

**National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations
19th Public Meeting
March 21, 2012**

The National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations held its 19th meeting on March 21, 2012, at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Mr. John Berry (Director, Office of Personnel Management (OPM)) and Dr. Shelley Metzenbaum (Associate Director for Performance and Personnel Management, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)) co-chaired the meeting. The following Council members also attended:

Name	Title
Ms. Carol Bonosaro	President, Senior Executives Association
Mr. Michael Filler	Director of Public Services, International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Mr. W. Scott Gould	Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs
Mr. David Holway	National President, National Association of Government Employees
Mr. Gregory Junemann	President, International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers
Ms. Colleen M. Kelley	National President, National Treasury Employees Union
Ms. Kathleen Merrigan	Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Ms. Carol Waller Pope	Chair, Federal Labor Relations Authority

Mr. Brian DeWyngaert, Chief of Staff, American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), sat in for Mr. John Gage, National President, AFGE.

Ms. Catherine Emerson, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Chief Human Capital Officer, sat in for Ms. Jane Holl Lute, Deputy Secretary, DHS.

Mr. Randy Erwin, Legislative Director, National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE), sat in for Mr. William Dougan, President, NFFE.

Mr. T. Michael Kerr, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Department of Labor, sat in for Mr. Seth David Harris, Deputy Secretary of Labor.

Ms. Jessica Klement, Director of Government Affairs, Federal Managers Association (FMA), sat in for Ms. Patricia Niehaus, National President, FMA.

Mr. Pat Tamburrino, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy, sat in for Mr. Ashton B. Carter, Deputy Secretary of Defense.

Mr. Richard Tarr, Associate General Counsel, Federal Education Association (FEA), sat in for Mr. H.T. Nguyen, Executive Director, FEA.

About 56 members of the public attended the meeting, including 2 representatives from the media.

Agenda Item I: Welcome

Mr. Berry began the meeting at 10:05 a.m. He explained that, since OMB Controller Danny Werfel had to attend a Congressional hearing, Dr. Metzenbaum would act as Co-Chair for this meeting.¹

Mr. Berry mentioned the recent extension of the Council's charter until September 30, 2013, which the President provided in Executive Order (EO) 13591.² Mr. Berry said the extension allows time to let another agency serve on the Council, and that Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Neal Wolin graciously offered to step down so the Council can take advantage of the opportunity to bring in fresh perspectives. He added that Treasury's service on the Council has been excellent, and that Treasury surely will continue to contribute significantly to the Council's efforts.

Mr. Berry said the open seat goes to Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Kathleen Merrigan. He pointed out that Agriculture has about 35,000 bargaining unit employees represented by various unions. He said that Ms. Merrigan, as a member of the President's Management Council who works with other Cabinet deputies to improve accountability and performance across Government, is ideally suited to serve on the Council. He added that one notable achievement for her is that in 2010 *Time Magazine* included her on its "100 Most Influential People in the World" list.

Ms. Merrigan thanked Mr. Berry and said she is pleased to serve, looks forward to learning a lot, and hopes she can contribute to the Council's success. At Mr. Berry's request, the other Council members then briefly introduced themselves to her.

Mr. Berry thanked the Council members for the introductions, then asked if anyone had further edits to the draft minutes from the previous Council meeting, which included all changes made by the Council so far. The Council made no further edits and unanimously approved the minutes. Mr. Berry asked Dr. Metzenbaum to kick off the next agenda item.

Agenda Item II: Agency and Cross-Agency Priority Goals

Dr. Metzenbaum began a presentation accompanied by slides labeled "Agency and Cross-Agency Priority Goals." She first reminded everyone that Executive Order 13522 requires concentration on goals and metrics, and reviewed the three key areas of focus: improve mission accomplishment and service/product quality; improve employee worklife; and improve labor management relations.

Dr. Metzenbaum discussed how the President and agencies set goals in accordance with the [Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010](#) (GPRAMA). She said

¹ As Mr. Berry explained in the previous Council meeting, Mr. Werfel will normally co-chair Council meetings during Mr. Jeffrey Zients' service as OMB Acting Director.

² EO 13591 continued the Council and a number of other Federal Advisory Committee Act groups until September 30, 2013.

that, under GPRAMA, the President sets long-term *Federal Cross-Agency Priority Goals*, and that with release of their budgets agencies in turn develop *Strategic Plans* every 4 years; set *Agency Priority Goals* every 2 years; and set *Annual Performance Goals* for key aspects of agency performance.

Dr. Metzenbaum informed everyone that agencies’ goals and performance plans, along with underlying Governmentwide management initiatives, can be found on the performance.gov website. She then provided examples of agencies setting and achieving goals linked to GPRAMA requirements.

Dr. Metzenbaum reported the results of two Department of the Interior Agency Priority Goal initiatives:

- The Safe Indian Communities initiative, a 2-year program that included targeted community policing and, by 2010, achieved a 35 percent overall decrease in violent crime on 4 Indian reservations compared to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007-2009 average; and
- The Renewable Energy Development initiative, where the goal was to produce 9,000 megawatts of energy by the end of FY 2011 and through renewable solar, wind, and geothermal energy resources on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

Dr. Metzenbaum pointed out that the 35 percent decrease in violent crime on the 4 reservations far exceeded the initiative’s goal of achieving a 5 percent reduction. She said that while Interior fell short of its renewable energy goal for the end of FY 2011 (6,055 megawatts versus 9,000), in pursuing the goal the agency made historic progress and *generated enough energy to power over a million homes*. She added, “It’s not so much about hitting targets as it is about making progress.”

Dr. Metzenbaum said that, for FY 2012-2013, there are 103 Agency Priority Goals and that the 24 largest agencies have set goals. She provided a few examples:

Agency	Goal
Veterans Affairs	By September 30, 2013, reduce the number of homeless Veterans to 35,000 by serving 35,500 additional homeless veterans.
Agriculture	By September 30, 2013, expand U.S. agricultural exports to at least \$150 billion to help rural communities.
Social Security Administration	By the end of FY 2013, increase online filing rates from 36 percent at the end of FY 2011 to 48 percent.
Health and Human Services	By December 31, 2013, reduce U.S. adults’ smoking from 1,281 cigarettes per year/capita to 1,062 cigarettes per year/capita, a 17.1 percent decrease from the 2010 baseline.

Dr. Metzenbaum displayed the list of the 14 Cross-Agency Priority Goals outlined in the President's 2013 budget. She said she would not go through them all, but highlighted these:

6. **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Education.** Increase the number of well-prepared graduates with STEM degrees by one-third over the next 10 years, resulting in an additional 1 million graduates with degrees in STEM subjects.
7. **Job Training.** Ensure our country has one of the most skilled workforces in the world by preparing 2 million workers with skills training by 2015 and improving the coordination and delivery of job training services.
8. **Cybersecurity.** By 2014, achieve 95% utilization of critical administration cybersecurity capabilities on Federal information systems.

Dr. Metzenbaum said people can access the cross and individual agency performance goals by going to performance.gov and choosing [Performance Improvement](#) under the heading "Areas of Focus." Referring to the potential for agency forums to contribute to GPRAMA plans and outcomes, she added, "This is a phenomenal opportunity for forums!"

As an example of the power of mission-focused metrics, Dr. Metzenbaum said a Veterans Affairs (VA) claims processing center increased the number of claims completed by 40 percent after management and labor set a goal and worked hard together to achieve it. Mr. Gould commented that he agreed wholeheartedly that setting goals has a galvanizing effect on agencies, an effect that extends outside the Federal Government to State and local Governments as well as churches and various other institutions in American communities.

Mr. Berry agreed with Mr. Gould's comments, thanked Dr. Metzenbaum for her presentation, and said the Council would now hear an update on metrics reports.

Agenda Item III: Metrics Reports on Agency Forums - Update

Referring to Dr. Metzenbaum's discussion of cross and individual agency priority goals, Mr. Filler said, "Shelley's presentation is a good lead-in to talking about where we stand." Like Dr. Metzenbaum, he began the presentation by reviewing the three key areas of focus for metrics: improve mission accomplishment and service/product quality; improve employee worklife; and improve labor management relations. He then turned the floor over to Mr. Tim Curry, OPM Deputy Associate Director, Partnership and Labor Relations.

Mr. Curry said the Metrics Working Group held three meetings since the previous Council meeting. He said the group continued its review of metrics submissions, discussed overdue reports, identified agencies needing to be contacted about predecisional involvement (PDI), and discussed strategies to gather information.

Mr. Curry said that, since the last meeting, 4 additional metrics reports were submitted, bringing the number received up to 44, with 7 pending. For the pending reports, he listed the agencies and unions and briefly described the impediments. He said he found one case particularly

interesting, where rather than collaborating on a single report management and labor submitted separate ones. He said the Federal Labor Relations Authority is offering help where needed.

The Metrics Working Group reported to the Council on themes emerging from the reports. The working group agreed that many aspects of the reports are encouraging (e. g. strong progress in building collaborative relationships), but that the reports also show mixed progress in producing mission-focused metrics. The working group also observed a tendency to use Employee Viewpoint Survey (EVS) results as primary metrics, and that in some cases activities/actions are listed as metrics with no clear indication of what is measured. (In such cases, the working group will reach out to forums for additional information.)

Mr. Berry asked Mr. Curry if, for cases where people are relying on EVS metrics, the Council can refer the forums to the Council's guidance on metrics, which includes helpful examples. Mr. Curry said OPM staff had already done so, but would be glad to reinforce the message.

Mr. Berry asked Mr. Filler if GPRAMA goals might be a good starting point for metrics. Mr. Filler said, "It's a possibility. Great idea, but I wonder about our capacity to do it at this stage." He said the working group could explore with forums whether GPRAMA goals can inform efforts at this point.

The Metrics Working Group reported on its progress so far in measuring the extent of PDI.³ The working group announced its plan to study a sample of agencies/their forums, with the sample consisting of at least 4 agencies with 1,000 or fewer bargaining unit employees (BUEs), 4 agencies with 1001-25,000 BUEs, and 4 agencies with more than 25,000 BUEs. (All agencies on the Council will be included.) The working group will develop written questions on PDI to collect data from forums and is contacting agencies/forums to make arrangements to discuss PDI.

Mr. Junemann asked if the working group plans to contact various locals directly. Mr. Curry responded that one of the challenges in the policy of contacting locals directly would be dealing with agencies with multiple forums and many bargaining units. Mr. Junemann acknowledged that large agencies could be a challenge, and then he said what he was thinking is he would like to see a copy of the survey before it goes to forums so that when he is contacted with questions he will be prepared. Mr. Curry said the survey instrument would be cleared by the full Council before being used.

Mr. Berry said that people can discuss things in academic and theoretical terms, but that bringing things down to earth with real examples is helpful. He then asked Mr. Gould to begin a presentation on forum metrics at VA.

³ In the previous Council Meeting, Mr. Dougan raised as new business the idea of the Council studying the extent of PDI, and the Council decided to assign the task to the Metrics Working Group.

Agenda Item IV: Forum Metrics at VA

Mr. Gould gave a presentation with slides labeled “Metrics in the Department of Veterans Affairs (Executive Order 13522).” His presentation provided a brief history of labor-management collaboration at VA, described VA’s performance management system and process for selecting metrics to comply with EO 13522, summarized progress on using and reporting on those metrics, and told a story of partnership success in the Houston VA Regional Office (HVARO).

Mr. Gould introduced two guest speakers who told the story of partnership at HVARO: Mr. Pritz Navaratnasingam, Director, Houston VA Regional Office, and Mr. Fernando Grajales, President, AFGE, Local 1454.

Mr. Navaratnasingam said, “I am humbled by the opportunity we are given to tell our story here.” He said the story is probably best told by contrasting the labor-management climate now with what it was a few years ago. He said, “When we started out, there was no partnership. But I want to turn it over to Fernando. I’ve been Director for a year and a half, but Fernando remembers further back.”

Mr. Grajales said that telling the HVARO story is an easy way to let people know labor-management forums can really work, which he could show simply by contrasting between the labor-management climate now versus a few years ago. He said, “I have PTSD with respect to the old labor-management relations,” but that things have come a long way since then. He said that great things can be achieved through partnership even when relationships have been difficult, and added, “If Mandela and de Klerk can sit down together and work things out, I’m pretty sure we can too.”

Mr. Grajales said that one of the keys to a successful partnership is direct and frequent communication between labor and upper management. He discussed his relationship with Mr. Navaratnasingam in contrast to his relationship with previous Directors who delegated communication with the union to lower management officials. He said, “There was no dialogue, and everything had to be reduced to paper. We’d lost all hope of any kind of talks. That’s what Pritz found when he walked in.”

Mr. Grajales described his first conversation with Mr. Navaratnasingam and changes in the labor-management climate since then: “Our first conversation was, ‘You and I need to talk continuously.’ Then it was like clear skies after a heavy storm. We don’t compromise on our positions, since we’re bound by the framework of the master agreement, but there are lots of common areas. When someone talks bad about VA, they’re talking about both the workforce and management.”

Mr. Grajales described the beginnings of the improved labor-management relationship at HVARO, and the shift in thinking since then. He said, “We were sent to FLRA to do training. It was not done by one side or the other. It was a great opportunity. It wasn’t absent of misgivings because of the PTSD, and it was hard to convince the rest of the Executive Board

there was actually a willingness of management to meet with us.” He said that eventually people overcame their doubts and really started communicating.

Mr. Navaratnasingam agreed with Mr. Grajales’ description of what it took to get where HVARO is now. He said risk-taking was key, and that it was PDI that made people comfortable enough to take the necessary risks. He said, “Ultimately, the pen moved with both hands. In the end, the metrics we were able to point to exceeded our expectations.” He said that the HVARO successes required a culture change. He said the Houston office used to be among the worst in terms of the labor-management climate, but that he could now point to metrics showing tremendous improvement.

Mr. Grajales reiterated the importance of good labor-management communication. He said, “Pritz gets the big bucks, but I’m working every day. I can be one of Pritz’s best sources, and he knows it’s advantageous for him to have this kind of communication.”

Contrasting again between previous Directors and Mr. Navaratnasingam, Mr. Grajales said, “When a management plan was proposed and Pritz asked for our endorsement, the old regime would have thrown us out at the first sign of misgivings, but Pritz had a conversation with us and made it clear exactly what we would be endorsing.”

Mr. Navaratnasingam described how the goals for claims processing were set, and he emphasized that success was largely due to Mr. Grajales endorsing the goals and helping to achieve general employee buy-in.

Ms. Kelley commented, “Your numbers are amazing! I can’t believe you did this just by speeding things up. Did you change processes?” Mr. Grajales said that what really made the difference was a culture change. He said, “Most people before this initiative had to be good fighters.” He said management needed open, honest communication with subject matter experts, which required a culture of transparency.

Mr. Grajales said, “I’m involved in every staff meeting. When there’s a concern, it’s voiced, clarified, and discussed. Pritz has endorsed my presence. Arbitrations are way down, and there’s not been one grievance since we established this program.”

At the end of the HVARO presentation, Mr. Berry said, “Thank you for your service to our country and to our Nation’s veterans. This is amazing progress. Hats off to you.”

Mr. Berry said that at OPM management and labor have been collaborating to decrease the retirement backlog, and frontline employees have weighed in. He said that, as a result, the number of retirement cases processed in February 2012 is up by 50 percent compared to February 2011, and he added, “The March numbers are looking good too.” He then turned the floor over to Ms. Kelley, who began a presentation on PDI at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Agenda Item V: Pre-Decisional Involvement at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Ms. Kelley introduced Mr. Larry Pittiglio, Executive Vice President, National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), Chapter 208, and Ms. Alison Naden, Senior Space Design Specialist, National Regulatory Commission (NRC). She said she was very pleased to have these guest speakers at the meeting to talk about handling workspace moves, a very important issue to employees, and one that every agency faces. Mr. Pittiglio and Ms. Naden began the presentation, using slides labeled “Three White Flint North Project Success through Partnership.”

The presentation described labor-management collaboration to consolidate NRC functions into a single facility, Three White Flint North (3WFN) in Rockville, MD, where office space is now planned for about 1,350 staff from 7 different NRC organizations. The speakers discussed PDI as an essential piece of the project, e.g. that planning and design included regular opportunities for NTEU predecisional input; that NRC and NTEU conducted four staff surveys to solicit input into the design; that NRC and NTEU collaborated on plans and drawings for each design phase as well as plans for moving into the new facility, etc.

Ms. Naden discussed the interior design process and showed typical floor plan and workstation designs. (See pages 4-7 of slides). The speakers stressed that employee input (e.g. surveys and participation of employees in the planning aspects) and consistent use of PDI were absolutely essential to the project’s success.

At the end of the presentation, Mr. Pittiglio briefly commented on his experiences with NRC partnership since the Clinton Administration. He said that when the Bush Administration ended the requirement for agencies to establish partnerships, NRC elected to continue partnership and so had it continuously now for 16 years. Regarding the success of partnership as shown by the 3WFN project, he said, “I cannot tell you how happy we are.” He said he enjoyed the project so much that, even though he is now retired, he continues the work as a volunteer.

Mr. Berry thanked the speakers. He said, “Office relocation and renovation are one of the most sensitive issues, and I have a bear story.” He said that one day a bear at the National Zoo suddenly appeared very uncomfortable with its familiar enclosure, and then investigation revealed that only one small thing in the bear’s enclosure had changed, a red ball replacing a blue one. He said that while millions of years of evolution separate humans and bears, people are no less sensitive about their space, so the 3WFN project was a huge achievement. He then turned the floor over to Ms. Bonosaro for an update on the Council’s progress in meeting the EO 13522 requirement to report to the President on (b)(1) pilots.

Agenda Item VI: Report to President on (b)(1) Pilots - Update

Ms. Bonosaro reminded everyone that, as discussed in previous meetings, the 12 pilot projects had existed for nearly 18 months, and EO 13522 requires the (b)(1) report to the President be delivered by May 1, 2012. She said the working group met weekly and had drafted the first four chapters of the report based on the Council-approved outline. She said the working group agreed on findings from the pilots to include in the draft, and that the working group will also draft recommendations.

Ms. Bonosaro said the working group should have a draft of the report ready for the Council's review in early April, and the hope is that the Council will approve the draft in the April meeting so that the report can be delivered to the President by the May 1 deadline. She added she hoped the (b)(1) projects submit *their* reports to the Council by the March 31 deadline, since time will not allow data from late reports to be included in the report to the President.

Mr. Berry said, "Thanks, Carol. I know it's a lot of work. We'll prioritize it on the April agenda." Mr. Berry and Mr. Curry said OPM staff would continue to remind the pilots that the (b)(1) reports are urgently needed by the March 31 deadline, and then Mr. Berry said the Council would now hear from the Career Development Working Group.

Agenda Item VII: Workgroup on Career Development

Ms. Terry Rosen, AFGE Labor Relations Specialist, updated the Council on the activities of the Career Development Working Group, which the Council decided to form in its previous meeting. Her presentation was accompanied by slides labeled "Working Group on Career Development."

Ms. Rosen reminded everyone of topics for study mentioned in the previous Council meeting: college credit for job training, expansion of career ladders, and expansion of apprenticeships beyond the Federal Wage System. She said the working group met on March 8, 2012 for preliminary discussion and brainstorming on those topics, and she listed the participating agencies and unions. (See third page of slides.)

Ms. Rosen summarized issues and ideas raised in the working group meeting with regard to opportunities for earning college credit through job training. She said that, while many classes with college credit are now offered on the OPM website, almost all the classes are for managers or human resources people. She said the working group's ideas for expanding opportunities for college credit to others included encouraging labor-management forums to address this in their workplaces, working with the American Council on Education, and partnering with community colleges. She said the working group also discussed developing a how-to guide for labor-management forums and the Council sending a letter to the forums asking them to take up the issue of college credit for job training.

Ms. Rosen turned to the issue of career ladders. She said the working group agreed the Government needs to expand career ladders to help form a bridge to provide opportunities for employees in lower-graded, dead-end jobs. She said an example was an agency where grade 5 and 7 support positions are provided no path for getting into grade 11 and 12 specialist positions.

Ms. Rosen said career ladders should be expanded to attract highly skilled applicants, but that the working group needs more information before it can propose solutions, e.g.—

- Can agencies expand career ladders on their own, or must OPM approve?
- What is involved in creating career ladders?
 - Can an agency create them on its own?
 - Can part of an agency create them?

Ms. Rosen said the working group also suggested—

- Finding ways to make individual development plans (IDPs) more useful and tied to future agency needs;
- Providing information to help supervisors and employees chart out their careers;
- Involving the Chief Learning Officers Council; and
- Continuing discussions to identify other ways to improve employee career development.

Ms. Rosen added she would like the working group to learn from agencies that have succeeded with college creditable job training, and that input from nonmanagement employees would be especially valuable. She added that her work on this issue has already been a learning experience for her, e.g. she did not know there were Chief Learning Officers.

Mr. Berry said OPM's Chief Learning Officer is Mr. Joseph Kennedy, whose services to the working group Mr. Berry volunteered. Regarding IDPs, Mr. Berry commented they work best when developed in partnership and not imposed by management on employees.

Regarding partnering on career development, Mr. Junemann commented, "My union is very interested. It's done in Europe and Southeast Asia. In other countries partnering on career development is a way of life, and the terms *learning representative* and *training representative* are part of their terminology. In this country we pretty much just negotiate tuition refunds. It benefits management, especially when new technology creates large numbers of unneeded people. A system like this would help management prepare for changes down the road. We can use what's in other countries as models." He added, "I applaud AFGE for bringing this forward and support Terry Rosen's suggestion to bring other agencies in."

Mr. Berry said he thinks everyone agrees training and career development are very important. He said he has been trying to increase the number of accredited courses available to Federal employees, since doing so benefits the country not just while employees are in Federal service but also if they go elsewhere in the U.S. economy.

Ms. Rosen said accreditation is a quality check on training and assures consistency. Mr. Berry agreed, and added there can also be cost savings along with consistency when training is provided across agencies. He said, "If we're smart we can have good quality training *and* savings for taxpayers."

Dr. Metzenbaum thanked the working group. She said, "Thanks for bringing this forward. There are lots of good resources out there, but they're not easy to find. Terrific progress!" Mr. Berry then turned to the next agenda item.

Agenda Item VIII: New Business

Mr. Berry reminded everyone that the next meeting is on April 18, 2012. He said the date for the June 2012 meeting would be a problem because an emergency training exercise is scheduled for June 20, 2012. The Council discussed if the meeting should be rescheduled, which would require a *Federal Register* notice. Mr. Junemann proposed that, rather than trying to reschedule a meeting at this point, the Council cancel the June 2012 meeting with the understanding the working groups will continue their work. The Council agreed.

Dr. Metzenbaum said she wanted to thank all the people who traveled to make presentations today, and Mr. Berry added his thanks.

Mr. Junemann said he had been privileged to observe the partnership process at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. He said it was a case study of productivity and savings, a lesson on making a difference that will last. He said, "They have saved millions and millions!"

Mr. Berry asked if Mr. Tamburrino approved of the Puget Sound success story being added to a future Council meeting agenda, and Mr. Tamburrino agreed.

Mr. DeWyngaert thanked the presenters from VA and NRC. He said, "These are lessons we can all learn from. How to get to the pragmatic from the theoretical. Terrific job on both sides." He said risk-taking was required for both sides, but that everyone benefited. He added, "I also want to take a moment to commend Mr. Gould for his leadership." He then said he wanted to raise two items for discussion:

1. AFGGE would like to see guidance issued on the legal prohibitions against direct conversions of Federal jobs to contractor personnel. Mr. DeWyngaert said, "It needs to say 'stop.' It's illegal." He said DOD has already issued such guidance.
2. AFGGE would like clarification on the impact of sequestration and a potential 5-week furlough. Mr. DeWyngaert said, "Given what Justice's comments were the other day, it's important for us to have information through OMB or OPM so we can understand the impact."

Mr. Berry responded, "On the first point, we'll get with experts so we can put it on the agenda. On the second point, the Administration has said sequestration is a bad policy. The President has sent a clear message to Congress, and he mentioned in his budget proposal he wants to avoid

sequestration. Should Congress fail to act, the Administration will come to this table and elsewhere to address the technical questions that need to be answered, but right now the focus is on reaching a balanced budget framework. Otherwise, we're committed to engaging with our labor partners."

Dr. Metzenbaum commented that she agreed with Mr. Berry's comments on sequestration, and that the Council should consider reminding agencies of what the law says about contractor conversions.

Mr. DeWynngaert said, regarding the sequestration issue, that acting sooner rather than later would be best, and that November is too late. Mr. Berry acknowledged the concern, and then turned the floor over to Mr. George Cohen, Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS).

Mr. Cohen began by commenting on the HVARO success story: "What you heard from Fernando and Pritz, that model is what we're trying to accomplish in the private sector." He then reminded everyone of the availability of FMCS *Train the Trainer* sessions. He said the Council members all have letters about a 4-day FMCS training session. He said this is an opportunity to spread training far and wide and to many thousands. He said, "All we need is to hear a request for sessions, and we'll be happy to provide them."

Mr. Berry thanked Mr. Cohen for the reminder and offer and said, "Great idea to take this to an exponential power." He then offered the floor for public comment.

Agenda Item IX: Acknowledgment/Receipt of Public Submissions

An individual from the audience asked whether agencies owed the Council any reports other than the metrics reports discussed earlier, and Mr. Curry said, "Just the metrics reports that were due December 31."

Agenda Item X: Adjournment

Mr. Berry adjourned the meeting at 11:52 a.m.

CERTIFIED

John Berry
Co-Chair

Shelley Metzenbaum
Acting Co-Chair