

National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations
35th Public Meeting
May 20, 2015

The National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations held its 35th meeting at the U.S. General Services Administration, 1800 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., on May 20, 2015. Co-chairing the meeting were Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Director Katherine Archuleta, and Ms. Beth Cobert, Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The following Council members also attended the meeting:

Council Member	Title
Mr. William R. Dougan	National President, National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)
Mr. Michael Filler	Director of Public Services, International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT)
Mr. David Holway	National President, National Association of Government Employees (NAGE)
Mr. Gregory Junemann	President, International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE)

The following individuals sat in for absent Council Members:

- Ms. Julia Clark, General Counsel, Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA), for Ms. Carol Waller Pope, Chairman, FLRA;
- Mr. Bryan DeWyngaert, Chief of Staff, American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), for Mr. J. David Cox, National President, AFGE;
- Ms. Catherine Emerson, Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), Department of Homeland Security, for Mr. Alejandro Nicholas Mayorkas, Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security;
- Ms. Gina Farrisee, Assistant Secretary Human Resources & Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, for Mr. Sloan D. Gibson, Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs;
- Ms. Robin E. Heard, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration, Department of Agriculture, for Ms. Krysta L. Harden, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture;
- Ms. Paige Hinkle-Bowles, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy, Department of Defense, for Mr. Robert O. Work, Deputy Secretary of Defense;
- Mr. Steve Keller, Senior Counsel, National Treasury Employee Union (NTEU), for Ms. Colleen M. Kelley, President, NTEU;

- Mr. Steve Lenkart, Director of Agency and Member Liaison, Senior Executives Association (SEA), for Ms. Carol Bonosaro, President, SEA;
- Mr. Richard Tarr, Associate General Counsel, Federal Education Association (FEA), for Mr. H.T. Nguyen, FEA Executive Director;
- Mr. Todd Wells, Executive Director, Federal Managers Association (FMA), for Ms. Patricia Niehaus, National President, FMA.

The Designated Federal Officer, Mr. Tim Curry, OPM Deputy Associate Director, Partnership and Labor Relations, was present, as were 50 members of the public and one media representative.

Agenda Item I: Welcome

At 10:09 a.m., Ms. Archuleta welcomed everyone to the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations'¹second meeting of 2015. She then turned to Mr. Curry, so he could make a few announcements. Mr. Curry indicated he had one administrative announcement to make before the meeting began. "This Council operates as a committee under the Federal Advisory Committee Act or FACA. To facilitate opportunities for those of you who are not members of the Council and any other members of the public to address the Council directly, we have set aside time on the agenda for you to make brief statements to the Council. If you wish to address the Council regarding any topics presented today or any other matter, we request that you wait until the appropriate time on the agenda when we ask if any member of the public wishes to make any brief statements to the Council. Before we move on to today's agenda, we have some business to address. We previously shared the draft minutes of the March 2015 meeting with you via e-mail. We've adopted all edits and corrections that were submitted. We recommend the Council approve the minutes for the March 2015 meeting. Do I have a motion to adopt the March 2015 meeting minutes?" It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved as submitted. The Council unanimously approved the minutes without further revision. Mr. Curry noted that before moving on to the first agenda topic, that he would like to remind the Council that the meeting is projected to end at 11:30 a.m., to allow the Council and public an opportunity to take a brief tour of the General Services Administration's (GSA) workspace. For Council members able to take the tour, we will provide more information at the end of the meeting. Members of the public wishing to take a tour will be able to take a tour after the Council departs on their tour. Mr. Curry then turned the meeting over to the co-chairs, Ms. Cobert and Ms. Archuleta, to make a few remarks.

Ms. Archuleta said she very much appreciated being at GSA, and noted that the Council would hear from GSA's Acting Administrator Denise Turner Roth in a few minutes. Ms. Archuleta said she loves that the agenda includes an update from the space management and PDI² group, as well as a labor-management forum success story from right here at GSA. She noted that if you have not toured the facilities, you should because they are very impressive. The facilities are inspiring

¹ At times during the meeting, the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations was referred to as the "National Council," or "Council."

² Pre-decisional involvement.

as workplaces for federal workers. Ms. Archuleta noted that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has used GSA's workspaces several times for their own meetings, and GSA is very generous. She thanked GSA and Ms. Turner Roth for the beautiful setting.

Ms. Archuleta continued by observing that we recently celebrated Public Service Recognition Week. She noted that President Obama issued a Presidential Proclamation in recognition of Public Service Recognition Week and to acknowledge the great work our Federal family does every day for the American people. While this week has passed, she and Ms. Cobert thought it would still be appropriate to display the President's Proclamation in today's Council meeting. Ms. Archuleta noted that regardless of any particular day, the whole year is appropriate for us to acknowledge the people who serve their government, in and out of uniform. She said if you have not had the chance to read the proclamation, she hopes you will take a moment to do so. Ms. Archuleta then noted that Ms. Cobert had something she would like to share with the management associations and unions.

Ms. Cobert said she would like to echo Ms. Archuleta's "thank you" to everyone in the room, first for the work they do every day to ensure that public servants get the recognition they deserve; and also for the support, prodding, and nudging that helped to get the proclamation done. It was a great project to work on, and her team greeted the task of making this happen with enormous enthusiasm. It is something they share an enormous relief and gratitude in. She then said they have something they would like to give to everyone today. Ms. Cobert said each of the groups would receive an official copy of the proclamation. Ms. Cobert extended a big "thank you" to all for their support in this, and a particular "thank you" to Mr. Dougan. She said she knew there were lots of hands involved, but she saw his hands and his email all the time—it really was great. Ms. Cobert also thanked Mr. Dougan for the letter he sent after the proclamation was signed. She shared that with her whole team and everyone in the White House who worked on this, and they were very grateful. Ms. Cobert recommended that the recipients take their copies of the proclamation home, or back to the office, as she finds it inspiring to read it every day.

Ms. Cobert then provided a couple of items as updates. They have been doing some work with the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council in relation to the White House Leadership Fellow program, which was proposed in the budget. The President announced this at the Senior Executive Service (SES) summit in December. It will involve bringing career folks in for rotations and they are working on that. Ms. Cobert also thanked this Council for its support of the overall employee engagement initiative. The teams from OPM and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) hosted 25 agency visits to discuss what each agency is doing. They also had all the senior accountable officials to the White House on Monday to start discussing next steps. Not surprisingly, one of the common themes was how to engage with labor as part of the employee engagement process. The focus on employee engagement has really reemphasized the effectiveness of their relationships with labor—not just in terms of labor relations but in terms of employee engagement. Ms. Cobert said she wanted the Council members to know that this was an important theme in a place where agencies were looking to learn from one another. There will be more on this as they can share those lessons learned and move forward. Ms. Cobert then thanked Ms. Roth for having the Council here today. She then gave her "pitch" for going on the tour of GSA. Ms. Cobert explained that former GSA

Administrator Dan Tangherlini took her on the tour of GSA while the government was shutdown. At the time, she was a nominee and he was the GSA Administrator. There were not a lot of people in the building. It is a fabulous space, and both the space itself and the discussion of the process that led to the design, which works for everybody, is a valuable one. They are going through that at OMB at the moment, and it is well worth doing. Ms. Roth was then given an opportunity to make a few remarks.

Ms. Denise Turner Roth (GSA) thanked the Council for having her there and for selecting GSA as a location for the meeting. She applauded the Council for the work it is doing. She said it is through their collaboration of management and labor that we are able to have strong agencies while also looking forward and being able to plan for the future of the Federal Government. Ms. Roth that for the past 31 years, up until last year, her husband worked for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, with Council Member Filler. She said she learned through that experience the importance of relationships and the importance of the voice of labor. As a manager, she has embraced this and looked for how to strengthen her organization through the strength of its employees. She anticipated that today the Council would hear from employees about what it is like to work in the redesigned GSA space. Ms. Roth noted that in the room were some GSA employees from Kansas City, who had gone through a space redesign and transformation. Many of the employees there did not have windows for probably 20 plus years, and now they have that experience. Ms. Roth said that example is just a small part of what they have to offer in terms of space, and privacy. What they really pride themselves on is the right space for the right work. She said she knows that the Council members will be able to appreciate the collaborative aspects, but also the importance of being able to meet the mission of the organization; while also bringing to the table the voice of employees. This will continue to build stronger Federal agencies, which is really the work of all of us. Ms. Roth thanked the Council members for being there and expressed hope that they will enjoy their tour. She noted that they would get to see her workspace, and that they might be surprised when they do. It works very well for them. She will be available to answer any questions.

Agenda Item II: Report of the Problem Resolution Subcommittee

Mr. Curry introduced this agenda item by explaining that the Council would hear four presentations from the Problem Resolution Subcommittee, on topics involving incentivizing pre-decisional involvement or PDI; contract language; space management PDI; and labor-management forum metrics. He said after the first group presents, there would be time for questions and discussion with the Council, then move on to the next presentation, and so on. The first presentation concerns incentivizing PDI. Mr. Phil Roberts of the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) will provide a brief update. Mr. Curry welcomed Mr. Roberts.

Mr. Roberts said he would provide a very brief update on the work they have done. The second slide of a PowerPoint presentation titled, "Problem Resolution Subcommittee" was displayed initially, and then transitioned to Slide 3 in that presentation. Mr. Roberts noted that, as the Council Members might recall, this group previously developed tools to assist parties with how to use PDI, and how that related to their statutory obligations under the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute. What they have been working on lately is getting people to actually use PDI. They are trying to come up with tools and incentives to use PDI. Toward that

end, they have decided to proceed along two tracks. The Design Track should produce more tools, hopefully soon. The Analysis Track will dig deeper into the question of why people do not use PDI. The group will then use that information to develop more tools. With Slide 4 displayed, Mr. Roberts explained that there are four projects that they are working on. The group recently decided it would try to pursue all of these simultaneously, if they have a critical mass of people. Mr. Roberts said that if anyone is interested in working on this, they would be more than happy to have people help out.

The first of the four projects is “Lessons Learned.” Mr. Roberts explained that this entails coming up with questions that they can pose to people who have been successful with PDI. The first group would be folks who have made presentations to the Council about their success stories. The group would develop some questions, and go to them, to ask if they can provide information about PDI. Have they used it? And what lessons have they learned about using PDI that they can share with others? The information adduced will ultimately be put into a package that will be posted on the National Council website. The second project is on measuring and reporting on PDI outcomes. Mr. Roberts noted that the Council has tools for metrics, but nothing that is specific to PDI outcomes. What they want to develop is basic stuff that people out there using PDI can use to measure this and to show their success and how that success is helping the mission of the agency.

Mr. Roberts transitioned to Slide 5 and explained that the third project they are working on concerns awards and recognition. This will identify ways that groups are recognizing PDI that are successful. The focus will be on how you can award or reward the use of PDI. The fourth project, “Reducing Barriers and Creating Accountability for Using PDI,” is based on a lot of interest in this. The group is still working on this. The idea is how to reduce the barriers that are out there that get in the way of groups using PDI. There is also the question of how you create accountability for the use of PDI on a regular basis. The group has had some discussion on that, and they have a group that is forming to work on that, but it is a project that is under development. Displaying Slide 6, Mr. Roberts then took questions from the Council.

Ms. Cobert said these are some very good, productive things. The idea of finding examples is a good one. She said Ms. Archuleta, who spends lots of time at meetings with her and hears a lot about data, will agree that any correlation they can draw between this and outcomes is always a good thing. In terms of incentives, it is important to be cognizant of the context in which we are living at the moment. What are the kinds of incentives that will work? Things that are fundamental to the work, like official time, are constantly under review and scrutiny. Ms. Cobert said that as we think about how we do this, she thinks the best incentive is success. These things link together. She advised that as the group thinks about incentives, they should think about that context and figure out what will emerge that will be practical. This is the kind of topic where work done well produces good outcomes; folks are more engaged, it is a good thing to do. Figuring out how to communicate that well is part of the challenge. Mr. Roberts agreed.

Ms. Archuleta said she appreciates the work they have done and she is very interested in hearing about how the Council can gather the efforts this group has made and pushing those out; similar to what Ms. Cobert said. It is important to take this work and not just own it here, but think about how to take those best practices and share them, because it is inspirational. It is also enlightening

to see how we can work as labor and management to solve issues that are facing us in each and every workplace. Ms. Archuleta said, “I am very much in favor of PDI.” She said they have been using PDI at OPM, not only to help us with complex problems, but sometimes with simple issues. What they find is that by using PDI very early in the process, it establishes a framework that can be used for much more complex issues. Ms. Archuleta said her questions for Mr. Roberts are: (1) are there one or two lessons learned that you can share with us now? and (2) how would you propose communicating this out? Mr. Roberts said that is a good question. Most of what the group has discussed so far is related to posting information on the website. They have not discussed other methods of disseminating this. That is a good topic for them to look into. One method would be the communication channels available to those in this room; both the union side and the management side could communicate that these tools are available. Aside from that, he can only say that he thinks it is a good idea and they will put it on the agenda for their discussions.

Ms. Archuleta said she would encourage them to think of new ways. Websites are very good but there is always a lot of information on a website. A visitor to the website could miss information if there is too much or if it is not what they think they are looking for. One alternative would be to create a video about the topic—this would be about a two-minute video. Or, the group could look into whether it could be embedded into something else that is not the webpage. It is important to be innovative and creative to capture the attention of folks who may not have thought about this. Once you have their attention, you might be able to rely more on the website. Ms. Cobert said this is an opportunity to learn more about what the labor partners here do within their own organizations, to convey information. It is important to look at a range of organizations to get these ideas. They are doing podcasts about acquisitions, and acquisition officers are listening to them. You can get these free on iTunes or on the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) website. That is just one idea; if you have a different audience, you need to think about what works for them. Mr. Roberts said that, in relation to that comment, even small examples of people using PDI successfully lead to more examples of people using PDI successfully. One of the potential beneficial outcomes of the project with GSA and space management, is this is a place where people can see the benefits of PDI, in a situation that is normally fraught with peril. Once they get used to using PDI in the context of problem-solving, hopefully, this will build on itself. Hopefully, once people are comfortable using PDI in the context of a space move or a space relocation, they will try using it in connection with other topics. This is another way where this could organically expand.

Mr. William R. Dougan (NFFE) said another opportunity may be found by looking at conferences or meetings where several agencies, from across government, are together. Where people are in the same room, the Council should take advantage of those opportunities. It is very important for people to hear the same message. This is sort of like putting on training. If you present training at 10 different locations, you may have people walk away with 10 different messages. He is not saying the Council should necessarily convene a government-wide conference, though it would be great if they could, but as those opportunities present themselves they should consider asking if there is time on the agenda. This is important. Ms. Archuleta noted that one of the ideas that OPM employed was doing this as a 20-minute segment at their senior leadership retreat. They did not make it the whole day, because there were a lot of things on the agenda, but her intent is to keep bringing this up. This is something to suggest not only for

employees, but also for managers. The goal is for it to become a daily practice that managers and employees are using PDI; it is all about communication.

Mr. Gregory Junemann (IFPTE) said it is very important to remember that PDI begins at the point of inception. What he is hearing from his local leaders is that they are being presented with solutions in PDI. He has also heard that PDI has not come to a lot of locations. Instead, there are locations that engage their unions in the implementing of solutions that have been developed without the union's involvement. Mr. Junemann said he sometimes believes that if they had been engaged pre-decisionally, they may have been supportive of the same solution. However, since they were not engaged early, he is doing a lot of training on the filing and processing of unfair labor practice charges (ULPs) and grievances. In other instances, his union is told that, "labor was involved, it just wasn't your union." In that instance, they can "make it rain," even though they do not want to. It is important to remind everyone that, despite the President's proclamation on public servants, we are in an environment of ever-shrinking budgets. When management attempts to adjust to that, and considers, "What are we going to do with the workforce? What are we going to do with training? What are we going to do with travel?" that is where the union needs to be involved. A lot of well-intentioned people looking at the same problems may develop very similar solutions. But, what has been happening is that unions are given solutions to implement. This is where PDI comes in. We need to remember to do all of this at the point of inception, and not at a later point in time. When management has developed solutions and seeks to involve the union when it is ready to implement them, it is too late.

Mr. Bryan DeWyngaert (AFGE) said he wanted to follow up on several comments. He agrees that the idea of success, no matter how small, if given promotion, can lead to other success stories. People are drawn to success, naturally. They want to imitate success, naturally. Ms. Archuleta's question about how to disseminate information about success stories is really a critical question. To answer Ms. Cobert's earlier question about what unions do to communicate, he said they take something of an "all" approach. They do it digitally, they do it through snail mail, they do it through training. They use a variety of ways to try and give the message some lift. They can try to capture this in small bites. This could be a one paragraph story, but every week or every two weeks, always a different success story. That method keeps the message in front of you; keeps it fresh; keeps it innovative; keeps you thinking. The second question, which merits some additional thinking, is how to institutionalize it. What is the long term thought on institutionalizing this, beyond the success stories? Sometimes the bigger success stories do not even get any attention. He said that just before this meeting started, he and Ms. Paige Hinkle-Bowles (DOD) were discussing "New Beginnings." This is a project that started five years ago and involves a new performance management system. It was a little rough at the start, but DOD was gracious enough to back up and begin in true PDI fashion. He said they have been at this now for a number of years. It would probably be another year before final implementation of a performance management overhaul within DOD, which may be the first time ever that has been done comprehensively. Mr. DeWyngaert said he is not sure this is on anyone's radar, save for the folks who are involved in the meetings. Lots of success stories will help.

Mr. Curry thanked Mr. Roberts for his presentation.

Mr. Curry then introduced the second Problem Resolution Subcommittee presentation, by explaining that the Council would hear from Ms. Candace Archer of AFGE. Ms. Archer co-leads a new work group that was formed after the March Council meeting. Many collective bargaining agreements cover similar issues, and often have similar contract language. In light of this, the workgroup is assessing what the Council can do to help management and unions save time during the collective bargaining process.

Ms. Archer began her presentation by displaying Slide 7, titled “Contract Language Working Group,” in the PowerPoint presentation titled, “Problem Resolution Subcommittee.” She said that the workgroup came as a recommendation to look into contract language that appears almost to be boilerplate. The suggestion is to look at what is similar across contracts and between agencies. The workgroup plans to put some meat on the bones around this idea. The workgroup has met twice since the March Council meeting. Their goals include: (1) identifying common language; (2) find ways to make this common language accessible to those who might be in negotiations; and (3) their longer term goal is to find ways this might be implemented. Ms. Archer invited anyone who might want to be part of this, particularly labor partners, to do so. She noted that in negotiations, even one word might be a big sticking point. They want to figure out ways that they can get people to understand there really is a standard that is consistent across contracts and this could potentially streamline negotiations. Longer term, they are looking at possibly designing some guidance. Moving to Slide 8, Ms. Archer said she wanted to show the Council some examples of contract language that is very similar. The workgroup started by looking at what articles are typically in a contract. Now, they are looking at what articles typically look similar from contract to contract. They are now doing the data collection part of this. Again, they welcome additional volunteers to help with that. They are focusing on noncontroversial articles to start off with. They hope to identify things that the workgroup thinks are very similar and should not require a lot of time at the negotiating table, because the outcome tends to look about the same. Ms. Archer then invited questions from the Council Members.

Mr. Michael Filler (IBT) thanked the workgroup for beginning this journey, which he is sure will be a long one. The concept of looking at common contract language will be helpful to some parties. What would be especially helpful, though, is looking at uncommon language. He suggested that this presents an opportunity to merge two of the items on the agenda, especially the pre-decisional involvement issue. That is one area where everyone can benefit from some common language. He said that if we could move forward with a way to institutionalize pre-decisional involvement, and having common contract language in that regard, it would be very helpful. Mr. Filler said he had other comments that he would save for later in the agenda, but space management is an area where there should be ongoing pre-decisional involvement. There should be a list of issues that are always brought up in labor-management forums, so that we do not have to think about it after the fact. It will be part of our everyday operation, like partnership. This would help the labor-management forums to accomplish a lot more. He then thanked Ms. Archer for the presentation.

Ms. Archuleta noted that Council Member Cox had proposed this workgroup at the last Council meeting, and she loves this idea. She said that anything we can learn from one another is very important. For agencies and departments all across the government, any time that we are able to save, is time that we may be able to spend on, perhaps, more difficult conversations. Ms.

Archuleta congratulated Ms. Archer on the work that her group is doing. She thinks it is an important step. She also thanked AFGE for the suggestion. Ms. Archuleta then asked Ms. Archer what more the Council could do to help the workgroup. She asked if there were areas, either PDI or other areas, where they could provide assistance; or if the workgroup was looking for input from the Council with regard to contract articles that they might be able to forward to the workgroup. Ms. Archer responded that there are a few things. First, the workgroup plans to first look at contracts to see which articles are similar, and then look at those articles to identify common language. They are doing a scrub of contracts. That requires a lot of volunteers. One of the things she could ask would be that members of the Council talk to their people about volunteering for the work that needs to be done. The second thing is access to contracts. Getting copies of the contracts is not as easy as it sounds. OPM has a database, but that database is not as complete as they would like it to be. Both of these are things both union and management partners can help with. They are also interested in hearing if any Council members have suggestions for different ways to approach this project or to accomplish the work. She summarized by saying the workgroup is looking for volunteers, brainpower, and anything the Council can do to get them access to more contracts.

Ms. Cobert began by thanking Ms. Archer and saying that this is something of real value. In a somewhat analogous way, they are trying to do something similar on the procurement side. They are looking at procurement contracts, and have started with the IT space. She recommended that if Ms. Archer goes on the tour later, she could ask Ms. Roth about it, as the GSA team is supporting these efforts. Procurement contracts are completely different; they are long and complicated. You would think they would all be the same but they are not. At a minimum, there may be some lessons learned from another group that has done something similar, across government. Ms. Cobert noted that it is hard to get those contracts. Ms. Cobert then offered a couple of take-aways from having started that journey a couple of months ago. She said, this is a great example of “not letting the perfect be the enemy of the good.” There will be parts of this that are very standard. Sharing that information while you are still working on other aspects of this will help build momentum. You will learn something from that. If you find something that is the same across contracts or that should be same, you should share that even while you are continuing to work. She said that would be one of their lessons learned; they were being a little too comprehensive at the beginning, as opposed to sharing initial impressions along the way. Ms. Archer said that is sort of their philosophy. They plan to start easy, with noncontroversial topics, like the preamble. That is not something people normally argue over, it tends to not be grievable, and it should be pretty similar across contracts.

Ms. Catherine Emerson (DHS) offered a suggestion that she said might save the workgroup some time. She asked the Council members if they could all take a look at their contracts, and come up with the ones that they think are fair. It may not be the whole contract. It may be a section or sections that they can then offer to the group. This might save Ms. Archer and her folks some time. Ms. Archer said they would really appreciate that. Ms. Archer also said that it is very important for agencies and unions to see that they do not always need to argue over every word. There can be great templates out there, and sometimes they can move forward with that. It really takes negotiating teams that are willing to accept that. Ms. Archer noted that the workgroup is far away from having recommendations, but these are the sort of things they are

looking at. This could streamline negotiations and help parties to not be embroiled for weeks on something like the preamble.

Mr. Curry then introduced the third presentation from the Problem Resolution Subcommittee. He said the Council will hear from the space management and PDI work group. This group was formed at the last Council meeting, and it has been busy for the last two months. Today, the Council will hear from Julie Clark of the FLRA and Temple Wilson of GSA. He welcomed Ms. Clark and Ms. Wilson, and asked what they could share with the Council.

Ms. Wilson began by thanking the Council for having them as presenters. Slide 10, "Space Management and PDI" of the PowerPoint Presentation titled, "Problem Resolution Subcommittee," was displayed. Ms. Wilson explained that the workgroup had been meeting frequently since the last Council meeting. She pointed out that, as mentioned at the last Council meeting, there was a lot of involvement and a healthy volunteer pool for this workgroup. The volunteer pool has increased since the last Council meeting. The Small Business Administration (SBA) joined the group, Department of Labor (DOL) expressed interest, and Ms. Wilson spoke with someone from the National Science Foundation (NSF) that morning and they also have an interest. This is a timely issue and the workgroup is excited to see so many who are interested and involved.

Displaying Slide 11, Ms. Wilson explained that the group had spent the last few weeks focusing on what they can do in the short term. They are seeking to identify short term deliverables and setting time lines for completion. They have identified long term deliverables as well, though those might be more of a "wish list." Displaying Slide 12, Ms. Wilson explained these are things they would like to do with the permission of the Council. Ms. Wilson said she likes the idea of a Podcast and will have to begin thinking about that. They would like to set up an area on the National Council website for a suite of tools. These would focus on the topic of space management and PDI, and could include items such as the video of the presentation they will hear later today. Also, by the time of the next Council meeting, they would like to develop a one-page list of their top-10 recommendations for a successful space move or space redesign. They would like to complete this by July and load it into the new area on the website for this suite of tools. Ms. Wilson noted that the joint labor-management working group is splitting up into smaller groups to accomplish some of these tasks. They also plan to put together a list of contacts. This would include representatives at the FLRA, FMCS³, and GSA to whom people can reach out with questions and to seek assistance if they need it. Third, the group wants to assemble pre-existing documents, such as Executive Orders and PDI tools, and place them in one place on the website. Moving to Slide 13, Ms. Wilson said the group is looking at success stories. They may want to reach out to agencies that have been through the process, to ask what their experience was. Maybe they can video their success story, or invite them to speak to the Council, and then make that video part of the suite of tools. The workgroup would also pull information from those experiences to include in any guidance they develop. These are all short-term things the group is working on. The next short-term project the group is looking at is not an easy thing, as it will take substantial effort to pull together. Ms. Wilson introduced Ms. Clark and asked her to speak about that.

³ Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

Ms. Clark said they are going to be offering a pilot two-day training program, on July 23rd and 24th, here at GSA. The FLRA's Regional Office structure allows them to provide training and outreach on an ongoing basis. This fiscal year, the theme of their outreach and training is "Rights, Responsibilities, and Relationships." They will be taking that theme and applying it to the space issue. They will be working with GSA and FMCS to develop a training program with concrete deliverables and take-aways that the group will have. In terms of making this a short-term goal, the deliverables will be sound in terms in content. However, they are calling this a "pilot" training program because they hope this audience will provide feedback on the training program. That will allow them to, very quickly, turn these tools into assets that can be used more broadly, such as by posting on the webpage, or making them into a Podcast. They can also be incorporated into the FLRA's regional structure, together with their FMCS and GSA partners, so they can have teams out there who can be resources to present this program to groups on an as-needed or even regular basis. It will help to provide assistance on a topic that can be an opportunity and a challenge at the same time. She thinks this is the perfect team because the FLRA can present the information in terms of the "rights" piece from a labor relations standpoint, while FMCS can focus on the relationship-building and PDI tools that are necessary, and then the GSA part, which we all need, is that essential roadmap to this pre-decisional process and to identify those points at which the employees, all employees—management and union representatives, have an opportunity to influence the process or make decisions. Having that roadmap, then we're really in a position to bring all this information there. By then, folks will understand the end-game, and solve those questions up front and do so in a more meaningful, time saving and cost-effective way. In terms of the participants in the pilot, they can accommodate about 70-80. Ms. Wilson noted that GSA had reserved this same space where the meeting is being held, for the training opportunity. Ms. Clark said that they have not yet determined how to identify the target audience, and they are interested in receiving the Council's guidance on that. Ms. Wilson noted that this is not an easy task, but she and Ms. Clark believe that by putting a firm time-line on it, they will get it done. If they get the go-ahead to move forward, they will get it done. She thanked the FLRA for the suggestion.

Transitioning to Slide 14, Ms. Wilson described the group's plan for long-term deliverables. They would like to take all of the material that they put together for the training and either put it online as part of the suite of tools they intend to place on the Council's website, or create a situational training tool. Then, if someone is not able to attend face-to-face training, they can have a training tool that may be situation-based. This would enable participants to identify the appropriate resources for their situation, such as dealing with a space move, or a space redesign, or a consolidation. They could then click on that situation, and see more resources and information dealing with what the process is, where those influence points are in terms of pre-decisional involvement, and where the statutory obligations are in terms of bargaining. Those are the sorts of things that a situational training tool would include. It will take much more time if they do this, but they are interested in it. The group is also looking at "PDI in a fishbowl." This concept is described on Slide 15. If they have a group that is interested in having SME⁴ assistance, then perhaps they can record that in some way. This is sort of a wish list, but they're putting it out there. They are very excited and hope the Council is, too. Ms. Wilson then invited questions from the Council.

⁴ Subject matter expert.

Ms. Cobert said that, first, she is very excited about this and the practicality of what they are doing. She would urge folks to think about trying to find people to participate in the PDI in the fishbowl, even if it means we have to give them editing rights. That would be fair. The goal of this is to actually show real dialogue, but in a way that respects the people in it. She thinks they can make that happen. She then said there are two things to consider. This is a place where, unlike some other issues, with space moves people should know when it is coming. For example, they have to prepare budget proposals for OMB and they work with her team and GSA in doing that. Ms. Cobert recommended using that to generate the invite-list for the trainings. A decision to move office space, or to reconfigure office space, takes a lot of planning. She is going through this right now. When you are planning for a move or a renovation, there are many things to consider before you get to the nuts and bolts of the specifics. She thinks that working with GSA and the Office of Federal Financial Management, which is working with every agency on their Federal real estate plans, should give us a pretty good list of folks who should be interested in going to that training. She recommended leveraging that, noting that adult learning works when it is practical and tangible to things you need to do. We know who the people are who are going to be making moves and making decisions about space in the next six to nine months; and those are the people who are going to be the target audience. OMB is happy to support that, and she knows that GSA is happy to support that. Ms. Wilson said that is a great idea, and they had talked about having an invite list. This is further support of that idea.

Ms. Archuleta said that the CHCO Council had a briefing on this yesterday. They are asking them to help the Council think about who might be interested in participating in the pilot. That is something they can bring to the table. Ms. Archuleta said she fully supports what Ms. Cobert just said. The Council should look for opportunities as opposed to waiting for opportunities to come to them. Ms. Cobert noted that OMB knows the places where issues related to space should be coming up. Ms. Archuleta said she was excited to hear about NSF becoming part of the group. As they put up their new building they will face these issues, and she is sure that is why their level of interest is high. Looking for those opportunities to provide this would serve the Council well. Mr. Curry inquired as to whether any other Council members had questions or comments. There were none.

Mr. Curry then introduced the final presentation from the Problem Resolution Subcommittee for today's meeting, which was an update from the metrics working group. He said that the Council is in the process of gathering and reviewing labor-management forum metrics reports that were due to the Council at the end of 2014. He introduced Ms. Wilson to provide the update.

Ms. Wilson displayed Slide 17 of the PowerPoint presentational titled, "Problem Resolution Subcommittee." She said that the metrics working group has been working hard since the last Council meeting. They still have not gotten in depth into reviewing the reports received. However, they have gotten through all of the reports that they do have, to at least get a baseline of what they are looking at. The group wants to report on that. First, Ms. Wilson said she had a few administrative items to cover. First, as of today, they have received 47 metrics reports. She noted that this is an update to the number shown on the pre-printed PowerPoint slides. There are five reports outstanding. They have a recommendation about that, which she will provide in a moment. She wanted the Council to be aware that the follow-up efforts are continuing.

Displaying Slide 18, Ms. Wilson explained that the group divided the reports up between the volunteers for analysis. They have discussed them as a group. They are looking at taking a deeper dive into the reports. Some of the volunteers have read all of the reports. She transitioned to Slide 19, and said there are some highlights the group wanted to point out for the Council. The group could see very clearly by reviewing the reports that PDI is happening and a lot of agencies are engaging their labor-management forums. Many are reporting successful results, which the group views as a very positive thing. The group wants to look at the data on this, and they have not had an opportunity to do that yet. They would like to look at things like the percentage of forums that are reporting that PDI is happening; the percentage of forums reporting that results are positive, and the percentage reporting that results are not so positive; and the percentage reporting on metrics in particular categories. Those are things the group plans to do in the future. However, here are some highlights they would like to focus on. First, there are some areas for improvement identified by the report. One thing they noticed is that eight of the 47 agencies reporting have reported they have no forum. This is something the working group would like to address. Second, a majority of the reports include anecdotal data. This is not even qualitative data that the group can use to measure; and it is certainly not quantitative data. This is creating a communication gap. It is not giving the group the results they would like to bring to the Council in order to say, "This is what is happening out there." However, they do see that there are some positive things happening. For instance, there was one agency that thought it would have to have people take forced annual leave at the end of the calendar year because of budgetary reasons. But, through their joint forum, they found a way where they did not have to do that. It was a very positive result. They were still able to realize the budget savings. The report did not provide any additional information beyond that. The group has some recommendations.

While displaying Slide 21, Ms. Wilson explained that the first recommendation is for the working group to continue its comprehensive review. The next is that they refer the eight agencies, and perhaps the five agencies who have not yet submitted their reports, to see if there is some assistance the subcommittee can offer to these groups to help them overcome any difficulties. Another recommendation is intended to help the group close the communication gap. They have discussed identifying five to 10 of the groups that they have where the reports look interesting, such as the one she just described with the budget savings and forced annual leave issue, and contact the groups. The group would like to engage in a very short interview seeking more information about what the group is doing; asking if there is anything they can share about the process they use in their joint forum; asking what data they are using in the forum; and asking if they are involving the agency's Performance Improvement Officer and the data folks. The intention is to get the bigger picture of what they are doing, and to close that communication gap. The group also would like to ask if the forum participants have any feedback for the Council, specifically whether any changes should be made to the reporting process to make things better for them.

Ms. Wilson noted that reports will be due again at the end of this calendar year, on December 31st. The group would like to use this very quickly, if they can, and perhaps focus the guidance that they send out with reminders about the reporting deadline. Maybe the group can use some of the input that it receives to reshape the guidance that it sends out to agencies with the reminders of the upcoming reporting deadline. As a longer term issue, it may be appropriate to retool some of the guidance that is out there. But, in the short term, perhaps they could modify the guidance

that accompanies the reminders of the reports that are due. This is where they are now. Displaying Slide 22, Ms. Wilson said that with the Council's permission the group intends to continue their comprehensive review of the reports received. She then said she would be happy to answer any questions. Slide 23 was displayed.

Ms. Archuleta asked how the Council can help Ms. Wilson and her group to continue their assessment of the reports. Ms. Archuleta offered that if they could work with the Performance Improvement Council to do that, it would be great. Also, Ms. Archuleta said that in her experience with working with the CHCO Council, often there are a lot of reports that are going out. It is not always a matter of an agency not wanting to get a report done. Rather, it's a matter of not knowing how to get a report done. If it is possible to provide a sample example demonstrating qualitative versus quantitative responses, that would be a good thing. Or, if there is only qualitative, what makes the qualitative report very good, as opposed to an anecdote? These sorts of examples would be very helpful to agencies. It is often not a matter of "I don't want to do it," it's "I don't know how to do it." Ms. Archuleta said that doing this, in conjunction with involving the Performance Improvement Council, would be great. Ms. Wilson agreed and said the group can do that.

Mr. Dougan said this really highlights one of the continuing challenges. That is, how do we measure the success or the efficiency and the effectiveness of working in a pre-decisional manner within the forums? We saw this in the Clinton administration. The Executive Order on partnership did not contain anything on how to measure success or how to demonstrate that partnership is worth continuing or worth having. As a result of that, President Obama came out with this Executive Order, stressing metrics. We need to be able to measure. We see that we are continuing to struggle. Mr. Dougan said that what the Council ought to think about is, is there a way to design some fairly simple tools that we can give to labor-management forums, to managers, and to agencies, to use. They would not have to be an economist or a PhD in mathematics, but yet, to the extent we can, we should try to be quantitative if we can. Really, that is what is needed in order to demonstrate that this stuff is worth continuing. Administrations come and go, parties come and go in power; and if we do not have a way to demonstrate that this is good stuff and it is worth continuing to invest in, then we're left to the winds of whoever is sitting in the White House and whoever is sitting in power in the House and Senate of Congress. Mr. Dougan said that the group could focus on that, and come up with a few very simple tools. These should show how to measure cost savings, if that is one of the outcomes being measured. If the parties engaged in PDI and saved a bunch of money, how do we measure that. He said it is also important, if we can, to be consistent across agencies. We should not use radically different tools, because then you are looking at apples and oranges. If we can focus on that, it would be a great outcome: get people trained in how to use those tools and then start using them. Then, we will have a shot at improving these reports and really showing and highlighting, both objectively and qualitatively, why PDI and why these forums are worth continuing to invest in.

Ms. Cobert said there are lots of things like this, where we all know in our gut that it works. There must be a way to quantify that. She faces this often in terms of conferences and travel. It is easy to measure the cost. One of the things she keeps emphasizing is the importance of quantifying the benefits, so that there will be one tangible thing to go with the other tangible

thing, then the case is stronger. She urged Ms. Wilson and her group to reach out to the PIC.⁵ Their role in life is to help find ways, across all elements of mission and management performance, to help agencies and all of us to get to practical metrics. They will not be perfect the first time through, but by pushing these and having them we can all make progress. They are very good at thinking creatively about how to do it. They can assist by providing direction to get you in the right place. These metrics are not costly to track and can be easily understood by people who do not have PhDs in statistics. They are a real resource here. Even if we start with a handful that are consistent and others that are agency-specific, that might be a way forward.

Mr. Junemann said he was delighted to hear someone from OMB say that you have got to feel this in your gut. It is great to get the measurables and the metrics and the statistics, but you either believe that you need employee engagement, or you do not. It does not really need to be proven on a whole lot of charts and spreadsheets. This just makes sense. Even on things we've discussed before, like space. I may know as a labor leader that we have a labor group in Duluth, Minnesota or Lincoln, Nebraska, and we are going to put them in a new building. They are either going to go cooperatively or they are going to go kicking and screaming, and it is a matter of how we approach that. If we believe in our gut that employees have a lot of really good ideas then we need to engage them. And we do not need to engage all of them because, God bless them, they joined a union so we can work with the unions as we go on. Certainly somebody like Ms. Cobert has to go before Congress with charts and data and all that stuff, because people like numbers and charts. But, I think you either believe in this stuff or you do not. I am really delighted to hear you say that.

Mr. Filler said that, as stewards of the public trust, there really is not a better topic to be dealt with by a labor-management forum than space management. It gets to the issue of the size of government, and then we cannot forget the role of government. He said that there is part of this that would be easy to measure, using the "Mader Memo,"⁶ related to reducing the size of the Federal footprint. But, if we focus solely on just on size and reduction in space, without really looking at it in terms of staff impact and organizational performance, then we are coming up with just one set of metrics that does not look at the real impact on how that affects public service. Mr. Filler said that he thinks these things need to be connected. We need to look at reducing the size and getting the right footprint. That needs to be connected with the impact on the staff, and the input you can get from the Employee Viewpoint Survey (EVS). Lastly, and most importantly, is the impact on the public and customer service. We need to look at how these things connect together. I think then we will have the right picture and the right set of measures to evaluate our success.

Ms. Cobert said that she could not agree more with all of those things. In the benchmarking they are doing this year, they have put a real focus on satisfaction and quality, as well as cost. She knows that GSA is very committed to this. They did a big tenant satisfaction survey this year across all of their space. In fact, there are some very interesting and positive stories where a move to new space; space configured differently uses less space and they have been able to

⁵ Performance Improvement Council.

⁶ This references a document that was handed out at the meeting. The document is Management Procedures Memorandum No. 2015-01, from David Mader (OMB Controller), with the subject, "Implementation of OMB Memorandum M-12-12 Section 3: Reduce the Footprint."

generate real results. Especially if you take the model that Ms. Turner Roth described earlier, which is the right space for the right kind of work. Different space demands different things. Frankly, even different people doing the same kind of work like to work differently. I think it is that integrated set of metrics: what have we done in terms of cost? What have we done in terms of satisfaction of the people who work there? How do we think that relates to their engagement? That is a core metric that we continue to focus on, because we know that engagement leads to improved mission performance. It is all about how we bring these pieces of data together. It is a really important thing right now.

Ms. Archuleta said that, adding to what Mr. Filler said, other indicators are where innovation and collaboration are going to produce the better product or service to the American people. Then, of course, there is the satisfaction of our employees for the work that they do. Looking at the EVS, especially in areas like GSA, can help us to begin to pull that out and help us to understand how, even while reducing the footprint, we may have increased innovation, collaboration, and delivery of service to the American people. This would be data worth looking at. Mr. Curry thanked Ms. Wilson for her presentation.

Agenda Item III: Labor-Management Forum Success Story

Mr. Curry introduced this next agenda item and said it concerns a labor-management forum success story. In fact, this success story is what led to the creation of the Space Management PDI working group. Today, we will hear about how labor and management worked together here at GSA on addressing space management issues. Mr. Curry said he would turn it over to Sue Scheider of GSA and he would ask Ms. Scheider to introduce her co-presenters. He thanked Ms. Scheider for joining the meeting.

Ms. Scheider displayed the first slide in a PowerPoint presentation titled, "General Services Administration Labor-Management Forum Success Story" and said that they knew the time for the Space Management PDI project was right, but not until their working group got started working on it did they realize how much it would intersect with other activities that are being sponsored by the National Council. Not only is the Problem Resolution Subcommittee working on a number of aspects of other projects that intersect with the Space Management PDI, but even out there in other agencies and budget making. When we thought to schedule today's success story, we did not know that OMB would issue the Reduce the Footprint guidance exactly one week after the last National Council meeting. What we had planned was for GSA to present a success story of how we developed our own internal space utilization policy and the successful PDI story of how our unions helped us formulate that policy and make it better. Today we are going to hear first from Dan Miller, of GSA's Office of Administrative Services (OAS), who will cover a little bit about Freeze the Footprint and Reduce the Footprint, so that everyone is up to speed on that. Then, he will talk about how he had the foresight and commitment to carry out a very successful three-day workshop with both of our unions. You will hear also from members of both of those unions who actually participated in the workshop. First we will hear from Ms. Rakaia Jackson, who is the National President of the NFFE/GSA Council. Then we'll hear from Ms. Margaret Lien, who is the Acting National Council President, from the AFGE Council of GSA Locals Number 236.

Dan Miller then displayed Slide 2 in the same PowerPoint presentation. He introduced himself as the program manager for GSA's Model Workplace Initiative. Today, he would like to provide some context and share GSA's story. He will focus on GSA's goals, and describe how they worked with their unions to implement a strategy. He will describe how they conducted PDI in the development of that policy. He will also talk a little about the feedback they have received. He will share the highlights of the policy that they created, and a recent example of its implementation. He will conclude with what they see as the most important next steps. He asked the Council to bear with him, because he will be telling a bit of a story. He then displayed Slide 3 in the PowerPoint presentation, which is a picture of a man holding a baby. Mr. Miller explained that this man is the late Paul Boymel. In addition to being a wonderful grandfather to Mr. Miller's two children, he was also a five-time Jeopardy champion in 1985 and a "walking Google," decades before Google existed. Mr. Miller then displayed Slide 4, and explained that it was his late father-in-law's office. Mr. Boymel had used his Jeopardy winnings to take a year off of work, and then he went back to school. He leveraged that education to get a job as an attorney with the EEOC.⁷ He spent 25 years with the government and, again, this was his office. Displaying Slide 5, Mr. Miller explained that technology has come a long way. Not only does everyone have Paul Boymel in their pockets, since most can access Google through their cell phones, but computers have been taught to outthink humans. For those of you who remember, in 2011, Watson—an artificially intelligent computer—beat two Jeopardy champions at their own game. Displaying Slide 6, Mr. Miller noted that the question is, how has, and how will, technology impact the workplace. He then displayed Slide 7 and said that GSA responded to that question with a few, "big, hairy, audacious goals." They wanted to lead the government-wide workplace transformation. Beyond that, they wanted to improve the performance of their buildings, from an environmental standpoint, and their people. GSA wanted to increase employee engagement, improve design quality and space utilization, and save tax-payer dollars. We see that the transformation can have an impact in many ways other than just reducing cost or reducing space.

Mr. Miller then displayed Slide 8 and said that here was the unfortunate perception of what those goals meant. It was that they were going to create these small spaces and cram everybody in. He then displayed Slide 9 and explained that the reality is much different. The reality is the space the Council sits in today; it is 1800 F Street. For those who go on a tour, they will see open-plan environments with desk sharing, access to natural light for everyone, with a variety of workspace options for everyone. If you tend to focus more and do that type of work, then they have small rooms for you to go to. If you collaborate more, then they have those types of spaces. He explained that GSA really took a non-hierarchical approach and instead used a needs-based approach, as the Acting Administrator described earlier. Mr. Miller then displayed Slide 10 and said that in addition to these goals they had set, which they began to implement with the consolidation of their headquarters; OMB, in March 2013, issued its Freeze the Footprint guidance. That guidance required two things. One is to create a three-year strategy cost savings plan, and then to report out on that plan annually. Mr. Miller displayed Slide 11 and said that throughout GSA's transformation, one perception that was often cited was, "we're different." The idea was either that we are different within GSA, or outside GSA, but either way, this will not work for me. Before moving forward with the national transformation, even though we had a model here at 1800 F Street, they knew their next step was to engage the unions, before deciding

⁷ Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

what that would look like moving forward. He then displayed Slide 12, and said that GSA met with representatives of AFGE and NFFE for three days in November 2013. The purpose was to present the initiative and GSA's goals, to establish clear and open communication, exchanging ideas, developing recommendations and best practices, and identifying and responding to questions and concerns. Mr. Miller noted that the agenda for that meeting was provided as a handout for the Council members.⁸ In the agenda, they focused on guest speakers, who spoke about design and environmental transit impact. They went on site visits to various locations, to see different workplace examples. They also facilitated exercises to elicit input on a variety of workplace-related topics. He transitioned to Slide 13 and said that here are the top three things that came out of those discussions. The top three concerns shared by the unions were acoustics, privacy, and ergonomics.

Mr. Miller transitioned to Slide 14 and said that GSA did not go into discussions with the unions with preconceived notions, and they did not have a draft policy to share with the unions, prior to PDI. They went into PDI with an open slate, not sure what the policy would look like. GSA then drafted the policy, and focused on clear roles and responsibilities. The draft also provided a framework for implementation, which allowed for customization of the project at the local level. They set allocation limits and utilization targets. They focused the language in the policy on design quality and the three top issues of acoustics, privacy, and ergonomics. Mr. Miller noted that the Council should have copies of the policy.⁹ GSA chose to go with a framework, rather than a very detailed, prescriptive policy, because it allows for local input and decision-making. It also requires that GSA engage the unions, pre-decisionally, before starting each project. The framework helps those discussions, because they are able to engage on a project-by-project basis. This leads to an engaged staff.

Mr. Miller then transitioned to Slide 15 and said that, after the three days in November 2013, GSA solicited feedback from the participants, and they got some very good, positive feedback. One hundred percent of the participants said that they felt engaged, and their ideas and input were valued; that the discussion topics were helpful and relevant. He noted that it was not GSA talking to the participants. Rather, they brought in experts and they went out of the building. It was very experiential. He continued by saying that 100 percent of the participants also indicated that the content and design of the agenda was effective and that the working group was a really positive experience.

Mr. Miller displayed Slide 16 and said that, in summary, he has provided some context; shared GSA's transformation story, which is still ongoing; focused on their goals; described how GSA worked with its unions to develop a national implementation strategy; and described how they conducted PDI and the feedback they received. Mr. Miller said that, since the beginning of 2013, GSA has reduced its internal footprint by over a million usable square feet, from about 6.6 million to about 5.6 million. Referencing the slide, he said here is a highlight, an example of GSA's most recent positive outcome. It involves the Kansas City office, in Missouri. He encouraged Council Members to take a tour if they are ever in Kansas City, Missouri. GSA was able to reduce its space in half, from 264,000 to 132,000 square feet. GSA has a tool that

⁸ This document, titled, "Improving GSA's Workplace: Joint Labor Working Group," and dated November 18, 2013 was provided as a handout at the meeting.

⁹ This document, titled, "GSA Policy and Procedure," was provided as a handout at the meeting.

measures design quality. They feel that they have improved that quality by over 100 percent. The feedback that they have received from staff so far has been really positive. They did implement desk-sharing, but it is a very different environment; it is even different from 1800 F Street. He thinks they have taken some lessons learned from this project and improved upon it there. It is a really good success story for us.

Transitioning to Slide 17, Mr. Miller said that when faced with ever tightening budgets, the choice can often be between retaining staff and reducing space. For example, in GSA's central office consolidation, they were able to eliminate about \$25 million in lease payments. That could be equivalent to about 200 people. There are potential benefits beyond what they are doing to create engaging workplaces to foster engagement and productivity. Mr. Miller then displayed Slide 18 and said that he had two more points to emphasize. First, they believe that "change management" is an important next step. GSA has developed an internal program that is focused on helping employees to make the transition. This includes helping them to understand and utilize the latest technology, and how to deal with electronic files and records management, and hoteling. GSA is committed to engaging in PDI on all of its projects moving forward. The policy is the framework; it does not cover everything. Their change management mechanism is in place to support the employees, without that it will not necessarily work, to support the employees as they transition to new ways of working. Mr. Miller then displayed Slide 19 and said that lastly, OMB has recently issued a Reduce the Footprint policy, which is a follow-up to the Freeze the Footprint policy. This change provides a great opportunity for other agencies to create that framework and to work with their unions pre-decisionally to create policies similar to what GSA did; and to come up with a five-year implementation strategy. Both of those are actual requirements of that policy. Mr. Miller closed by saying that they still have a lot of work to do, and he would welcome any questions or comments.

Ms. Cobert said that based on her tour here and at other places, it seems as though the overall approach and the process for engaging with individuals is key to the success of this. The difference between space utilization and ability to get light; all of those different factors are important. There is, in this case, no substitute for the dialogue about where we are going and how people work. There is a genuine opportunity here to bring folks together, have a conversation, and emerge with a more effective workplace and a more efficient workplace. This is one of those places where you actually can get there. There often is a tradeoff between those two things, but done well, you can get both at the same time.

Ms. Rakaia Jackson then took the podium. She said that Mr. Miller did a very good job of describing their three-day workshop. It was all of the things he talked about. It was very engaging. It was an opportunity to get outside of our normal paradigm of how we do PDI. She said that she would be remiss if she did not go beyond that and share that PDI is not a one-time level of engagement. It is very important that you engage your union partners throughout the process. Even as decisions begin to formulate and develop, if something shifts in your PDI paradigm, it is important to bring your union partners back in. As they being rolling the process out to their local field offices, it is important that they engage them in the PDI process as well. As Mr. Miller stated, the PDI framework was created at the national level. But, when you get down to some of the locals—and the way they do business in some of GSA's regions is different than how it is done at the national office—it is important to engage the locals in the PDI process.

Again, this is not just a one-time opportunity. You can drop the ball if you bring the unions in at one time, and then beginning rolling out without further input. This is a journey, not a one-time trip. Ms. Jackson concluded by saying that Mr. Miller did a good job at that level, but it is important to consistently bring the union back to the table.

Ms. Margaret Lien then introduced herself by saying that she is currently the Executive Vice President of AFGE Council 236. She is also serving as the Acting President of that council while Bruce Williams is on a medical absence. She said it is her pleasure to speak with the Council about the PDI that AFGE, NFFE, and GSA management have engaged in over the space alignment. Along with Ms. Jackson and Mary Behrendt from NFFE, Ms. Lien also works with Tajuana Maddox of AFGE. Ms. Lien said they participated in a PDI workshop that was very successful, in her opinion. The purpose was to advise GSA on the framework that they wanted the GSA policy to include. The three-day workshop was probably the best PDI workshop that she has engaged in. What made it such a good workshop and activity was the range of issues that they covered during those three days, and the obvious and very genuine interest by Mr. Miller of GSA management, by Ms. Scheider of GSA labor relations, and by the two unions. The unions' opinions were truly helpful in forming the policy of GSA. The agency actively listened to them during PDI. Ms. Lien noted that she sees a big difference between listening and actively listening, and GSA demonstrated that it actively listened to them. They knew that their comments and suggestions would be included in the policy. When the drafts of the policy were issued to the unions several months later, they submitted comments. A number of their responses made it into the final policy. Ms. Lien said that, overall, engaging in PDI over this issue was a very good example of one of the best ways that unions can be involved with management, and can contribute to improved outcomes for their membership and the agency's mission. It proves that agencies and unions can successfully work together for a successful outcome.

Ms. Lien closed by saying that AFGE has a presence in all 11 regions of GSA. They began working in the regions to reduce the footprint as they were forming the policy. Where Ms. Lien came from in Region 10, which is in Washington, they were doing informal PDI. They worked things out in the region that they, once upon a time, would have formally engaged in negotiations on. They worked out the problems up front. The employee has normal questions and concerns about things like, "What if I have to sit next to a person who has an extremely loud voice, or somebody with horrible body odor, or somebody who never shuts up and I can't get my work done?" The employee may say, "It's bad enough now, but if you reduce the space, what is the impact going to be." Those are some of the typical concerns that employees have. Management was also expressing concerns about, "If the employees are irritable, how am I going to manage this successfully?" They worked together by taking the issues one at a time and working them out. Ms. Lien said there was one thing that worked to their benefit. A lot of the employees in Region 10 are on AWS, maxi-flex; and, better yet, work-at-home. When the employees are not in the office five days a week, they are more flexible when they are in the office. They are more willing for one, two, or three days a week, to be in more close quarters than they would otherwise have been. Ms. Lien said she thought this was a wonderful advantage that they had going into reducing the footprint. She said it was a very positive experience, and thanked the Council. Mr. Curry asked if the Council had any final questions. There were none.

Agenda Item IV: New Business

Mr. Curry thanked Acting GSA Administrator Denise Turner Roth for making this wonderful room available for today's meeting. He offered special thanks to the entire GSA team here for working with the OPM team on all of the logistics. Our next Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 15, 2015, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The Council is currently scheduled to return to our usual meeting space at OPM. However, if that changes, we will let you know as soon as possible. Mr. Curry announced that they would now cover new business, and asked if any Council Member wished to raise any new business. There was none.

Agenda Item V: Acknowledgment/Receipt of Public Submissions

Mr. Curry stated that, as a FACA Committee, the Council offers opportunities for members of the public to make brief statements to the Council. He asked, "Does any member of the public wish to make any brief statement to the Council?" There were two public comments.

Mr. Matthew K. Asada, Vice President of the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) addressed the Council. Mr. Asada introduced himself and noted that AFSA is the public sector union for the Foreign Service across six foreign affairs agencies. He said he wanted to offer comments today on one of the topics on the agenda, which was Space Management and Pre-Decisional Involvement. Mr. Asada said it is great that the Council is here in this building. He said he had to commend AFSA's colleagues at the Department of State. They actually had the two unions, the AFSA and AFGE, come to the GSA building to take a look at what had been done, before they decided to do some of their collaborative, open-plan offices at the Department of State itself. This topic is really ripe for the Council's consideration. He said GSA is serving not only as a model for, again, productive labor-management relations at its own level, but for the entire Federal government. The other unions can learn from this experience. Finally, Mr. Asada said he would like to submit to the Council that the State Department is unique in that it has the overseas and domestic property. AFSA submits that this topic of pre-decisional involvement for space management is really something to take a look at. For several of the unions around the table here, you have members overseas as well. In our embassies, our consulates; that is where the saving is to be gained. This is because the cost of building and maintaining classified spaces is extreme. He said that if we can, again, collaboratively—labor and management together—think about how to better design our embassies, better design our consulates, to ensure that not only the workers but also the people we are working with, our foreign counterparts, have a positive experience, then that is a net win-win. Mr. Asada said he wanted to submit some written comments to the Council, describing AFSA's experience and observations here at GSA, and also to encourage the Council to push this out to all of their agencies and to all of their unions so they can have more labor-management involvement in this space. Mr. Curry thanked him and said the Council would accept the written comments.¹⁰

Jack Hanley offered the next public comment. He said that he is a Federal employee, and his comment revolves around the perception on the part of Federal employees on the success or failure of this body. He said that if you look at the situation of the average Federal employee, for how many years have they gotten essentially no raise? They have now had an increase in

¹⁰ On May 21, 2015, Mr. Asada emailed his written submission. That submission is attached to these minutes.

contributions to Federal retirement for certain prospective retirees, with no benefit that accrues because of your additional donation. Mr. Hanley continued by saying that, in terms of people speaking to each other and patting each other on the back, he thought this was a good meeting for the Council. However, he does not think—they need to hear from somebody, and he just happens to be in a position where he can make a comment to them, the average Federal employee does not feel good about how he has been treated in this administration. That is the simple matter of fact. And so, talking about success stories—though he said he does know the Council needs to celebrate its small successes—pales in comparison to what has happened, where the overall economy has increased tremendously. The stock market has increased tremendously during President Obama’s administration, with no benefit accruing to Federal employees—in fact, they are going backwards. He then thanked the Council. Mr. Curry thanked him for his comment.

Adjournment

Ms. Archuleta thanked everyone for the great conversation they had today. She said she appreciated being here in the GSA space, and noted that she had the opportunity to visit around the country, and most of OPM’s offices are in GSA space. They know that the great examples that they saw here are spreading across the country. OPM has been fortunate to be a part of that. She noted that the next meeting will be in July. Ms. Cobert then thanked everyone for the productive discussion. She appreciated the comments about space and also the discussion about metrics. This will enable them to reinforce the benefits of many of the actions that are being taken in the labor-management forums and in PDI, and it will serve us all well in the long haul. She also thanked everyone for their participation and for the really high quality presentations and conversation.

Mr. Curry said that, as he indicated at the beginning of the meeting, GSA will be providing a brief tour of their facilities. Council members and their staff will depart first on a tour led by Mr. Bart Bush of GSA over on the left side of the room. For others attending the meeting who are not part of the Council, a tour will be led by GSA staff and it will be departing from the right side of the room.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.