

**National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations
33rd Public Meeting
November 19, 2014**

The National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations held its 33rd meeting at the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 810 7th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., on November 19, 2014. 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
Ms. Carol Bonosaro	President, Senior Executives Association
Mr. William Dougan	President, National Federation of Federal Employees
Mr. Michael Filler	Director of Public Services, International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Mr. Sloan D. Gibson	Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs
Mr. David Holway	National President, National Association of Government Employees
Mr. H.T. Nguyen	Executive Director, Federal Education Association
Ms. Patricia Niehaus	National President, Federal Managers Association
Ms. Carol Waller Pope	Chairman, Federal Labor Relations Authority

The following individuals sat in for absent Council members:

- Ms. Stephanie Barna, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (Readiness and Force Management), Department of Defense, for Mr. Robert O. Work, Deputy Secretary of Defense;
- Mr. David Cann, for Mr. J. David Cox, National President, American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE);
- Ms. Catherine Emerson, Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), Department of Homeland Security, for Mr. Alejandro Nicholas Mayorkas, Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security;
- Mr. Steve Keller, Senior Counsel, National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), for Ms. Colleen M. Kelley, President, NTEU;
- Mr. T. Michael Kerr, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Department of Labor, for Mr. Christopher P. Lu, Deputy Secretary of Labor;
- Mr. Faraz Khan, International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), for Mr. Gregory Junemann, President, IFPTE; and
- Bryan M. Knowles, Director, Employee & Labor Relations Division, Department of Agriculture, for Ms. Krysta L. Harden, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture.

The Designated Federal Officer, Mr. Tim Curry, OPM Deputy Associate Director, Partnership and Labor Relations, was present, as were one media representative and 60 other members of the public.

Agenda Item I: Welcome

At 10:03 a.m., Mr. Curry began the meeting by welcoming everyone to the fifth National Council meeting for 2014. He continued, “Before we begin today’s Council meeting, I would like to make one administrative announcement. 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 Council business to address. We previously shared the draft minutes of the September 2014 meeting with you via email. We’ve adopted all edits and corrections that were submitted. We recommend the Council approve the minutes for the September 2014 meeting. Do I have a motion to adopt the September 2014 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 the Council would be trying something new today, in that one of the presenters is planning to participate via video teleconference (VTC). The plan was for the VTC to be connected for the entire meeting, but there are some technical difficulties. The plan now is to connect the VTC when it is closer in time to the presentation. There will be the sound of a phone connecting, and he doesn’t want anyone to be surprised when that happens. Mr. Curry turned the meeting over to the co-chairs, Ms. Cobert and Ms. Archuleta, to make a few remarks.

Ms. Archuleta began by wishing everyone good morning and noting that today’s meeting has a full agenda. She said she is pleased to see that the National Council is continuing its discussion of employee engagement, which is a very important topic. Ms. Archuleta noted that the People and Culture plank of the President’s Management Agenda focuses on improving employee engagement, and also on building a world class management team, starting with the Senior Executive Service (SES), to improve our ability to recruit and hire the best talent into the federal workforce. Ms. Archuleta saw many of the National Council members at the recent Federal Employee Engagement Forum, which shared best practices from both the public and private sectors on how we can improve employee engagement and performance in government. The panel members provided good insight for strategies on employee engagement. Likewise, this Council should continue to identify best practices and explore how these practices can be shared and effectively used throughout the Federal government. Ms. Archuleta said she is hopeful that today’s presentations will help with this important effort. In fact, the Council will hear two great examples of management working together with labor. Engaging employees through their representatives helps with efforts to improve overall employee engagement. Before turning it over to Ms. Cobert and moving on to the agenda for today, Ms. Archuleta acknowledged all of the Council members. She noted that she and Ms. Cobert are both at about one year in their jobs,

as they both started at almost the same time. Serving as the Director of OPM has been the best year that Ms. Archuleta has had. She has traveled all across the country and met Federal employees who have great interest in the work this Council does. She then asked Ms. Cobert if she had any remarks.

Ms. Cobert said that she has also recently passed her first year on the job and during that time she and Ms. Archuleta have developed a close working relationship on many topics, and that they have learned from each other. Ms. Cobert said she would like to reiterate Ms. Archuleta's comments on employee engagement. She stated that we know the Federal workforce is very engaged. This topic underpins the other work they are doing. That is why they have focused so much on tools. She said that they circulated to the members of the Council a draft memo on how the agencies should approach employee engagement throughout the year. The memo that will be cosigned by Ms. Cobert, Ms. Archuleta, and the White House Personnel Office, focuses on employee engagement. They have received comments from Mr. Dougan. If anyone else has comments, it's past the deadline but Ms. Cobert would be happy to take them. Ms. Cobert noted that she is a "data geek" and appreciates the value of the 21,000 cells within the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results. She noted that the results are important to the entire President's Management Agenda team. She stated that the hope was to connect people who are going well. Tools are valuable when people use them, and that it is important to make sure that tools are used appropriately. The results are not an end in themselves, but they are an important tool.

Agenda Item II: Employee Engagement Work Group

Mr. Curry noted a slight change to the agenda since Ms. Robin Heard of USDA is not able to make it to today's meeting. Mr. Dougan will be flying solo with this group's presentation.

Mr. Dougan then commenced the presentation, displaying the title slide of his PowerPoint Presentation, "Working Group Update on Employee Engagement." He said that, since this Council has heard from this working group before, he would quickly recap past activities and spend the majority of the time today discussing a few key lessons learned. Shifting to the Slide 1, "Employee Engagement Working Group," Mr. Dougan said, as Council members remember, this group was formed earlier in the year and includes representatives from multiple agencies, national union staff and management association representatives. The co-chairs are himself and Jody Hudson, the Deputy CHCO of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Mr. Hudson is unable to make it today because he is working in Vienna, Austria. Since the specific strategies that will improve employee engagement aren't one-size-fits-all, the work group is passing along the good ideas that it finds, as advice. It's important to get this in people's hands quickly. The work group is using the phrase "unofficial wisdom" as it passes along products. Displaying Slide 2, "Engagement Groups: Activities/Products," Mr. Dougan explained the three working groups within this work group have been using data to identify potential places to look for good ideas. They're using data from the FEVS to identify areas where engagement is working well. The work group has also visited a few worksites and talked with people there to understand why they've been successful. And the work group is exploring the best ways to communicate what it is finding. Each group is working on specific products, as highlighted on this slide, and he said he would talk about each of those later.

While Slide 3, “Employee Engagement Defined,” was displayed, Mr. Dougan explained that the workgroup has defined employee engagement a little differently than OPM’s new definition, but the key point here is that engagement isn’t the end goal. The end goal is the benefits derived from having an engaged workforce. It’s all about greater retention, making it easier to recruit good employees, and about how engaged employees feel, think and ultimately act more positively to advance the mission of the organization and serve the public. Moving to Slide 4, “Engagement Measured,” Mr. Dougan said the Council has heard previously from work group member Kelley Carameli, who talked about measuring employee engagement using FEVS and other survey tools. The key point on this slide is that this team has identified a few questions in the survey that are more actionable than others. That’s important if you’re an agency manager and you’re focusing on results and you want engagement in your workforce. With Slide 5, “Why Employee Engagement Matters,” Mr. Dougan said that as the Council has discussed, engagement itself isn’t the goal. Highly engaged individuals and teams produce better outcomes and better service to the public. The data help us understand the conditions of the organizational culture, but we have to go beyond the data to really understand why organizations are engaged or not. With Slide 6, “Employee Engagement: Workplace Culture,” Mr. Dougan said that in the work group’s site visits to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and Health and Human Services (HHS), and through other evidence collected from OPM, USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), there are four key qualities of positive organizational culture that have emerged. The quantitative data and the work group’s qualitative observations show that these key factors are (1) clear organizational values, (2) committed senior leaders, (3) skilled frontline managers, and (4) employees who have been provided opportunities to have input into impact decisions and grow in their careers. The organizations that invest in improving those things are more likely to succeed.

With Slide 7, “Context: Internal Engagement Barriers,” displayed, Mr. Dougan said that improving engagement in the current climate is not an easy task. First of all, it takes time. It doesn’t happen overnight. “We’ve got to communicate better, collaborate better and coordinate our efforts better.” The key takeaway here is that it takes time to build trust and to learn how to work together. The most successful organizations build a strategy with their employees, communicate that strategy effectively and stick with that strategy. It can be very difficult to turn around a poor culture, but in places where it has been done, such as the FDIC and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, it has been a focused commitment for five or more years. It’s not a quick fix and takes long term commitment to see it through. Moving to Slide 8, “Context: External Engagement Barriers,” Mr. Dougan said that speaking of commitment, with all the negativity that Federal employees have experienced over the past few years, they need to believe that their organizations are supportive. As an employee said during a session in OPM’s Innovation Lab, “I will commit to my organization when I know they are committed to me. I will work harder for my organization when I see they are working hard for me.” So it has to be a reciprocal relationship. With Slide 9, “Focus: Leading for Employee Engagement,” Mr. Dougan said when talking about focus, the primary topic today is the value of leadership. As discussed previously, the Employee Engagement Index contains 15 questions. It is difficult to move an index up or down in a short period. Those scores don’t miraculously jump by large amounts from year to

year. The overall employee engagement index has been falling very slowly over the last three years. However, the decline from 2013 to 2014 in the “Leaders Lead” subcomponent is very serious. Through data analysis, his team identified three key questions that are most actionable. You can see them on the slides, questions 53, 54, and 55. It isn’t enough to focus on these questions. It’s necessary to refocus, and go beyond the numbers to address them.

Moving to Slide 10, “Re-Focus: Engaging Communication,” Mr. Dougan explained that Employees at every level tend to question decisions that they don’t understand and question leaders that they don’t know and trust. Improving communication at every level is critical to improving workplace culture and employee engagement. To really address things like motivation and commitment, honesty and integrity, you can’t just look at data. You have to talk to people, listen, and work hard to understand what is important to them. Now the work group wanted to walk through each of those four qualities of positive organizational culture using the lens of effective communication. They will dive most deeply into values and leaders and touch on supervisors and employee development. Discussing Slide 11, “Engaging Communication: Values,” Mr. Dougan said he wanted to remind the Council of the presentation from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in March of this year. Labor and Management there worked together to identify core values, develop a motto and credo, and to develop a plan to map out improvement. You’ll recall that the key word at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing was accountability, and it emerged from the frontline employees. When employees identify what they value most and help drive it, significant and lasting progress is possible. He said that today he wants to describe what the work group found at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. During a group site visit, they heard extensively about NRC’s values. “If you ask any employee at NRC, they will almost always be able to tell you what the organizational values are.” These values are Integrity, Service, Openness, Commitment, Cooperation, Excellence, and Respect (ISOCER). Most organizations have a list of values and might even put them into an acronym or place them on posters, lanyards, or mouse pads. NRC’s done all of that, but they describe themselves as a values-based and values-driven agency, and they have taken the time to give their values real meaning. NRC works to deepen employees’ understanding of their values, and to model the values through behavior. During new employee orientation, managers go line by line and describe in their own words what the values mean in practice, and what they look like in daily activities. NRC has an initiative called “Behavior Matters,” where they began with an open-ended discussion method called the World Café. During Phase I of the initiative, the cafes were organized so that five to seven people per table could discuss a given NRC value, what that value meant to them, and what it looked like in the form of behaviors. Those cafes were open to anyone in the agency, and it provided an opportunity for everyone to interact with people who may have never met before, in order to develop a shared, deeper understanding of the NRC values and the behaviors that model those values. This helps NRC build a community environment. In the first round, they did 30 cafes that included 19% participation of the entire workforce of management and staff. They distilled what they learned from the 30 cafes, and found that the agency is really great with technical complexity and the associated values like commitment, cooperation, and excellence. But they were not so great with basic civility and interpersonal skills, like saying “thank you” and “good morning”; which is directly undermining their value of respect and indirectly impacting their value of service. From that, they developed a list of the top desirable behaviors that would model the values; a list that they call Behaviors that Matter. At our January meeting, next year, we plan to hear from USDA’s Food and Nutrition

Service about how they have revised the way they articulate their mission, vision and values based on employee input.

With Slide 12 displayed, “Engaging Communication: Leadership,” Mr. Dougan said that when we talk about the role of leadership, the key elements are visible involvement and coordinated messaging. Again, at the NRC, they communicate a lot about the FEVS and what they have done to improve in the last year based on the FEVS results. To ensure every employee gets a clear, coherent message, their office of communications prepares cascading communications, from the Chairman on down to frontline managers to use in staff meetings, and they use posters to connect the dots for employees: “As a result of what you (the workforce) said in the FEVS, this is what we’ve done.” They also send reminder e-mails for employees to complete the survey, and they consistently achieve among the higher response rates across government. They monitor response rates during the six week survey period, and they ask people to take the time to be heard. “It only takes 28 minutes to take the survey, and that can inform a full year of action.” Because the survey report that OPM produces now goes down to many work-unit levels, the actions for each group are targeted to the concerns of that team. This is a best practice and many organizations do this, but NRC does it particularly well. As the slide indicates, a key to turning things around at the FDIC, was the personal involvement of former chair Sheila Bair. The same can be said of the Department of Transportation. In 2008, they were the worst large organization in government, according to the FEVS. Through very visible involvement from former Secretary Ray LaHood, DOT improved significantly, and the current secretary is continuing the focus on employee engagement. When we visited NASA, we saw a similar approach. They are very intentional with their workforce communication. Whether messages come from Administrator Bolden, who they have positioned as “Charlie,” or their highly visible CHCO, who they have positioned as the front person for workforce communication, each message is prepared well in advance and frequently circulated to local management and union officials before being sent out to the broad workforce. The tone of the messages has changed over the past few years to be more informal, personal and “real.” NASA works hard to connect with their employees through these coordinated messages, and they are working to implement a new communications tool to make it easier for all employees to connect with each other.

Transitioning to Slide 13, “Engaging Communication: Supervisors,” Mr. Dougan said that as with values and leadership, the best examples we have seen are with respect to supervisors. Again, NASA has developed an internal training program to build model supervisors based on NASA’s values and leadership style. They recognize that the daily experience of employees is most affected by their frontline supervisor, and they spend time explaining exactly what they want from their supervisors and equipping them to deliver that model behavior. NRC uses Emotional Intelligence training as part of their Behavior Matters initiative, and their most successful regional office has pursued a Servant Leadership model for many years. At OPM, over the past three years they have identified five key supervisory skills: critical thinking, developing others, inclusion intelligence, accountability, and interpersonal skills. They place an emphasis on those qualities when they hire new supervisors, and they look for people who already have those qualities or have the potential to develop those qualities. They then provide training and other tools, such as the New IQ and Human Centered Design, to build on those qualities. They assess those supervisors and leaders against those qualities. In Fiscal Year 2014, OPM implemented performance expectations for engagement, diversity and inclusion

behaviors for all supervisors, managers, and SES. As the slide notes, FDIC and FNS have used a particular training program, but what sets successful organizations apart is that they work to translate training concepts into visible behaviors that employees experience. Again, the key takeaway is that successful organizations choose a leadership model and work hard to implement it.

On Slide 14, “Engaging Communication: Development,” Mr. Dougan said that for employee development, the key is to help the workforce to have a voice in decisions and processes that affect their work and to provide new skills that support new ways of doing business. The best organizations also make it clear through strategic communications how the work of each employee advances that agency’s mission. At Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, the work group saw two clear examples. Their use of idea boards gives employees an immediate outlet to positively question the way things are done. Through employee-led meetings, they discuss ways to change processes and improve procedures. Their investment in training centers for specific skills used in submarine maintenance helps employees learn and avoid mistakes that are costly if committed on an actual submarine. The message sent to employees is that, “We want to hear your ideas and we want to help you improve.” In the same way, OPM is using Lean Six Sigma and Human Centered Design to improve their retirement case processing, to identify problems in the hiring process and to redesign USAJobs, among other things. Those tools are different, but they both focus on input from a variety of sources, particularly those closest to the work. Again, at our January meeting we hope to hear from FNS about their career path initiative.

Displaying Slide 15, “Employee Engagement: Call to Action,” Mr. Dougan explained that, at this point, there is really a need for a call to action. We have a lot of data and how are we going to act on that? The main takeaway for this slide is that the President has set a big goal; Senior Officials are being pushed to make a positive change; and OPM has provided lots of data to help diagnose the symptoms. He said that as we’ve discussed today, the key is talking to people and going beyond the numbers to understand what is really going on. That’s what we have to do. With Slide 16, “Employee Engagement: What’s Next?” Mr. Dougan said that there is a lot of academic research that shows the importance of engagement for everything from lower turnover, to fewer accidents, to higher performance. The work group intends to let the academic record speak for itself, but they are focused on practical implementation. They are working to produce a few specific tools to help the Federal community. What he has presented today is based on both survey data and first-hand observation. A number of agencies are doing some great things, and the work group wants to share that information effectively. They are developing a template so that the lessons learned can be easily understood: the organizational context, the challenge, the strategy used and the result. They are also planning to turn the template into a solicitation, so that organizations with great information to share can share that information with us, come to us with information in a template – a common format. By looking at data and talking to the people involved, we can quickly validate the successful strategies and help other organizations with similar context and challenges identify what might work for them. Our Barriers and Enablers group is working to develop a “conversation starters” package for organizations to self-diagnose their areas for improvement. In many cases, there is more to the problem than the survey numbers can reveal, so helping organizations talk about their culture is an important step. And finally, our data group has developed some really interesting ways to dig into the survey and to look at moving results from negative to neutral and from neutral to positive. The data insights

guide won't be for a general audience, but we think it will be helpful for those who have been assigned the job of making sense of their survey numbers within agencies. Our workgroup has had a few discussions about pre-decisional involvement, which has become a real term of art since the President Obama's Executive Order was issued. Successful organizations talk early and openly about decisions affecting their employees, whether they consider it official PDI or not. We believe that better understanding of the role of pre-decisional involvement in agency labor-management relations could greatly improve employee engagement. In other words, on this issue, senior leaders and employee representatives should be on the same page. We all want our employees to engage so that they can serve the public better, and we need to work together to improve organizational culture to make that possible. The final takeaway is that successful organizations make a plan, communicate it, stick to it and hold people accountable for doing their part. So, the final question this morning is, what can we, as a Council, do to support our organizations and improve employee engagement? With that, Mr. Dougan said he would be happy to take questions.

Ms. Cobert said she had no questions but she would like to make comments. First, she said "thank you to you and the entire workgroup for what is clearly a lot of work and high quality work." She continued by saying that this topic is very important to the presidential management team. Mr. Sloan Gibson of the Department of Veterans Affairs will tell you that this is regularly discussed at meetings. Ms. Archuleta will tell you this is discussed at nearly every meeting of the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council. She noted this is a topic the President stresses through cabinet officials. The FEVS is not the end, but it's a means; a place to start a conversation. She stated that FEVS is a valuable tool. One of the things we're committed to is learning to use these results better. I love your "unofficial wisdom" ideas. We can't let perfect be the enemy of the good. With 20,000 data points, there is no one way to use them. Let's keep going. She stated that she was excited about the progress and that data can drive results. You can see progress again and again when agencies focus on the results.

Ms. Archuleta said she had one thing to add. One thing in the presentation that struck her is the mention of agency organizations and offices that make this a year-long effort. The FEVS is a snapshot; a moment in time. As a manager, she said she has a view of how employees were feeling on one day. Ms. Archuleta said she looks forward to more examples in future meetings; no one should rely on the FEVS results as a single indicator. She stated that she was very excited about taking all of this information to create a larger toolbox of best practices. "I would ask you and the members of your committee—what more can we do to support you? She stated that she took a lot of notes, and that the challenge was how to get this information out across the government. Mr. Dougan responded by saying that is the challenge. As these tools become usable products, how do we get them to the right people in the right agencies? We'll need to distribute them through the President's Management Council (PMC), the CHCO Council, and labor organizations. He noted these are prime vehicles. Also, relating back to pre-decisional involvement, why not use labor-management forums? Let this be a topic that they take on. They could ask "what are our scores?" and "how can we work on these?" He noted that this should be a standing agenda item for forums, and he further noted the challenge was collaboration and communication. Ms. Archuleta responded that she loves the idea of how we can spread this out across the government using different councils. She stated that all have a stake in employee engagement, and in communicating it, and it bears more conversation here. Ms. Bonosaro said

that she thinks that what the group has done is really superb. She said her organization will share that PowerPoint presentation with their members and do a webinar. One thing is that if SES will have this in their performance standards, then the unofficial wisdom is important. She said we are particularly interested in the possibility of adding questions to the FEVS. She said she knows OPM wants to maintain the same questions for meaningful data analysis over time, but there are new questions her organization would like to add. Ms. Archuleta said, "We're looking at adding questions right now". Jon Foley is the master, and he and his research team know what the questions mean for organizations, and how to interpret them. They are asking, what does each question mean for us? Are there questions that don't need to be on the FEVS any longer? Any ideas or suggestions you have, please send them to us. In particular, please send them to Jon Foley." Ms. Cobert said she would channel Mr. Foley for a minute, and ask how do we preserve data over time? Additions are welcome, subtractions may be welcome also. Mr. Dougan said, if you remember Kelley Carameli's presentation, she described supplemental surveys agencies are doing, and which are agency specific. Those drill down in certain areas as employee engagement. If we're looking at the government as a whole, however, it's useful to have one data set of standardized questions. Ms. Cobert said, it's a "yes . . . and." We need the data at a central level but we also need to recognize there are specific agency issues, such as trust, relationships, flexible work arrangements, and how can we help them address those. Ms. Archuleta said we need a lot of tools in the toolbox. We'll all have this one (the FEVS). I want to be sure OPM provides the basic tools you need, but how do we help individual agencies when they know there are different, unique issues. What fits into your toolbox, and how can we help you fill out that toolbox. For example, she said to look at what NASA is doing. Mr. Faraz Khan of IFPTE then thanked Mr. Dougan for his presentation. He said that Mr. Greg Junemann regrets that he couldn't be here today. Mr. Junemann has thoughts about PDI that he would like to share. PDI is critical to communication and collaboration. PDI is what informs our culture and feeds into agency mission and organizational performance. Mr. Khan said that what we're seeing again and again are situations where problems are presented along with solutions to our members; instead of working with unions and labor-management forums collaboratively. PDI is a huge stumbling block for us. Mr. Steve Keller of NTEU said there is one thing all agencies could do if they want to be committed. They can do that by communicating obstacles and challenges, and then asking how do we solve those problems. Agencies can then explain to employees why the agency made the decision that it did. Mr. Keller said that is how you show commitment to employee engagement and agencies can involve labor unions as a mechanism in that too. Mr. Michael Filler of the Teamsters then thanked the co-chairs for their leadership and congratulated them on passing their probationary periods. Mr. Filler said he also wanted to acknowledge the White House, and the role it is playing. The leadership has been very good, with good direction. He said we have a delicate balance between studying the data versus application and moving forward. We may make some mistakes but the important thing will be to start taking actions. He noted there are a number of agencies on the Council. In 2015, Mr. Filler said it would be good to hear from agencies, such as the Department of Justice, the Department of Transportation, and the General Services Administration. The Council should learn about the experiences of large, small, and medium-sized agencies. He concluded by thanking the co-chairs for their leadership. Mr. David Cann of AFGE said that President Cox sends his regrets and his regards. Mr. Cann thanked Mr. Dougan and Mr. Hudson for their work, and he thanked the Department of Justice for hosting today's meeting. He expressed support for ongoing research. Mr. Cann said that having the narrative framed by management is very useful, but there are other ways to look at

employee engagement. Employees articulate their concerns through unions, and those concerns are data. Interviewing employees away from their worksites could be another method of data collection. This is not taking anything away from the work that's been done, but there is other data out there that can be useful. Mr. Cann said he enjoyed working with this work group before being pulled off to focus on other assignments, and he said thank you. Mr. Curry inquired as to whether there were any other questions or comments. Hearing none, he transitioned to the third agenda topic.

Agenda Item III: Report of the Problem Resolution Subcommittee

Mr. Curry introduced this agenda item by saying that a subgroup of the Problem Resolution Subcommittee has been hard at work for approximately the last 18 months on development of guidance regarding pre-decisional involvement (PDI) and confidentiality. This group has been led by Julia Clark of the FLRA. This new guidance is intended to build upon the Council guidance issued on January 19, 2011. The January 2011 guidance focused on pre-decisional involvement and highlighted an opportunity for pre-decisional involvement – the annual budget process. The guidance notes that there are restrictions on the release of the nature, amounts, and underlying budget materials prior to the budget being submitted to Congress. The new guidance, that we'll hear about today, is intended to further assist labor and management in using pre-decisional involvement when there are restrictions on the release of certain information and where there are long-standing policies on preserving the confidentiality of the deliberations that lead to budget decisions. Today, Mr. Kurt Rumsfeld of the FLRA will provide the Council an overview of the current draft. Then, following Mr. Rumsfeld's overview, Council Member Dougan will lead the Council's discussion toward release of this guidance, and see if there are any objections to releasing the guidance. Mr. Curry then turned it over to Mr. Rumsfeld.

Two documents (“Confidentiality Agreement Template” and “Guidance for Handling Confidential Information During Pre-Decisional Involvement (PDI) Discussions”), which were provided as handouts at the meeting, were displayed at different times during Mr. Rumsfeld's presentation and the Council's subsequent discussion.

Mr. Rumsfeld began his presentation by explaining that the work group focused on logistical barriers and obstacles to PDI. They had heard concerns about PDI not happening because it would involve information that was confidential, and some parties preferred confidentiality, particularly in the budget process. There was a reluctance based on past experience. Unions expressed frustration with this obstacle. The work group had a narrow purpose, which was to address this issue of confidentiality in the budget process. He said that what we contemplate today does not contemplate release of information where prohibited by law, rule, regulation, directive, or agency policy. For example, classified information or information protected from disclosure by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-11 remains protected from disclosure. The sample template and guidance are offered as a roadmap and resources to share which parties can tailor to their needs. They do not create new rights. The ultimate enforcement mechanism for any party is to not continue participating in PDI. Mr. Rumsfeld then began explaining the Confidentiality Agreement Template in more detail. He noted that under paragraph two, “confidential” is a self-defining term. This means that the disclosing party determines what information is considered to be confidential for purposes of PDI. The purpose is

to increase communication. The agreement template makes clear how and with whom information can be shared. Paragraph three of the agreement template gets into more of the nuts and bolts of how this works. The disclosing party identifies the number of people who may participate in the PDI confidential budget discussions; and provides the disclosing party's points of contact information, and requires identification of other recipients of the confidential information with whom the receiving party may discuss the information in order to facilitate discussions. Paragraph four of the agreement template provides for the receiving party to identify who will receive the confidential information, and that those who receive the information will not disclose it to anyone else. It would require consent in order to disclose the information to more recipients. Paragraph five makes clear that this doesn't override any existing requirements. The guidance explains these areas more. He stated that he wanted to emphasize a couple of points which were the need for dialogue between the parties as to the process, and the need to designate which information was confidential. For example, paragraph two (located on page four) of the guidance document focuses on the need to designate information as confidential before it's disclosed. Paragraph four of the bullets on that same page describes recommendations if there is a failure to designate confidential information at the appropriate time. Paragraph nine (located on page five) of the guidance talks about what parties may say publicly about PDI matters when PDI is involved. Paragraph 10 (also located on page five) of the guidance addresses actions that may help unions to satisfy their representational responsibilities, while also maintaining confidentiality in PDI. Mr. Rumsfeld noted that earlier parts of the guidance emphasize that this is not vehicle for releasing classified information. The guidance also addresses how OMB's A-11 Circular and the January 2011 guidance from the Council relate to this topic. These documents were originally drafted by the union-management group. They received substantive input from OMB. The template and guidance are presented here as the working group's best efforts. Mr. Rumsfeld then handed it over to Mr. Dougan to lead the Council's discussion.

Mr. Dougan noted that Executive Order 13522 and the memorandum of the previous Council co-chairs, Mr. John Berry and Mr. Jeffrey Zients, contemplated PDI related to budget discussions. Mr. Dougan encouraged the Council to look at the memo Messrs. Berry and Zients issued on January 19, 2011 because the memorandum encouraged the use of PDI for discussion of topics of a confidential nature. Mr. Dougan said that the two documents being discussed today are intended to provide resources for PDI. They can be used as is, or modified to their own unique comfort levels. He noted that the group went to OMB and made sure the guidance doesn't conflict with the law or regulations on confidential information. Mr. Dougan said that speaks loudly; OMB was comfortable and the group incorporated their comments. He said this has been an iterative process and it has involved at least 10 to 15 drafts. We are at the point where the work group thinks we have a good work product. It's time for agencies and unions to have access to these documents. Mr. Dougan then opened the topic up for further questions or comments and discussion by the Council.

Mr. Holway said he had a question for OMB. He said he is not familiar with the A-11 Circular. He said he doesn't know why they have to have a lot of secrecy around the budget process. Mr. Holway asked, "Why not share information as early as possible? If you want to treat federal employees with dignity and respect, why not involve them?" Ms. Cobert said she is familiar with the A-11 Circular. It is a long document and covers lots of topics. Confidentiality is needed when

agencies are trying to test out ideas. The A-11 Circular concerns agency interaction with OMB. There are other issues that don't involve the labor force. Ms. Cobert explained that they have tried, through guidance, to create balance where agencies can involve unions in discussions. Since this really is PDI, it's important to find a way to engage folks early but in a way where preliminary discussions don't seem like decisions are already made. She said she thought the work group has done very thoughtful work. Mr. Holway responded that his union has agreements with state governments. Sometimes there are state officials who will say publicly, "I need more lawyers for Child and Family Services," or "I need more elevator inspectors." Mr. Holway said that if Mr. Dougan supports release of these two documents, then he would, too. However, it may be better to let agency heads express their budget needs publicly. Ms. Archuleta said she would speak for OPM and only for OPM. "For us, this is a year-long process. If this is a surprise to employees, then I haven't done a good job with my employee engagement. I see this as an additional tool for us." Mr. Holway responded, "Not all agency heads are as open and transparent as you are." Ms. Archuleta thanked him. She then said she would go back to the President's directive on employee engagement. Under that directive, the budget discussion is not a surprise discussion. The President is asking us how we are doing that, "What are your goals? How do they relate to the strategic plan?" Mr. Filler asked if the Council needed a motion to accept this guidance. Mr. Curry noted that the subcommittee wants to release the guidance by posting it on the website. Mr. Curry asked if there were any objections to release. Hearing no objections, Mr. Curry said we will post it on the website. Ms. Cobert thanked the work group for their work.

Agenda Item IV: Department of Defense and National Federation of Federal Employees— Labor-Management Forum Success Story

Mr. Curry said that for the next presentation today, the Council will hear management representatives of Aberdeen Proving Ground and union representatives of the National Federation of Federal Employees.

Mr. Todd Morris introduced himself as the Director of Human Resources, US Army Research, Development, and Engineering Command, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. Ms. Lisa Foust introduced herself as the President of NFFE Local 178 at Aberdeen Proving Ground. She noted that Aberdeen Proving Ground includes two locations. The two presenters displayed the title slide of their PowerPoint presentation, "Labor/Management Partnership Forum." Mr. Morris identified the agency organizations represented on the title slide: CBRNE Analytical & Remediation Activity; the U.S. Army; U.S. Army RDECOM; U.S. Army Contracting Command, Aberdeen Proving Ground; U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD; and Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, a U.S. Army RDECOM Laboratory. Mr. Morris pointed out that as you can see from the names of the organizations, this is a highly educated and very technical workforce. He added that they thought this meeting was a professional development opportunity, and brought the entire forum; all 19 members are here. The Council acknowledged their attendance.

Ms. Foust displayed Slide 2, "Forum History," and explained that a labor-management group with composition similar to this one had a partnership council under the Executive Order issued

by President Clinton. On November 18, 1999, a partnership forum between Soldier Biological Chemical Command (SBCCOM), Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense (MRICD) and the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) Local 178 was signed. On December 2, 2000, a collective-bargaining agreement between SBCCOM, MRICD and NFFE Local 178 was signed. From 2002 to 2013, organizational changes occurred. SBCCOM was split into three organizations. People from New Jersey were transferred to Aberdeen Proving Ground as part of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). Ms. Foust explained that this changed their footprint. They realized they needed to come together when furloughs came along and it was clear that the Department of Defense (DOD) would take a hit. Since they had worked together previously, all they had to do to form a forum was to add a few people and start meeting. Faced with significant challenges in 2013, such as furloughs, the government shutdown, and snow; the group kept working together and signed the forum charter in May 2014. Ms. Foust transitioned to Slide 3, "NFFE Local 178 Partners," and explained that the union believed that providing the workforce with a wellness program would help their mindset. Management said OK to this proposal. Then telework came up. The group is still working through that, and they are already sharing information and communicating. She then described some of the challenges the forum has faced: (1) This one forum covers multiple agencies. There are eight tenants at Aberdeen Proving Ground, and 11 unions. The unions would benefit if they were all allowed to sit down with the leadership of the Garrison. An Army contracting activity has its own forum already. Ms. Foust said, "I believe we'll all get there." (2) There are multiple sets of organizational workforce policies. Also, no union representative is on 100 percent official time. (3) Reorganizations – we keep having these but just work through each one.

Mr. Morris then spoke to Slide 4, "Management Partners," and said that as a management representative, he never thought that he would say that making it through the year was an accomplishment. Fiscal Year 2013 was very difficult. Management and labor spent 14 hours discussing the first furlough. This was before the government shutdown led to additional furloughs. As they were discussing the first furlough, other issues would come up. That was the genesis of the forum. Mr. Morris then discussed some of the other successes that have been facilitated by the forum. Because of their dialogue, they discuss telework flexibilities. They are trying to increase workplace flexibility as a way to incentivize retention. Mr. Morris noted that Ms. Foust had mentioned some of the different policies within the Department of the Army. Fiscal and human resources policies come from headquarters, and are then sent out through the Multiple Army Major Commands (MACOMs). This can make engaging in PDI difficult sometimes, inside the forum. As a result they try to keep forum discussions at a high level and work on unique issues separately. Mr. Morris transitioned to Slide 5, "Going Forward." He explained that as they move forward, the forum will be looking at "big ticket" issues for the betterment of the workforce community. He explained that it is easier to come to agreement when you agree that the desired end state is a better, happier workforce. The forum will continue with its joint training efforts. Their relationship benefits from the fact that the management team at the table has the full support of management at the highest levels. In addition, they will continue to facilitate the flow of information. There may be future fiscal challenges. Mr. Morris said they would continue to work on that together. Ms. Foust explained that another person, Lisa Bryant, MER, has been a critical piece of their success. Ms. Bryant, who is with the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) often contributes to the policies as an advisor. It takes all three organizations for them to be successful. Mr. Morris asked if there were any questions.

Ms. Archuleta said that she is interested in knowing how they came together as a forum. Do they have any advice for teams that are still working to establish a forum? Ms. Foust recommended using open dialogue on issues, and using communication, collaboration, and coordination. She suggested introducing an issue and working on it as a team. This is not always accomplished sitting at a desk. They have gone on trips together. They kept educating themselves on what a forum does and doesn't do. For them, it was helpful that they had had a forum in the past, and that they knew that it could work. Mr. Morris said that he would add his advice, which is that it's important to just start walking down the road. That furlough discussion was the genesis of their forum. He would encourage others to "just start solving problems and you can form it as you go." He believes that they have a very good charter but it was important for them to work together even before the charter was signed. Ms. Archuleta responded that she thought it was interesting that he said to "form it as you go," as opposed to putting the structure in place first. Ms. Cobert thanked the presenters. She said that the presenters had a clear and tangible problem that had to be resolved, and that paved the way for future collaboration. Ms. Archuleta then thanked the presenters and thanked the team that traveled to be here today. Ms. Cobert thanked them again and said it was a great idea to bring the team.

Agenda Item V: Department of Agriculture and National Association of Agricultural Employees— Labor-Management Forum Success Story

Mr. Curry introduced this next agenda item by saying, "For the final presentation today, we will hear from a management representative of the Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and a union representative of the National Association of Agricultural Employees. Our presenters today are Mr. Frank King, Labor Relations Officer for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and Ms. Sarah Rehberg, National President of the National Association of Agricultural Employees." Mr. Curry explained that, as mentioned earlier, the hope was for Ms. Rehberg to participate in the meeting via video teleconference. Unfortunately, the video connection is not working. However, he understands that she may participate using the audio connection. He asked if Ms. Rehberg could hear him, and she confirmed that she could.

Mr. King began the presentation by explaining that he would present the information in the slides, and Ms. Rehberg would chime in if he missed anything or if she wished to add anything. Ms. Rehberg confirmed that she agreed with this. Mr. King began by displaying their title slide, "NAAE and APHIS." He explained that the group is "geographically challenged." The management and labor representatives are located at numerous facilities around the United States. As a result, they have no informal, water-cooler type interactions. That makes it difficult to negotiate but they work through it. He noted that one of the strengths supporting their forum's success is that they have very low turnover among labor relations staff. Moving to Slide 2, "APHIS," Mr. King explained that APHIS has 8,000 employees in several different program areas. The major ones are Animal Care, International Services, Plant Protection and Quarantine, and Wildlife Services. The APHIS Mission is to protect the health, welfare, and value of American agriculture and natural resources. Mr. King also described that Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Mission, which is to safeguard agriculture and natural resources from the entry, establishment, and spread of animal and plant pests and noxious weeds into the United States of America; and supports trade and exports of U.S. agricultural products. Displaying Slide

3, "NAAE," Mr. King explained that NAAE represents employees in the Plant Protection and Quarantine Program. NAAE is a stand-alone national union that represents professionals and non-professionals (Entomologist, Plant Health Safeguarding Specialist, Technicians, Tree Climbers). They have a national Executive Council of 11 members, a General Counsel in Washington, D.C., 27 local unions and over 1,000 bargaining unit employees. Mr. King highlighted that in 2010 their forum was honored by the Society of Federal Labor and Employee Relations Professionals. Ms. Rehberg asked him to accept the award on behalf of the union, and to read her acceptance speech at the award ceremony. Prior to that, there was a time when the parties had boxes filled with documents related to unfair labor practices. Their relationship turned about seven years ago and has improved significantly since then.

Turning to Slide 4, "PPQ Forum," Mr. King said that the Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Forum was initiated in 2010. He explained that the other union that participates in the forum, the National Association of Plant Protection and Quarantine Office Support Employees (NAPPQOSE) couldn't be here today. It has helped the forum to have the decision-makers in the regional offices directly involved. The PPQ Forum Charter was signed on February 17, 2011. While it defines the procedures and expectations, the one item that has been of greatest benefit is the large list of topics that the forum has jointly determined to be appropriate for pre-decisional involvement. The biggest challenge to creating the forum was deciding whether to have subordinate labor-management forums in the field and how to involve the field units. They decided to engage them through consultation and PDI. While displaying Slide 5, "PPQ Forum Metrics," Mr. King said that each year, USDA asks them for an accomplishment that can be submitted to OPM. Typically, this is before the end of the year. For their metrics, they have taken a different approach than other forums. Rather than establishing goals based on uncontrollable percentages or numbers, they typically set goals based on projects. He said that they review the FEVS scores to assist with determining employee satisfaction and engagement goals. Internally, USDA conducts labor-management relations surveys, yearly, to assist with the labor-management relationship goal. These surveys are taken by labor relations specialists for the agency and by union representatives. Normally, the forum jointly brainstorms to find goals related to the mission element; specifically, efficiency and cost.

Displaying Slide 6, "PPQ Forum Accomplishments," Mr. King described the PPQ Spotlight Newsletter. He explained that this came about because of sequestration and the unavailability of awards. This newsletter is a method for recognizing employees. The forum developed this special quarterly newsletter that provides an avenue to recognize the varied contributions, achievements, good deeds, and talents of the employees in PPQ's numerous diverse workplaces and programs. The forum established an eligibility and nominating process, created a committee to run and oversee the process, and agreed on an electronic mechanism for spotlighting employees. Moving to Slide 7, also titled, "PPQ Forum Accomplishments," Mr. King described how the parties created an internal PPQ Forum Internet Site. This provides a mechanism for the Forum to share ideas, projects, and activities with employees. The site is available to all PPQ employees and contains the forum's charter, meeting minutes, list of members, training survey results and recommendations, training materials, and useful links. Mr. King pointed out that they have just completed the development of a SharePoint site for the forum. This has additional document links and policies and directives that have changed in the past year. He explained that the SharePoint site satisfies contractual obligations; the collective bargaining agreement required

management to create an electronic bulletin board to highlight changes in policies and directives. Slide 8 is also titled, "PPQ Forum Accomplishments." With Slide 8 displayed, Mr. King noted that the agency created a shared email account for the forum. Access to this email account is shared by representatives of NAAE and NAPPQOSE, as well as the agency's labor relations staff. Employee can use this email address to provide input to the forum members, to ask questions, or to make comments. Transitioning to Slide 9, also titled, "PPQ Forum Accomplishments," Mr. King said that the labor relations survey showed very low scores for the Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB) process. The forum decided to work on that. In an effort to expand the collaborative labor-management relationship, the PPQ Labor-Management Forum jointly developed and presented six webinars on IBB. This training was jointly delivered to 120 participants, which included managers and union representatives from both NAAE and NAPPQOSE. The training presentation was also recorded for "AgLearn" so that future managers and union representatives can obtain the same training without delay or additional cost. Mr. King said they are looking forward to receiving the survey scores this year to see if they increased as a result of this training initiative. Moving to Slide 10, also titled, "PPQ Forum Accomplishments," Mr. King explained that in an effort to improve the labor-management relationship at the field locations, the Forum established a goal of improving the PDI opportunities during 2013. The baseline was five PDI opportunities in 2012 and a goal of 10 was established for 2013. The recorded PDI solicitations at the field level were 25. This exceeded the goal of 10. This was a direct result of Forum-related activities or goals, which included multiple messages from senior management about expectations and obligations dealing with bargaining units. Other goals that were set by the forum also contributed to this. One of these other goals had to do with sending a message from senior management to managers about labor obligations. Now, the Deputy Secretary sends an annual message describing Weingarten rights, PDI obligations, etc. Mr. King then spoke to Slide 11, which is also titled, "PPQ Forum Accomplishments." He explained that the parties jointly developed and delivered Basic Labor Relations Training 1 and 2. They delivered the two separate webinars six times each in September. The joint training sessions were attended by 341 participants and covered topics including PDI, ULPs, Formal Discussions, and Weingarten Rights. Managers and union representatives receive the same training at the same time. This means they hear the same questions and receive the same answers. This is consistent with the forum's theme of joint training. Mr. King explained that the next accomplishment, described on Slide 12, "PPQ Forum Accomplishments," goes to mission, cost savings, and efficiency. The forum identified the PPQ Medical Monitoring Program as an inconsistent process, which could be updated to reduce costs and to bring consistency within the field operations. The separate Regions also followed different protocols related to this program. For example, one Region was sending all employees to participate in this program; while another Region was more analytical about which employees had to participate. This led to inconsistencies in how the program was administered between Regions. The parties formed a joint working group. The working group finalized a Field Operations Guidance document which identified best practices. This resulted in a consistent procedure for requesting medical monitoring testing, along with savings in cost. The cost savings resulted because each test could cost several hundred dollars. Mr. King then described a recent training survey that the forum developed, while displaying Slide 13, "PPQ Forum Accomplishments." This survey was conducted through Survey Monkey and 437 PPQ employees participated. The survey questions covered topics such as Employee Development, Training Opportunities, Training Methods/Media, and Miscellaneous Training. The results of the survey were broken down by

Regions, duty assignments, tenure groups, etc. and were reviewed by the forum members and the Survey Work Group. This review included analysis of the 174 individual comments submitted, concerning training. Mr. King noted that the comments are where the value of the survey actually was. He said that training was the first goal that the forum ever established. They have also had goals related to emergency responses and technology.

Mr. King then displayed Slide 14, “Joint Contract Training,” and said that while this topic is not directly related to the forum, it is important to helping labor and management move forward. The parties spent many years renegotiating their collective bargaining agreement, and it was completed in September 2011. The prior CBA, from 1985, was 27 pages long, including the cover sheet, index, and signature page. The 2011 CBA is 202 pages in length and has an additional 8 pages for an appendix, with Internet links. Due to the establishment of many procedures and requirements, the parties jointly developed five training presentations to cover the significant changes. In October and November 2011, they presented 24 webinars on the new national contract, to managers and union officials. These training webinars were jointly done by union and management representatives.

Displaying Slide 15, “NAAE Bi-Annual Conventions,” Mr. King explained that the union’s General Counsel and APHIS Labor Relations staff provide joint training to the attendees of the union’s National Convention. This is done by invitation of the union. In 2010, the convention took place in Las Vegas, Nevada; in 2012 it was in Savannah, Georgia, and in 2014 it was held in Saint Louis, Missouri. Normally, the participants in the convention are the union’s executive council, presidents from across the country, and PPQ Regional/National managers. Mr. King explained that at first, the parties were hesitant about joint training. However, it has done a lot for the relationship. It provides the agency’s representatives with the opportunity to meet 27 union representatives. “That’s how our relationship has blossomed.” He said there is no “magic pill,” but for the union it is important to see that management is listening. Mr. King then moved to Slide 16, “PPQ Forum Training,” and said that the forum jointly developed and presented training for the forum members, on the topic of Executive Order 13522. The presentation was developed mainly from presentations by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) and the FLRA. Mr. King explained that when the Executive Order was first signed, USDA had posted training developed by the FLRA and FMCS. The forum took those presentations, cut the materials down to what was important to them. They then presented it to the thirteen forum members. He also noted that generally, when the parties are working on interim memoranda of understanding (MOUs), their approach is not “are we going to get an agreement?” but rather it is “when will we get an agreement?” Displaying Slide 17, “PPQ Forum Training,” Mr. King said that yearly, the forum includes training from the FMCS during its forum’s face-to-face meeting. This training focuses primarily on forums, interest-based bargaining, and relationship building. Mr. King said that the FMCS training seems to be positive and helps them to realize the value of “face time.” With Slide 18, “PDI Initiatives,” Mr. King said that they have either been doing a better job of tracking pre-decisional involvement or they are doing a better job of engaging in PDI. This slide shows an increase in PDI engagements from 14 engagements in 2010, to 58 in 2011, 56 in 2012, 69 in 2013, and 78 in 2014. The process the parties follow for initiating PDI engagements is that management will give the union a description of changes being contemplated. The union then decides when to engage. Management will provide webinars to the union’s executive council for big issues. Mr. King noted that, “confidentiality is the cornerstone

of PDI.” Management understands that the forum representatives will share information with the union’s executive council, and the dissemination of confidential information stops there. They have an excellent level of trust. When management wishes to engage employees directly, they brief the union in advance.

Having concluded the PowerPoint presentation, Mr. King asked Ms. Rehberg if she had anything to add. She said that she thought Mr. King did a great job, and said that she agreed with everything he had said. Mr. Curry thanked the presenters and noted that the meeting was slightly behind schedule. Ms. Archuleta said she would love to have more insight into the challenges the forum faced and their recommendations. She asked if perhaps the Council could invite them back in order for them to share their recommendations for groups without a forum, who are trying to set one up. Mr. King said that Ms. Rehberg will not be available on January 21, 2015; he wanted to let the Council know that now.

Agenda Item VI: New Business

Mr. Curry stated that the next Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21, 2015, from 10 a.m. to noon. Normally, the meeting would be held at OPM. However, due to ongoing construction work at OPM, which prevented this group from meeting at OPM today, the usual meeting space will not be available for the January meeting. He noted that the Office of Justice Programs in the Department of Justice graciously provided space for today’s meeting. However, this space will not be available for the January meeting. Mr. Curry noted that he has reached out to some of the Council members informally, but would like to make the request today that if any Council members have space appropriate for a public meeting on January 21st, please contact him or his team right away so they can make appropriate arrangements and ensure sufficient public notice is provided in the Federal Register about the meeting date, time, and location. Mr. Curry said he hopes to publish a Federal Register notice about the new meeting location and will share with the Council members as soon as it is published. He then asked if any Council member wished to raise any new business.

Ms. Bonosaro indicated she had two items of new business. First, she requested an update on (b)(1) pilots, noting that they seem to have fallen off the radar, at least for her.¹ Second, she described “flags for the fallen,” noting that OPM recently issued regulations related to the Flag Recognition Benefit for Fallen Federal Civilian Employees. Ms. Bonosaro said she hoped that all agencies would adopt the practice. She said she hoped the labor unions would help them to get the word out.

Mr. Dougan then raised an item of new business. He explained that he is part of the Public Employees Roundtable, which is chaired by Jenny Mattingley. They are preparing for Public Service Recognition Week, which will be in early May. This year the group is planning something slightly different. They envision a “white board campaign” initiative around the “faces of government.” This will give individual employees a chance to describe the work they do and why it is important for the American people. Mr. Dougan said they hope to partner with

¹ The term “(b)(1) pilots” refers to Section 4 of Executive Order 13522, which provides for the establishment of pilot projects, of specified duration, “in which some executive departments or agencies elect to bargain over some or all of the subjects set forth in 5 U.S.C. 7106(b)(1) . . .”

agencies. In particular, they need a standard approach to social media. For example, they could use common hashtags. He asked for time on the agenda for the next meeting for Ms. Mattingley to present on this topic. Ms. Archuleta said she would like to offer the assistance of OPM's Director of Social Media. Mr. Dougan thanked her.

Mr. Curry thanked Karol Mason at the Office of Justice Programs and her staff for offering the space for today's meeting. They have been very helpful and very gracious.

No additional new business was raised.

Agenda Item VII: Acknowledgement/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?"

A member of the public, Carl Goldman, introduced himself as the Executive Director of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Council 26. Mr. Goldman said his union represents the employees who work in this building where the meeting is being held. He noted that he had listened to the success story presentations today, and his union's experience with the management representatives in this building is at the other end of the spectrum. There is a pervasive anti-union feeling. The management labor relations staff yells at union representatives. The union president has trouble getting official time. This discourages employees from participating or even bringing issues to the attention of the union. Union representatives are not allowed to speak directly to managers and supervisors. This is discouraging because many disputes could be resolved informally through discussions at that level. He said that it took two years to renegotiate the collective-bargaining agreement, because management opened every article for negotiation. The management negotiating team belittled union staff. The union's negotiator has lots of experience negotiating contracts. This includes experience in the private sector with union-busting law firms. She said she never saw a more anti-union management team. The relationship is not working. Mr. Goldman said he would like this Council to come in or to assign a team to come in, interview employees, and help them to develop a plan.

Council Member Nguyen stated that the parties should seek assistance from the Federal Labor Relations Authority and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. He said since this union is requesting help, he would like to bring together people in this building with some people involved in prior success stories that have been presented to the Council. He would like to connect them in some way. Also, Mr. Nguyen said he would ask the union and management to discuss with the Council their issues and their implementation of the Executive Order, since it's been in effect for five years. Mr. Curry responded by saying that the Problem Resolution Subcommittee exists in part to address requests for assistance such as this one, and they will discuss this at their meeting on Monday. Council Member Holway asked if the Council can receive a report on the status of this request for assistance, at the January meeting. Mr. Curry said yes. Mr. Cann said that AFGE expresses its solidarity with the AFSCME council.

Adjournment

Ms. Archuleta asked if there were any other comments. There were not any other comments. She said, "Thank you and see you next time." The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.