
MEETING MINUTES

Attendees

Rafael Borrás/USM	Christopher Crane/AFGE-ICE	Curt Odom/USCG
J. David Cox/AFGE National	Glen Dockham/NTEU-CBP	James Ruoff/NTEU-CBP
Colleen Kelley/NTEU National	Steven Hardman/AFGE-FEMA	Abdullah Shahbaaz/NTEU-CBP
Catherine Emerson/CHCO	David Hess/NPPD	Demetrios Stroubakis/AFGE-USCG
Gary Anderson/FEMA	Marcus Hill/FLETC	Hydrick Thomas/AFGE-TSA
Eric Beane/TSA	Ben McCashland/AFGE-FPS	Mark Whetstone/AFGE-CIS
Donna Campagnolo/USCIS	Gary Mead/ICE	Thomas Winkowski- CBP

Welcome by the Co-Chairs

The Under Secretary for Management Rafael Borrás (standing in for S2) and Ms. Colleen Kelley welcomed the new Co-Chair J. David Cox, who was recently elected as AFGE National President. The Co-Chairs then welcomed attendees.

Budget Update

OCFO updated forum members on the current status of the Department's budget, and the outlook in Congress for the next several months. The operating budget for FY12 is 46.5 billion dollars, funds that are available through the end of the fiscal year on September 30, 2012. Congress has passed a continuing resolution (CR) which will fund the Federal Government through March 27, 2013. This funding includes a slight increase of 0.612% over FY12 enacted levels, however no new starts are permitted and all pay increases for FY13 have been halted under the coming CR.

The CR does not affect sequestration which is scheduled to occur on January 2, 2012. Sequestration could mean 7-12% reduction in the Department's budget. The members discussed potential impacts on the Department; however, the discussion was purely analytical as there is no certainty with regard to what will happen. Budget will be a priority topic at the DHS LMF and components are encouraged to discuss this topic in their forums.

St. Elizabeth's Update

The forum was briefed on the status of headquarters consolidation at St. Elizabeths. The move will happen in phases. For the first phase Coast Guard will move 3,700 people to St. Elizabeths in August of 2013. In total 14,000 employees will eventually be moved to the new site. Currently the only development that has been secured is Coast Guard Headquarters. The next phase will be to bring the Secretary and immediate staff. Additional moves and development will be dependent on budgetary constraints. Council members interested in a tour of St. Elizabeth's, please contact Carol Mitten.

Telework Update

Components provided a telework update covering three areas: telework eligible positions, telework pilots and best practices, and barriers to telework. Most components have experienced progress in identifying telework eligible positions where there is opportunity for episodic or situational telework. Technology and equipment challenges were frequently identified as barriers.

Members also received the following update regarding the 2012 OPM Telework Data Call: The telework data collected will be reported to OPM and Congress. The report will contain two parts:

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- Department-wide data
- Component-level data on eligibility frequency, and participation

The goal for 2012 was to have a 15% participation rate among eligible employees. For 2013 the goal has been raised to 20%. About 10% of federal employees opt out of telework. The data this report is based on is supplied by time in attendance and component telework coordinators.

OPM will provide a standard government-wide agreement that all employees are expected to follow. This agreement does have portions that can be customized by components.

One of the Co-Chairs requested that in addition to covering telework eligibility, the next telework report include number of employees with a telework agreement, number of employees opting out of telework, and impact of telework on productivity/savings.

Coast Guard Goals, Engagement, Accountability, and Results (GEAR) Presentation

Mr. Odom and Mr. Stroubakis briefed the forum on the progress achieved since the initial briefing to the forum on February 8, 2012. Months of extensive collaboration paid off and USCG determined that engagement would be the key element for GEAR's pilot.

USCG plans to implement a pilot program in Boston, MA. Approximately 200 civilian employees, 150 of whom are AFGE bargaining unit employees, will be participating in the program. The pilot will begin in April 2013 and will be preceded by training as well as robust communication.

Employee Viewpoint Survey

OCHCO briefed Forum members on the recent participation rates of this year's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. The DHS overall average was 46.5%. S&T had that highest rate of response with 68.4%.

2012 Labor-Management Relations Survey

OCHCO shared the 2012 DHS Labor Relations Survey results. The survey was sent to 15,647 people. 44% completed the survey; thereby achieving the goal of increasing response rates.

This year's results are similar to last year's. Therefore, the initial overall recommendations are to continue focus on training; consider addressing the growing divergence in opinions between labor and management, and develop methods to improve trust between labor and management. Components are encouraged to review their component specific reports and develop action plans to address specific areas of improvement.

Closing Remarks

The Co-Chairs thanked everyone for attending. Members were reminded of the importance of working to achieve goals between meetings.