment is still out of commission in the Executive Conference Room in the Director's Office, but we think in October, it will be back in operation.

Any other update on that, Madeline, that you have?

MS. GONZALEZ: No, that's the last thing I heard.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Regarding the map book project, regretfully, the press of other work has prevented as much progress as we would have hoped by now on that, but I understand

that it's about 20 percent complete. There are staffing issues, as people may well be aware of, that are making it very difficult to get it done, but it will be completed as soon as possible. If any member has a specific map they need, they can request it. Of course, meanwhile we have the old maps that we can reference.

Any further update on that?

MR. ALLEN: One of the issues with this project is that the previous version of the software that we were using to do the mapping was no longer supported in our operating system, so we had to upgrade to a newer version of the software and draw the maps from scratch.

Right now, we're working on establishing a new baseline map, and after that is completed, it shouldn't take too long to produce maps for individual wage areas. I would say the 20 percent figure is probably a fair one in terms of the scope of the whole project.

As our Chairman says, if anybody has a request for a specific map for an area that they are interested in, just let us know, and we will see what we can put together.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Thank you. I just want to make sure people did not think we had forgotten about this project.

It is underway, and progress is being made.

MR. ALLEN: The maps that I have seen so far are looking considerably better than what we had previously.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Right, right.

Any other announcements?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: If not, that brings up the review of the transcript of our last meeting. Are there any other corrections to that transcript that you want to bring to our attention?

[No audible response.]

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

[No audible response.]

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

That brings up Old Business. We have four issues that have been hanging around for quite a while. Is there a particular issue that anyone would like to discuss today?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: If not, we do have one late-arriving New Business item, and that is a letter from AFGE

President Cox concerning the Northern Mississippi Wage Area, an issue that FPRAC wrestled with in 2010, which is an issue involving the Army Corps of Engineers employees at a series of lakes in Northern Mississippi.

I know that we won't finish that agenda item today because, obviously, people have not really had an opportunity to look at it in any depth.

There is some supporting material from our previous work on this issue that we will recirculate. We figured that the members wouldn't have a chance to review it if we circulated it just a couple of days before the meeting, so we will circulate it in advance of our next meeting.

Is there anything that people want to bring up about this issue now in terms of the type of research that we need to do, or questions that need to be looked into?

I have a few thoughts, but I wonder if anyone else wants to bring anything up right now on this issue.

MS. ARCHER: I actually just want to apologize for this agenda item getting to you so late. We had anticipated putting it on the September agenda, so I appreciate sort of the preview of this, and we hope to do more work on this for the September meeting.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay. We actually don't have a September meeting.

MS. ARCHER: Oh, I thought there was a September 17th meeting.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: No. The Chair will be on vacation. But we have an October meeting.

MS. ARCHER: Oh. My apologies. So then the October meeting will be fine.

MR. ALLEN: That actually gives us a little more time to look at new information we might have available. We last reviewed this in 2010, so we should be able to obtain updated information from the Census Bureau. I doubt that any of the metropolitan statistical areas would have changed in that particular area, but we will take a look and see what's changed there, if anything.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I think I would ask our Designated Federal Officer who just walked into the room to introduce herself for the record.

MS. ROBERTS: Brenda Roberts.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Thank you.

MS. ROBERTS: And I apologize for having to arrive to the meeting late.



CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: That's okay.

MR. ALLEN: I will take off my second hat now.

[Laughter.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I have a few thoughts about the issue.

I thought of three things. The first is to update the regulatory criteria analysis of the two counties in question where the lakes are located. Maybe it would be helpful to take a fresh look at an updated analysis.

The second is the viability of the Northern Mississippi Wage Area. It is one of those low-employment wage areas that we are going to be talking about later today in our working group. I don't know the amount of survey data that is being collected in that wage area and so forth, and it would be nice to have a good picture of the viability of that wage area.

Then the third is whether there is a sense in which these four lakes should be considered a single activity or installation, given the amount of alleged interchange of workforce. How much actual movement of workers from one lake to another occurs within the four lakes? This seems to me to be a question for which it should be possible to get some answers, to help us understand the issue better.

MR. ALLEN: I think they are all good questions.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Any other discussion at this time?

MR. SHULMAN: I would only observe that certainly we have had discussions about such issues, particularly the Army Corps of Engineers in prior meetings, and it's proven useful to have representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers present.

This is no slight to our friends from the Department of the Army, Gary.

MR. BUCK: I know. None taken.

MR. SHULMAN: Okay. So most representatives from the Office of the Director of Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works, Operations, Office would have a grasp of what actually goes on, and it would probably have some probative value for any discussion of this issue to have them present.

MR. BUCK: Have we requested information from the Corps of Engineers?

MR. SHULMAN: We have not done anything because this just showed up on the agenda on Wednesday.

MR. BUCK: Okay. How about back in 2010?

MR. SHULMAN: I don't know the history of what was happening in 2010. I wasn't doing this Committee work in 2010, so I was not present for those discussions, but we've had other

discussions where Army Corps of Engineers' pay issues have arisen at lock and dam situations.

MR. BUCK: Right.

MR. SHULMAN: We have had Army Corps of Engineers present in the past at meetings in person as well as on the phone, and it has proven useful.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Yes. It seems to me that it would be very helpful if we could get that participation and input. Thank you for that.

Unless there's anything else on this issue, we have laid out a research agenda for it. So I think that's probably as much as we could hope to do on this topic today.

Anything else on this issue?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Well, okay. If not, any other New Business items that people want to bring up this morning?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: We do have a working group meeting today after this meeting is over, which will be in this same room.

I just want to remind people that we don't have a September meeting. Our next meeting will be October 16th.

If there is no other new business, it would be in order for us to adjourn. Is there any objection to our adjourning?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Hearing none -- yes, sir.

MR. FENAUGHTY: I have a question, actually. Are we ever going to get to this Old Business? Some of this stuff has been hanging out here since Christ was a Carpenter.

[Laughter.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Well, what was he paid, by the way? Which wage area was he in?

MR. FENAUGHTY: Minimum.

[Laughter.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: So I think that's a good question. Any thoughts on that? Anybody on the Committee on either side of the table have any thoughts on that?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Well, I think we need to put our heads together and figure out how to deal with those issues. Basically, these have been non-consensus issues. We can either walk the plank on them and make a decision or --

MR. SHULMAN: Well, one of them is certainly wrapped

up. Item (c) is certainly wrapped up in an entire --

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: In a larger issue.

MR. SHULMAN: In a larger issue.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Yes.

MR. SHULMAN: From my perspective, it would not be something we want to discuss here until the larger issue is addressed.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: I would say on item (a), the Review of Lee County, Virginia, is another one of these rather low-employment wage areas, which we are going to have a discussion on in the working group in a few minutes. So that might or might not be something that is useful to look at through the lens of the overall employment level in that wage area.

MR. FENAUGHTY: Well, the first two have been sitting here for quite some time, if my memory is right.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Right.

MR. FENAUGHTY: I understand what Seth is saying about item (c) that we can't really get into that until we take care of the other big issue.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Right.

MR. FENAUGHTY: But (a) and (b), we can certainly get

moving somewhere, get the ship away from the pier.

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Yes. Well, I'm all for that. I second you. I'm not allowed to second motions, but if I were, I would second your motion.

Anything else this morning?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: If not, any objection to adjourning?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Okay. Hearing no objection, we are adjourned, and I don't know if we need a full 10 minutes, but in a few minutes, we will begin the working group meeting.

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