U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON
VETERANS SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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(Meeting called to order, 1:05 p.m.)

MR. GREEN: Okay, good afternoon, everybody.

In case you don’t know me -- I introduced myself to a few of you -- I’m Tim Green. I’ve been here about three weeks at the Small Business Administration -- I almost said Vets. And happy to be here. I’m Larry’s deputy. And Larry is not able to make it today. He got called out for a briefing, so he will be not at the meeting, but he will be at the Advisory Committee meeting tomorrow.

So I think as we start, I want to just give you a little background on me. I did about 28 years in the Air Force, aim high, and then I worked over at the Department of Labor with Bill Metheny as -- I did outreach and legislative affairs over there at Vets. And then I recently came over here as a deputy administrator for Larry.

So happy you’re all here. We’re going to do a roll call now. So why don’t we go around the table, and then I’ll ask those on the line to tell us who you are. Okay? If we can go around the room.

MR. CARTER: Good afternoon. Dewayne Carter from GSA.
MR. METHENY: Bill Metheny from Department of Labor, Vets.

MR. KURTZ: Stan Kurtz, SBA, Office of Veterans Business Development.


MS. TORRES: Beth Torres, Veterans Affairs OSDBU.

MR. HUBBARD: Hi, everybody. Will Hubbard, Student Veterans of America.

MR. GREEN: Okay, and on the outside of the room?

MR. SOBOTA: Joe Sobota, SBA Office of Advocacy.

MR. GREEN: Okay, so who do we have on the line?

MS. LEWIS: Hello, this is Valerie Lewis.

MR. GREEN: You said Valerie?

MS. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

MR. GREEN: Thank you.

Do we have anybody else on the line?

Nothing heard, okay. If anybody calls in, please announce yourself, but you won’t hear this, since you’re not on the line. Okay.

All right. That’s my attempt at humor this
1 afternoon. Again, welcome, everybody. We’re going to
go around -- start with updates. And I thought I would
kick it off with kind of what we’re doing at SBA based
on what I -- my limited knowledge of what’s going on.
I do have Stan Kurtz on one side and Amy’s going to be
on the other side to answer any tough questions. And
then I want to -- we’ll go down and let each of you
give us an update. And then I’d like to have a little
discussion about the committee and where we are, where
we’re going, that kind of discussion. And then we’ll
take it from there.

So my updates, I have a slide, if you can go
to the next slide. So the President this year gifted
us $100,000 of his FY18 salary to conduct some kind of
program to assist veteran-owned small businesses. And
so what we did, we took and ran with that, and we’re
focusing on the growth portion of entrepreneurship. So
we’re going to do a program partnering with the Veteran
Entrepreneurial Training and Resource Network, and
they’re out of Boston.

And they’re going to run a couple of cohorts
to start with. We’re calling it a pilot, obviously,
starting in September. The funding announcement and
all that should be -- all the grant process should be
done probably in about two weeks. And they’re going to
run a couple of classes. And we’re calling it the Veteran-owned Small Business Growth Pilot. And they’re going to train businesses that have been open a year or so, and they’re going to run them through a training program to help them expand and grow their business.

So we’re excited about this. I know it’s a small amount of dollars, but it’s also -- it’s going to get a lot of visibility for us, and so we’re pressing forward with that.

Stan, anything you want to add on that?

MR. KURTZ: Just working on the one-pager right now, so the one-pager just kind of gives you an overview of what the program is. So once we get that complete, we can send that out to you so you can share with other folks.

MR. GREEN: Okay, appreciate that. The other thing, there’s been some talk about excess equipment, and I don’t know if you’ve been briefed on this before, but back in April, Senator Duckworth introduced S2679. It’s called the Veteran Small Business Enhancement Act of 2018. Really, the intent here is to give GUS -- excess property, US-owned surplus property to businesses so they can use and help generate, you know, save costs for supplies and equipment and that, to businesses that are owned by veterans. Funded into
law. It was the Veterans Small Business Enhancement
Act of 2018.

GSA is going to play a big role in the process
or reusing and disposing of equipment. SBA and VA are
going to be leaders in the outreach effort for that.
One of the reasons we’re bringing it up is because
we’re getting a lot of calls on that, but this whole
process for helping the veterans is going to require a
rule, and the rule, you know if you’ve ever done a rule
before, it takes a little bit of time to draft that.
So it’s going to go shortly into interagency review,
and then it will be 60 to 90 days, and then -- probably
90 days, and then it’s going to go in for public
comment. So when we get into that period, we’ll let
everybody know. Then you’ll have an opportunity to see
how that program is going to be working.

Hopefully, you’ll want the rule published late
in 2019 and then start the program sometime in 2020.
And that will allow opportunities. And then each of
the states are also going to have -- we’re going to
have an agreement with each of the states on how to --
how they’re going to ask for the property and collect
it and all that kind of thing. So that is in the works
right now, and if you’re interested in that, we can
provide some information on where to go to reach out to
the states and where they are in the process as we go along.

Amy, do you want to add anything on that?

You’re kind of the expert on --

MS. GARCIA: No. Hi, Amy Garcia. No, we’re working with GSA to craft the proposed rule, and so as soon as that’s cleared by OMB, then we’ll be headed down the highway, just like you mentioned.

MR. GREEN: Okay, great. The next thing -- the next slide, if you’d go to that -- well, back up one. On the bottom, we do want to announce the VBOC conference, August 13 through 15. Ray Milano, if you know Ray, he’ll be part of that. I guess, Stan you’re not the VBOC director anymore, so you’ll just -- you won’t be the lead for that, but Ray, and that’s going to be 13 through 15 August here in town, just for all the VBOC directors who will be coming in.

Next slide. So I was getting ready for the meeting. I want to -- I kind of reviewed some of the requirements for the Interagency Task Force, and I know we normally conduct this the day before the full FACA Committee meeting, which is tomorrow, but there is -- the Interagency Task Force is in public law and statute. And we also have a charter I can share, but basically representatives here are part of the
membership, and then we have four representatives from VSOs, MSOs, the associations that are part of the charter.

Go to the next slide. Back up one. Go ahead one. Yep. Forward. Okay, so this lays out the functions of the Committee. And I know you probably all know what the Committee’s charter is, but if you haven’t, it requires us to consult regularly with VSOs, MSOs, and then creates regulatory activities and proposals for all these things. And I’m -- the reason I put it on here, I’ll leave it with you, you can take it with you, but just kind of a reminder of some of the things that we’re asked to do for this task force in case we stray off and go into other areas, to kind of bring it back to this.

Next one.

MS. LEWIS: Excuse me.

MR. GREEN: Yes, go ahead.

MS. LEWIS: It’s kind of hard to hear. I was wondering if you could just speak up a little bit, and we’re not -- we’re not able to see the slides. Are we supposed to be able to see the slides?

MR. GREEN: And if you want, we can send them to you, if you pass your contact information.

MS. LEWIS: Yeah, we have -- I have the agenda
and the handouts. I just thought maybe you guys might not be aware that we can’t see what you’re doing there.

MR. GREEN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. KURTZ: Do you have the slide deck? You should have that.

MS. LEWIS: Yes.

MR. KURTZ: So when we go through it, we’ll tell you what slide that we’re on. That way you can kind of follow along.

MS. LEWIS: Okay, great. Thank you.

MR. KURTZ: Okay. So we’re on Slide?

MR. GREEN: Four.

MR. KURTZ: We’re on Slide 4 right now.

MR. GREEN: So this kind of -- this lays out the functions of the Interagency Task Force. It’s good to review this every once in a while and remind yourself of what we were asked to do with the original legislation.

The next slide is where I want to go kind of at the end of the meeting to talk about reporting and what our plan is for this year’s report and to go moving forward. I will likely be the designated federal official for this committee. Larry still will be the chair. And then we do have a requirement to meet four times a year, and we can do that in person or
via conference call. And we can talk about that as well. And then we have the ability to establish working groups -- ad hoc working groups -- as necessary to support this Committee.

So that’s kind of the overview. I’m going to go a little more into the report and stuff after we have the other agencies report out. So any questions before I turn it over?

(No response.)

MR. GREEN: Okay, that said, GSA, do you want to give an update?

MR. CARTER: So I apologize to say that Amando didn’t pass any updates, and he only mentioned about the VETS2 contract and that it was doing quite well dollars-wise, but he had an emergency meeting and he didn’t have the opportunity to send me anything, so I told him I would take notes and we would go from there.

MR. GREEN: Okay, that’s great.

Do we have anybody from DOD?

(No response.)

MR. GREEN: Okay, over to you, Bill.

MR. METHENY: Okay, thank you. Again, this is Bill Metheny from the Department of Labor. The first thing I wanted to share is the veteran unemployment rate and numbers from last month, April, just to keep
everybody up to date on how we’re doing, the unemployment rate for April was 2.3 percent for veterans. That’s down from 3.7 percent the year prior, so still going in the right direction. It’s actually the lowest unemployment rate for April since we started collecting data in this way in the year 2000. So good news there, and we’re excited about that.

To compare it to the nonveteran unemployment rate, which is not seasonally adjusted, is 3.3 percent. So veterans are doing better in some ways than their nonveteran counterparts. One area that still -- we still need to continue to focus on is our women veteran unemployment rate -- 4.1 percent. So higher than the broader veteran population itself, but one that is much improved over recent years. So I wanted to share that.

The next report for the month of May comes out on Friday. So if you watch email threads or check veterans.gov, you can get that update when it comes out, usually mid-morning, on this coming Friday.

Second, I wanted to share with you, many in this room are involved with implementing the guidance that came out with last year’s National Defense Authorization Act to revise the Transition Assistance Program in pretty significant ways. And so the Department of Labor’s piece, the employment workshops,
are part of that and allows a little bit more focus for folks to choose which direction they want to go and get the training that they need at different times, rather than right at the end. So we’re excited about that. We’ve updated our curriculum, and this summer we will be piloting the curriculum at about six different installations around the country, starting later this month and through August, to make sure that it’s meeting the needs of the service members so that when we roll it out full -- in full, it’s ready to go and the best product we can make it.

Next, I wanted to share, too, a program that we’ve been very excited about and tried to keep this task force up to date on: the Hire Vets Medallion Program. So that is -- has just completed its first year of full run-through of applications. The applications closed not too long ago, just a few weeks ago, and now we’re reviewing the applications. And each year, those recipients will be announced around November around Veterans Day. So we’re excited about that, and we will share more about who those recipients are so that they can be recognized for being great employers of veterans around the country.

And, finally, one of the other things that we do and focus on over at Department of Labor and in Vets
is our homeless veterans and getting them employed.

And so we announce a grant each year called the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program. That announcement closed. We received the applications; we’re reviewing the applications; and we hope to announce those award recipients, those grantees, later this month. And so we’ve had great success with that program around the country, and we’re looking forward to the new recipients there. And that’s an update from us, and I’m happy to answer questions as we go.

MR. GREEN: Thanks.

Okay, do we have anybody from Treasury?

(No response.)

MR. GREEN: Okay, over to Beth.

MS. TORRES: I’m Beth Torres from Veterans Affairs. We have a few things, updates as far as verification goes. CVE is reporting that in the month of May the average time to determination was 24 days, and for the fiscal year of ’19 it’s at 43 days, so that we are processing more and more applications more quickly.

Now, the number of submissions lately has dropped, and we’re not sure exactly why, but at any rate, if folks need to get their applications in, they’re speeding right through at this point. We’ve
I got a number of outreach events that we’ve been working on. We’ve had a couple of one-on-one sessions with the associate executive director of the facilities management -- construction and facilities management office. We’ve had three outreach events targeted at the Med-Surge prime vendor contract that’s coming out. A couple of industry events over at the National Cemetery Administration, and we’re working on the Electronic Health Record Modernization Industry Day. We assisted with that as well.

We’ve got a number of outreach events planned where we’re trying to get a direct connection between veteran businesses and program managers. We’re working on one that connects large businesses with veteran-owned businesses so that they can talk about opportunities for subcontracting.

There’s an energy services company -- Energy savings performance contract event that’s coming up. I don’t have a date on it here, but it would include future project opportunities, including some discussion about the process of becoming ESCO-qualified by the Department of Energy.

We’re coming up on approximately 34 events nationwide held at the VA medical centers, intended to provide marketing opportunities for VOSBs and other
small businesses, especially with VA healthcare opportunities.

And we are looking at two large national events. We are partnering again with SAME on the construction event that will be held in Dallas on the 20th through the 22nd of November. And right now we have -- we’re tentatively looking at the NVSBE. We’re waiting final approval on that, which will be the 9th through the 11th of December in Nashville. And that’s going to focus on information technology, VHA, and VBA.

Let’s see, what else do I have? If you are interesting in going to any of these events or finding more information about it, that’s on our website under dapevents.mbmapp.com, and it has a listing of those. That’s dapevents.mbmapp.com.

And unless anyone has any questions, that’s our update.

MR. GREEN: Great, thank you.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: I have a quick question.

Your SAME event and the National Veteran Small Business Engagement event are not at the same time this year?

MS. TORRES: Correct. They are two different events, so the SAME event is focusing solely on the construction and A&E opportunities; and the NVSBE is focused on the other opportunities.
MR. GREEN: Okay, no other questions? Oh, go ahead.

MR. PHIPPS: Hi, Michael Phipps, American Legion. Hi, Beth. I have a quick question on the time to get people CVE-certified. The last time we spoke, there was some issues with people kind of getting recycled through, getting kicked out of the queue for the help desk and having the time restart, and we had a number of veteran companies come and say, they’re saying it’s 30 days or whatever the timeline that VA is given, but we’ve been doing this process for 90 days, 120 days.

And so we found -- when we talked to some -- just people had called us because they know about the committee here and the committee tomorrow. And so we had found that that was an issue, and Tom had said, yes, that is an issue and we’re working to correct that. And I just wanted to know if you had any update on that or if Tom had given you any direction on that issue.

MS. TORRES: Well, let me just say first, Tom is actually no longer at OSDBU, so he has moved on. He’s the associate executive director at the SAC down in Frederick -- Fredericksburg, both, I guess. And what has occurred is, over the course of this fiscal
1 year, we have removed a large number of applications
2 for a 30-day dormancy. If, you know, we had spoken to
3 a vet and the vet needed to submit something and they
4 didn’t submit and we had not heard anything for them
5 for 30 days, then they were -- they were
6 administratively removed.

    When they come back in, all of the documents
8 are still there, so they’ll basically pick up where
9 they left off. But if their application has been
dormant for 30 days, it just is removed for dormancy.

    MR. PHIPPS: Yeah, I think this was a little
12 bit different. These people weren’t dormant, but I’ll
13 try to get some -- I’m sure a couple of people had
14 called in last time. I’ll try to get some people to
15 just call into the meeting tomorrow about their
16 specific issues where they were -- they weren’t kicked
17 out for dormancy. It was just a -- they were just
18 being kicked out and restarted, and Tom had said it
19 might have been an IT issue, and we were going to
20 address it, and I think he started addressing that
21 issue, but we never got a full resolution on it.

    So I’ll try to get some, if I can by tomorrow,
23 some anecdotal information from the companies that this
24 is happening to because we still have their contact
25 information. And then are you going to be here
MS. TORRES: I have another meeting I have to be at, but I will check to see if I can get at least Tom McGrath to call in.

MR. PHIPPS: Oh, that would be great, because the VA always have an open invitation to our meetings. Full and open, anytime we have a meeting, we would like at least somebody to be there just so we have that representation there, so thank you, Beth.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: I have another question for Beth. Can you explain to me -- I’m not really sure I understand it. You said the CVE average with the applications is 24 days normally, but then for Fiscal Year 2019, it’s 43 days, I think you said. Did it go up or something?

MS. TORRES: No, it had -- it’s coming down, actually. It’s 43 days average if you look at every month in Fiscal 19. For the month of May, we were down to 24 days. So that average is coming down. It’s getting fast and faster, actually.

MR. GREEN: If there’s no further questions for VA, we’ll go to OMB.

MR. BLUM: Thanks, Tim, and for folks keeping score in terms of the point earlier on functions, I guess most of the work that OMB has contributed to this
Task Force over the years has been under, I think, the third function, or the second, depending upon how you’re counting, ensuring achievement of federal contracting goals and also reducing paperwork and administrative burdens. Our office, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy obviously focuses largely on the contracting piece of this equation.

So we have three updates of actions that have occurred since our last -- we last convened I think in March. One is on category management. The second is on a legislative proposal that the Administration transmitted to the Hill on innovation. And the third is a quick regulatory update that I will do in, I guess, the absence of our GCBD colleagues.

On category management, on March 20th, OMB issued guidance a long time in the making, OMB Memorandum M-1913, M-1913. And this guidance is intended to codify much of the activity that’s been going on under the President’s management agenda, and hopefully reflects a lot of the work that we have done with SBA, with the Small Business Procurement Advisory Council, the SBPAC, with the OSDBU Council, and with this group in making sure that as we pursue efforts to be more efficient in how we acquire common goods and services, that we are simultaneously providing maximum
practical opportunity for the small business community, including the service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses and veteran-owned small businesses that are the primary focus of this Task Force.

And I think first and foremost, just as a large umbrella point, by calling this category management, as opposed to strategic sourcing we have broadened the focus of this first and foremost onto smarter buying through collaborative, coordinated, and data-driven actions, not -- leveraging is a part when it makes sense, but only one part of the efficiency equation. And most of what we have done to ensure that agencies understand the importance of providing natural and practical opportunity has taken advantage of this larger frame.

So what does that mean? Well, specific points that you will see made in this memorandum, M-1913, are that small business goals are unchanged. Agencies remain fully responsible for meeting their contracting goals and all of the socioeconomic goals. Success is achieved through balance, that agencies are expected to manage contract spending through a balance of government-wide, agency-wide, and local contracts. And by local contracts, we mean set-aside contracts that are done at the local office level that generally are
1 designed to meet the needs of a small number of
2 customers, and we specifically pointed this out because
3 in many instances, especially out in the heartlands,
4 these are the contracts that are held by small business
5 incumbent contractors providing services, and we want
6 to make very clear that an organized strategy by the
7 OSDBU of making sure that there’s a robust industrial
8 base is an acknowledged and positive action that
9 supports smart spend under management and that they
10 receive credit through this initiative for those
11 activities.
12
13 So taking a play out of the small business
14 playbook, we manage this initiative through goals.
15 It’s not on a transaction-by-transaction basis, meaning
16 agencies aren’t being asked to justify individual
17 transactional activity, but rather they work towards
18 achieving a goal for their category management
19 activities, both in bringing spend under management and
20 also using best-in-class contracts, but also doing so
21 in a way that enables them to meet and exceed their
22 small business goals.
23
24 And our history under the President’s
25 management agenda is such that we think that the goal
26 levels that have been set for, in particular, the best-
27 in-class contracts are such that there’s lots of
flexibility and leeway for agencies to comfortably meet those goals. There should never be a situation where they are having to trade off meeting one at the expense of the other. And through the PMA and also through the infrastructure of this memorandum, there are a lot of touch points with OMB through the senior accountable officials at agencies to make sure that this is happening. And in addition to that, the memorandum specifically empowers and creates an expectation that OSDBUs are going to be working with the senior accountable officials in identifying these strategies for meeting their goal.

So there’s a lot of opportunity through this process to make sure that, you know, we’re engaging with the agencies and understanding any challenges arising, and hopefully more importantly sharing success stories of how agencies are kind of meeting the dual goals of being more efficient, saving money, getting better value, getting better customer satisfaction, and doing so with small business contracting support, and also making sure that OSDBUs and SBA are embedded in each of these category management teams, these teams that are focused around various areas of spend, because as we know, and kind of the bottom-line purpose of category management is to recognize that all spend, you
know, isn’t one size fits all.

There are terms and conditions. There are industry practices that differ, and we want to make sure we’re leveraging the best of that so we get our experts together and we want to make sure that SBA and OSDBUs that are knowledgeable in those spaces are participating in those conversations. And that’s particularly important for government-wide solutions to make sure that consolidation and bundling considerations were being considered, and also furthering the practice that I think has been in place since at least 2012 that, you know, as agencies think about renewal or creating new vehicles that we have a baseline, we’re aware of what the current participation rate is, and building on.

So we’ve had, I think, some good outreach, but this is -- although this is an important milestone, this is not the end of the conversation. Maybe this is the end of the beginning of the conversation, and we are fully committed to continuing to do robust outreach as this gets implemented to make sure that it’s having an intended good impact and in particular that we are making sure that agencies are able to maintain and build a robust industrial base, which we know is as important in many instances as making sure that dollars
are getting to small businesses.

Before I go to the other two issues, let me just pause there to see if anybody has any comments or questions or thoughts.

MS. LEWIS: I do. This is Valerie, VetForce, American Legion, and from Service-Disabled Veteran-owned Small Business Network. I have a question about the category management piece. So is there, like, a particular ombudsman assigned to each agency for small businesses to have reference to this new impact?

MR. BLUM: So we didn’t create a new position or a new responsibility for ombudsman, but we have -- and if you have a chance to look at the memo, I think it’s in the second attachment. There’s kind of a detailed discussion of roles and responsibilities. And it lays out -- I don’t know if I brought the memo with me -- but it does lay out, I think in some detail, the responsibilities of the OSDBUs.

So we would, at least as a starting point, want to make sure as we have conversations with the senior accountable officials, the ones that are ultimately responsible for category management, to understand that the OSDBUs are having -- are fully engaged in that conversation. So to put it in kind of maybe simpler speak, OSDBUs are already, you know,
familiar with the profile of how their agency uses small businesses to meet their mission generally.

We view category management as a subset of that, in other words, making sure they have access to information so that they can figure out how can the agency best utilize small businesses to perform functions involving common goods and services. And it’s actually incumbent, we believe, upon some of our government-wide offices like the PMO at GSA to provide the data on where small businesses are on these vehicles and in what capacity they’re performing, so that OSDBUs can make common sense and smart decisions about when it makes sense to use these vehicles versus when it makes sense to go with a local vehicle.

And we actually go so far as to say if an agency is going to do a large spend play for tens of millions of dollars, and they’re not going to, you know, migrate to a government-wide solution, one of the reasons for this could be that it could hurt the small business contracting base. Another rationale could even be that they don’t have sufficient information to even make that determination.

So we would want to see the OSDBUs involved in those conversations and, you know, plan to as we go over their annual reports, you know, ask questions and
1 also have encouraged OSDBUs at the SBPAC and other
2 places to be vocal in raising points to us to make sure
3 we’re aware if, for whatever reason, you know, they
4 believe that their communications internally are not --
5 you know, their concerns are not being voiced.
6          MS. LEWIS:  Is the Tier 0, is that a new tier,
7 or has that always been in place?
8          MR. BLUM:  No, Tier 0 actually -- she’s
9 referring to how we give credit to agencies towards
10 achieving a goal of bringing spend under management.
11 Tier 0 refers to spend that isn’t aligned with --
12 currently aligned with basic category management
13 principles. That charge actually was part of the
14 President’s management agenda, but an important change
15 that we made in the guidance is to recognize that you
16 can have local contract spend through set-asides, for
17 example, to small businesses that receive credit in
18 Tier 1, which is bringing spend in alignment with
19 category management.
20          I think prior -- initially, we were not giving
21 credit but have recognized, as I mentioned earlier,
22 that when OSDBUs create strategies, that include, you
23 know, smart use of set-asides to achieve goals, you
24 know, that should receive credit.
25          We only kind of ask, and it is an important
one, is you don’t automatically get credit for every set-aside. We want to see the OSDBUs looking at the information that’s been made available through, for example, the GSA PMO and others so that they can make smart decisions about where it makes sense to migrate. That doesn’t mean that they don’t reach the same conclusion, but to the extent that we’re spending taxpayer dollars to build out these vehicles, and in many cases these vehicles actually will include pretty strong small business participation, you know, we want to make sure that the OSDBUs and the agencies are at least considering, you know, where it may make sense.

You may, for example, have a play that involves a product that really -- you know, there’s many, many small business providers and just given how the agency uses small businesses, it may not matter whether they stick with their local contracts or go to a government-wide play. In other cases, like say for example, semi-specialized services, they may have developed, you know, a supplier base that has expertise that you don’t find on these government-wide vehicles. And this is precisely where we want the OSDBUs and the agencies making these informed decisions to say we’re not going to migrate here. It wouldn’t make sense, we’re not going to get a better value and, in fact, we
could put the agency at risk.

MS. LEWIS: So this also gives the OSDBUs the authority to do that? Is that -- because let’s just say, like, for instance, VA, what we find is that OSDBUs are oftentimes overworked and very little category management, you know, gets dealt with at that level, and you might have a better solution from a small business, but they really don’t have an outlet to -- you know, to voice those types of issues or concerns.

MR. BLUM: So two things there. One is we’ve been working with SBA and the OSDBUs on the SBPAC to build out small business dashboards so that there’s much greater visibility on what opportunities exist or don’t exist, and we’re trying to do this with end-user input so that it is meeting the needs of the people that are using these at the level of information they need. So, for example, developing a very complex dashboard that has all sorts of detailed information may be great for a contracting officer that’s making $50 million buys, you know, to support a -- it may be a government-wide solution. Providing that dashboard to a contracting officer that has a $2 million warrant out at the heartland is probably not helpful. So we’re specifically trying to develop resource tools, and as
well as training tools, that are stratified to meet the
needs of people at the local level.

And the second thing, and this is -- and I
apologize that I didn’t bring my guidance -- but I want
to say it’s -- there’s a section in the back of the
report, and I think it’s also in the front of the
guidance, that specifically requires agencies to
identify the specific process that the workforce is to
use in requesting exceptions. So, for example, because
OSDBUs are very good, but they don’t know everything
and they can’t be knowledgeable of every single
transaction. If you’re making a decision --

MS. LEWIS: Right.

MR. BLUM: -- about multi-million dollars of
spend, you don’t necessarily know that out at the
heartlands there may be some cases, you know, where it
doesn’t make sense to use that vehicle that the OSDBU
at the federal level didn’t know about. So we’ve
anticipated that and said when you make decisions that
say we’re going to migrate to this vehicle, you should
also have clear processes that your workforce can use
to raise exactly the types of questions that you are
describing, where they can go to either their local
OSDBU or, you know, up to the national, if you will,
the federal-level agency OSDBU.
Again, it doesn’t mean that they’ll say yes or no, but it means that the process is important because we don’t want contracting officers just throwing up their hands when a customer says, I really like this small business, they’re performing really well, and I don’t see what the benefit is of migrating over to this, why the agency decided to migrate over. And sometimes people just come back and say, well, it’s because OMB said. OMB is not making these decisions, but even then, we have to have some accountability to make sure that we’re working with agencies to process these and anticipate these questions.

MS. LEWIS: Good, thank you.

MR. PHIPPS: Hi, Matthew. Mike Phipps. So you had stated that the agencies don’t have to adhere to the small business goals on individual procurements but it’s at an agency level.

MR. BLUM: No, I don’t think I said that.

MR. PHIPPS: Okay.

MR. BLUM: The small business -- nothing in the guidance changes the small business contracting goals. What I was saying is that in the not-to-distant past, Congress passed a law -- this is part of FITARA, the Federal IT Acquisition Reform Act or something. I might be getting the name wrong, that said for FSSI,
Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative, vehicles -- this was under something prior to category management, basically vehicles that were identified as kind of best-in-class in the old days, that they wanted contracting officers that didn’t use those vehicles to put justifications in the contract file every time they didn’t use those vehicles.

And what we said is, you know, we don’t want to go down that path because that’s kind of a micro-management approach, it’s very inefficient, and it doesn’t provide agencies the flexibility they need, right? That assumes that every time we identify a government-wide solution it’s best, and we’ve gone through, I hope, in a clear fashion to say best-in-class does have benefit and value, right? In other words, it has a track record of having satisfied customers. It has terms and conditions that have worked, but that doesn’t mean it’s one-size-fits-all, and it doesn’t mean that it’s all-or-none, the latter being the problem that we see with doing individual exceptions.

So we said we’re going to let agencies tell us how they’ll meet their goals, and they may decide they’re not going to use a vehicle at all in a given instance to meet their category management goal. And
so, therefore, we’re moving to the goal approach to achieve accountability as opposed to having individual transactional justifications.

MR. PHIPPS: So how does the memo interact with the FAR, and how is the guidance going to become more -- because when you’re talking about contracting officers just getting guidance as opposed to, okay, this is guidance versus this is -- you know, this is in the Federal Acquisition Regulations and it goes through that process.

MR. BLUM: Right.

MR. PHIPPS: Is there an intersection there that is going to occur?

MR. BLUM: Yes. Yeah, so we haven’t made -- and I don’t know that we’ve opened a FAR case yet because, just to be brutally honest, we want to give the guidance a little time to settle and make sure that if there are glitches that we can, you know, make adjustments to them so that when we go to make the regulatory changes we’re doing it in a thoughtful manner.

But we have been working with the Federal Acquisition Institute, and I believe the Defense Acquisition University as well, on guidance that will help agencies in implementing their category management
responsibilities, and also the PMO at GSA and OFPP have been offering, like, regular classes on the dashboard. In fact, when we went to the SBPAC, I think it’s June 13th, but I’m happy to send the information, it’s mostly at this point for feds, but we are giving people regular training.

We have office hours. We have an initiative at OFPP called Inreach, which is, one, to build a greater workforce awareness of our tools, as well as getting people involved in giving us feedback. So, again, that’s not to the exclusion of our contract partners, but it’s recognizing that I can sit here and tell you all of these good things, but if they don’t get translated in a way that the 40,000 contracting officers get these messages, you know, we don’t achieve our intended results.

MR. PHIPPS: So contractors themselves can make themselves knowledgeable about this and educate their contracting officers that they’re working with. Where would we go -- is it just the memo, or is there a deeper guidance now with all of those initiatives that you’re talking about, is there some sort of guidance that even contractors can educate themselves on?

MR. BLUM: So let me get back to you on that. I think that’s a great question as to what specific
tools are being made available to contractors. I know we did a one-pager on category management when the initiative was released that we did share with industry, and I then created one that’s the same format but specifically focused on what’s in it for small business, so I did give it to our GCBD friends, and as soon as we get feedback on that, that at a minimum, we’ll share, but I think there’s more that we can share as well.

MR. PHIPPS: Okay, thank you.

MS. LEWIS: Did anything change in the tiered level spend allowing agencies or large businesses to get credit for lower tiers?

MR. BLUM: So sorry. So now I believe you’re not asking about category management; you’re talking, I think, about the statutory requirement from a couple of years ago. And there’s a FAR case on that. I was going to mention that in the third bucket, and I apologize, I feel like I may be going over my time, but just to kind of quickly touch on that, there is -- there was legislation that talked about receiving credit for lower-tier subcontracting awards to small businesses, and there’s, I believe, a proposed rule that should be coming out, hopefully within weeks, if not sooner, that addresses that issue.
And while we’re on the issue of regulations, just for your awareness, we should hopefully be issuing in very short order a regulatory coverage to increase the simplified acquisition threshold, that’s from $150-to $250,000. And also a final rule should be coming out shortly completing the rulemaking process on the set-asides under multiple-award contracts. That goes back to authority that originally was authorized through the Small Business Jobs Act, and also a rulemaking -- a proposed rule that addresses the applicability of small business regulations outside the United States. And this is a further implementation of SBA guidance and addresses, you know, and clarifies the use of set-asides for overseas work.

And then the last thing I just want to mention very quickly, if I may, is on the legislative front. On April 30th, we issued -- OMB, that is -- transmitted to the Hill a set of acquisition proposals for consideration in the National Defense Authorization Act. And I wanted to bring your attention -- I think there were six of them that were transmitted. The one I wanted to flag in particular was a proposal to essentially transform the statutory framework that OFPP uses for conducting tests of new and better ways of doing business with the Federal Government.
In our opinion, that authority has largely remained unchanged in the 40-plus years that OFPP has been in existence, and to address this shortcoming, the proposal would establish an acquisition modernization test board to accelerate work on contemporary acquisition state through testing, feedback, retesting, and scaling. And it would also authorize tailored pilot programs involving waivers of acquisition laws on an as-needed basis to evaluate how changing the statutory requirement might facilitate more efficient achievement of the purpose underlying the law.

The goal is not to have broad waivers. The goal is to as we identify better ways of doing business to be able to, one, create greater awareness amongst the agencies and their contractors that are using these, to gather information in a more disciplined manner, so where things are working, we’re able to, you know, organize around them and to scale.

So one example. We’ve talked, I think, previously at meetings about the 809 panel -- Section 809 panel. Had lots of good luminaries on acquisition, and then made many bold recommendations. I think in some cases, there seems to be maybe some hesitation or question about is there enough information out there to move forward with their proposal. The one that I think
has gotten, perhaps, the most press individually was
the idea of creating a new category of spend for what
we call readily available products and services in the
marketplace.

And I’m oversimplifying, but if you read the
proposal, it appears to be suggesting raising the
micropurchase threshold to $15 million. It’s not
exactly that, but it is -- and to give credit to what
they’re trying to get at is they’re saying that there
are classes of stuff out there that’s been very market-
tested, where there are lots of, you know, robust
participation, where maybe we can use technology and
smarter business practices to bring competition to the
desktop of our workforce rather than having to follow
some of the procedures that have been in place decades
ago when those opportunities weren’t there.

I think the concern that’s been raised is
that, you know, the proposal itself, I don’t believe,
you know, stratifies within that very broad area, $15
million, you know, what that spend looks like. So in
some cases, there may be tons of competition; in other
cases, there may be very little. And following kind of
a process that puts the discretion into a contracting
officer’s hands, while not necessarily intended, it
could have an unintended consequence, for example, of
hurting the -- or potentially hurting the industrial base.

So our thinking, and it isn’t geared around that in particular, but it just recognizes that oftentimes today, because it’s so complicated to get a waiver of law through Congress, that takes oftentimes years and, you know, we have people thinking of ideas in real time, if we had a program that was organized and had lots of transparency and lots of accountability in talking about the purpose and what you want to achieve, and then telling the public what you did and you do things in little bites, we could actually start drilling down on a proposal like this and saying, in this space, it looks like we can do, you know, something much more streamlined. And whether it’s up to $15 million or not, I don’t know, but have that conversation.

And by the way, I believe they also had a recommendation about how to deal with small businesses, which I think was creating a preference. And, again, that’s something that obviously is of great sensitivity to this community. I can’t answer the question about what makes or doesn’t make sense, but being able to do these things in little pieces gives us the ability to test something and see if we have something that works
and scale it in a slower manner so that the decisions, when we’re ready to go government-wide, we have the evidence, right? The Government has the evidence; Congress has the evidence; and hopefully the interested stakeholders have the evidence as well.

MR. PHIPPS: Matthew, is this the Amazon portion of having a system that GSA was going to create to have a portal to utilize this kind of simplified purchasing? Is that what you’re referring to? Is that the same --

MR. BLUM: No, actually -- no. The readily available proposal of the 809 panel I would argue was much broader -- much, much, much, much, much, much broader -- because that’s up to $15 million, and it includes services.

It was essentially a reimagination of how we currently buy commercial off-the-shelf items, COTS, whereas what the 846, what you were calling the Amazon proposal, is simply up to the SAT and figuring out how to take advantage of online marketplaces that exist so that we -- the theory is we can buy from all the third-party services that sell on commercial platforms in the same manner as they sell to their commercial customers. Again, that’s up to $250,000. And we are statutorily responsible for working with GSA on this, and we
actually are only focusing on up to the micropurchase threshold so, again, we can do it in chunks, learn a little, understand, and then build it out.

MR. PHIPPS: So have you looked at DOD? DOD has several programs, experimental acquisition --

MR. BLUM: Yes.

MR. PHIPPS: -- the Air Force is using.

MR. BLUM: Yes.

MR. PHIPPS: Rapidly equipping the force.

MR. BLUM: Yes.

MR. PHIPPS: And they have some of that authority already.

MR. BLUM: Yes.

MR. PHIPPS: Have you looked at -- are there statistics on that, because this is something we’ve been discussing because there’s a lot of people now doing FOIA to find out, hey, all of a sudden, there’s billions of dollars going through these vehicles, and what does that money look like, because that’s not being reported.

MR. BLUM: Right. So, I mean, broadly speaking, one of our goals in setting up this test board is to have an infrastructure so that we can bring these various pockets of activity together, right? And if I may -- and, again, I apologize I’m going a little
long here -- you know, we’re not trying to recreate the FAR Council.

One of the things that OMB, I think, does well because of our statutory position in the Government is bring together agencies and try to come up with an appropriate whole of government solutions. Well, in the context of regulatory development, it’s a pretty -- it looks like a pyramid, you know, where you have the FAR Council and OMB at the top of that pyramid, and it’s pretty tightly controlled, right?

There’s a very clear deviation process, and it makes a lot of sense because those are our ultimate guardrails, and we need to make sure if people are going to go outside of those and break those, there can be bad consequences. One of our challenges here -- it’s actually less about the legislation. You know, we can set up -- we could probably set up a test board -- I’m sure we can -- without Congress, but the idea is, you know, what does that board actually look like, because you have to give autonomy to individual agencies to be able to continue to experiment.

If we try to control that centrally I think it will hurt, you know -- hurt that. And as long as they’re doing -- going in little increments, we should be able to control the downside risk. But all of that
said, I think it would be good for the Government, I think it would be good for industry, and in the good government associations that are on this group and elsewhere that have awareness of what’s going on so you don’t learn about it by accident; there’s some way of sharing this information so that everybody can kind of weigh in, you know, as people are experimenting and we can figure out more rapidly as a community what makes sense and where we should be putting our investments.

MR. PHIPPS: Do you have a working group that’s doing this?

MR. BLUM: So we put up the legislation at the end of April. We do have acquisition innovation advocates, and they’re focused on -- again, on acquisition. And that council was created in 2016, so these are individuals at agencies that are doing some thinking with us. They would probably have a pretty prominent role on the board, but the other pieces of what I was describing are not in place, but we do have people that are at least sharing, you know, what they’re doing.

We had the Air Force give us a briefing on -- I forgot what it was called. And I don’t think it was the one you just did, but it was --

MR. PHIPPS: Was it Works?
MR. BLUM: It was something like that that they did in January --

MR. PHIPPS: Or new --

MR. BLUM: -- and it was something where they were able to basically bring people in and make initial awards the same day or somewhere very close. And I’m happy to get --

MR. PHIPPS: So from technology --

MR. BLUM: Yes, yes.

MR. PHIPPS: -- and that’s part of the 809 panel, I think.

MS. LEWIS: Where can we go to get more information about this proposed rule before it becomes --

MR. KURTZ: Yeah, Matthew, so I think at this point there’s a lot of interest, so if you could send us the information --

MR. BLUM: Yes.

MR. KURTZ: -- the new OMB and any information on how they could get to this --

MR. BLUM: Yep.

MR. KURTZ: -- we’ll definitely send it out to committee members, because it sounds like we really need to dig into this --

MR. BLUM: Yes.
MR. KURTZ: -- and kind of run it over a little bit.

MR. BLUM: Yep.

MR. KURTZ: So we’ll turn it back over to the Chair.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: Good afternoon once again. I’m Fran Perez-Wilhite with the North Carolina Military Business Center. Now, the NCMBC is a state-funded team. We help existing businesses win federal contracts, and these businesses are mostly veteran-owned, and they’re not only from North Carolina, they’re from a lot of states across the nation, as far as Arizona even, all the way up to Maine and down to Florida. All our services are free, so as you can imagine, we have a lot of clients.

And we help basically to identify federal opportunities, and we make sure that these companies meet the prime vendors and also meet the major decision-makers from the federal agencies, many of which that are here on this Task Force. One of the ways that we do this, we have events, and they are business-development events, not just networking.

And I handed out some cards to those that are in attendance today. This is next week’s event, the medical, biomedical, and biodefense support to the
warfighter symposium. It’s in Chapel Hill. And I’d
like to thank a lot of people that are in attendance
today. I’d like to thank, once again, the VA. They’re
sending VA OSDBU, VA contracting, and Veterans Health
Administration are going to be there and having their
own separate sessions each to help our companies.

DOD is going to be there again; U.S. MEDCOM;
USASOC; the Second Marine Division. We also have
Womack Army Medical Center from Fort Bragg coming; U.S.
Army Medical Research; and a lot more agencies. Feel
free to join us. And most of these agencies are going
to be going over the upcoming business forecast and
projects, which our companies need to know about.

We’re teaming up soon with NAVFAC. We’re
collaborating to do an industry day together. The date
is going to be determined, and that’s going to be in
Charlotte, North Carolina.

Also, in October, in Wilmington, North
Carolina, we’re going to have our 12th annual Federal
Construction Summit. We limit that every year to 1,000
attendees. We want to make sure that all the companies
get to talk to the federal agencies and prime vendors
that they want to, so we cap that. And thanks again to
a lot of the agencies in this room that are going to be
there, especially VA and DOD.
I look forward to collaborating with all of you here on this Task Force. If you have any questions, feel free to give me a call.

MR. GREEN: Great. I’ll turn it over to Will.

MR. HUBBARD: Hey, everybody. Once again, Will Hubbard with Student Veterans of America. I appreciate you having me here today. I’ve been not here in person because I was in Afghanistan for the last seven months, so a little hard to make it out to these but, I’m glad to be here in person finally.

Just a couple things that I wanted to share. Coming in January of 2020, we will have our annual national conference. I just wanted to flag that for everybody in advance. It’s actually the largest gathering of post-9/11 veterans in the country, and that’s largely because the first stop that the majority of veterans make when they exit the service is to go to school. It’s going to be in L.A. this year at L.A. Live, and that’s January 3rd through the 5th.

We actually have up until Monday, our call-for-proposal process is still open if anybody would like to present at the conference, we encourage particularly many folks around the table to do that. Some of you already have, and so thank you for that, but if you were considering making a last-minute push,
we encourage it.

As a separate note, if you’d like to table at the conference or have a presence, consider that this is the up-and-coming leaders of the nation and I would like to get you all in front of them if possible, so something to consider there.

Aside from that, I wanted to share that some of the research we’ve been doing over the last couple of years, I wanted to flag for the fact that the number one major continues to be business administration, which, interestingly, with the 75th anniversary of the GI Bill coming up not too far from now, just a small bit of history, so the top three majors for the original GI Bill, the Service Members Readjustment Act, in 1944, the top three majors were business, STEM, and health-related fields. And, coincidentally, today they’re the exact same three, so it’s not a surprise to us, but it’s certainly a point of interest.

Other than that, if anybody has any questions, we look forward to answering them.

MR. GREEN: Will, this is Tim. Do you have any events planned for the 75th anniversary?

MR. HUBBARD: We do. We actually just did an event with the Secretary of VA at George Washington University. And then the 19th, we’re doing an event on
the Hill with a handful of members and others, so if anybody would like to connect about that, we would definitely encourage you to touch base with me and we can get you hooked up.

MR. GREEN: Great. We have our proposal in. I think Stan submitted that, and Larry will be participating in your conference in January. I went two years ago, a great event. I highly recommend it. Motivational and inspirational, so appreciate that.

MR. PHIPPS: Quick question, Will. Mike Phipps. Are you going to be -- do you know about the committee hearing tomorrow?

MR. HUBBARD: I’ve heard rumblings.

MR. PHIPPS: So you’re welcome to come. It’s all veteran businesses and VSOs. It’s from 9:00 to approximately 3:00. We would love to have you. I’m sure we can make room to let you give a brief, and especially the studies that you do, those are something our committee really just thrives on because getting that kind of data as opposed to anecdotal data really helps us make decisions on what our recommendations for legislative change are going to be, and I think there are probably some things that you, just with what you said, we don’t even know about that we would love to hear about. So I thank you very much.
MR. GREEN: Okay, we’re at a point we can take a break or we can power through and end a little early? Anybody need a break?

MR. WYNN: Can I ask --

MR. GREEN: Absolutely.

MR. WYNN: Good afternoon. Joe Wynn, VetForce vets group. Just a quick question. You know, there was a comment made about the 809 -- DOD 809 Panel. Just wanted to follow up with where are things with regard to the recommendation that was made to eliminate small business set-asides. Got any feedback on that? Because we actually -- organizations, many of us, put together a letter adamantly opposed to that recommendation. I’m wondering, did anybody have any feedback on that.

MR. BLUM: I don’t want to speak on DOD’s behalf, but after the 809 Panel submitted its recommendations, including -- and that may have been tied to this “readily available” thing I had mentioned, because that’s where I think they were going to convert the set-asides into something like a 5 percent price preference if I recall correctly.

Anyway, the panel then issued kind of a 30-page roadmap that just summarized, because it was like 3,000 pages of stuff, so that was hard to navigate.
And then the Department transmitted a letter to the Hill with its, like, initial reactions to each of the proposals. And at least to the extent that they were talking about this in the context of "readily available," they were pretty clear. They said we need more information and more study. So there was no endorsement from the Department that I’m aware of.

And, you know, OMB has not weighed in or made comment on the 809 Panel recommendations, other than to indicate that we would like to see some testing process, not specific to any individual proposal. And then also there were two proposals related to the Cost Accounting Standards Board, but I don’t think they’re relevant here.

So I don’t know that -- I’m not aware that any other agency -- and SBA obviously can speak -- I don’t recall them speaking to that.

MR. PHIPPS: This is Michael Phipps. I just want to bring this up because it’s something we flagged about six months ago or maybe eight months ago.

There’s a part of the 809 Panel that could be -- could potentially almost dissolve the SBA or really cut out half of what the SBA even would do. And that -- it’s kind of like a -- it’s just a shim in the door where DOD is saying for innovative products, we do not have
to follow FAR, right? That was a recommendation of the
809 Panel.

And the rumors that we hear through all of
our networking is that DOD is trying to get out of
following small business FAR to some degree and
maybe just if this program would expand, right, it
wouldn’t -- it would give -- I mean, that’s the biggest
acquisition player that’s out in the government.
Really, it would take half of what SBA is worth and
kind of set it to the side, and some people were saying
that that could even dissolve the SBA if you follow
certain logic chains.

Of course, you know, that’s a lot of
grandstanding; however, it’s something we just want to
keep an eye on because if DOD is already thinking about
circumventing small business acquisition and the FAR
for these programs, then -- and it’s to help the
programs initially -- but it could have a different
effect.

And I just want -- I said it the last -- the
first time I read the panel and we went through it,
there was a very small blurb, I brought it up, I just
want to make sure it’s on the record now because in two
years, when we’re going back and reading through all of
our meeting notes and we see something happened,
everybody’s kind of aware of it and we’re tracking it.

That’s it. Thanks.

MR. WYNN: Okay, thanks.

MR. GREEN: Okay, did anybody need a break, or do you want to power through for a little bit? Okay.

So I wanted to talk a little bit about our report or kind of the lack of report that we haven’t been submitted. So what I asked -- it’s easy for me since I’ve kind of just walked into this role, but I asked Amy and my staff to put together a draft report from the last report, which I think was closed out in FY15, if I remember right, and try to go back and generate a report of the activity -- a summary of the activity, a summary of any kind of recommendations, updates, that kind of thing, and then propose by early August to have a draft report to share with the Task Force to look at and make their inputs into it. So I just wanted to have -- if we have any -- wanted to have any kind of discussion about that.

Amy did you want to add anything? Stan, on that?

MS. GARCIA: Not at this time. I think that we can expect to have something come out maybe in about a month. I think we could -- it would be a reasonable time frame to have a pretty solid draft, yeah. And if
we wanted to consider maybe a quick call, kind of a
subcommittee or a working group kind of off-the-record
call, just to explain the process and the timelines and
the expectations, that might be helpful, too.

MR. GREEN: Yeah. Ideally, part of the reason
I put the statute in the functions and responsibilities
in here is we are required to do a report 30 days after
the end of the fiscal year, so we’re a little late on
that, but we would like to get it caught up and -- as
we move forward, and then hopefully streamline the
process and we can get an annual report out as
required. I know in September we’re looking at having
a meeting. The first Wednesday is the 4th. That’s
right after Labor Day, so we’re proposing -- and I
don’t know if this is a good day or not -- September
11th, the following week. I know September 11th is a
historic day, but if there’s any reason not to have it
on that day, please let me know, or reach out to Stan
or Amy or myself or Cheryl and let us know, or you can
voice your opinion now if you have anything.

So any thoughts on any of that? Trying to get
a report up to speed, trying to get our next meeting
and the plan for that?

(No response.)

MR. GREEN: Okay, that was easy. Then do you
have any more comments before we open up for public
comments?

(No response.)

MR. GREEN: Okay, any comments, any open
comments that anybody would like to make for the
record?

MR. WYNN: Just a quick one.

MR. GREEN: We got plenty of time.

MR. WYNN: Joe Wynn again. Just trying to get
an update on the -- I know you were just talking about
setting up for the next meeting. Do you have an
updated roster now of the members of the Task Force
and, you know, with kind of the bios built for
nonagency organizations represented?

MR. GREEN: That’s correct. I think there’s a
couple of vacancies on our Task Force, and I asked
staff to look at filling those, getting
recommendations. So we’re looking at that. We do have
rosters I believe we can share on both this committee
and the committee tomorrow, so we can share that as
well, but there is a plan to fill a couple of the
vacancies that we have on this Task Force right now.

MR. WYNN: Great. And, also, there have been
some outside discussion, I guess, about extending, you
know, the life of this particular Task Force. Any
discussion on that?

MR. GREEN: Well --

MR. WYNN: At one point, there was a sunset provision or something, it would come to an end unless it was extended.

MR. GREEN: Well, I think they have to renew to charter every two years. It is in legislation, that’s why I brought it up. I don’t think we can end it without the administrator pushing for a legislative ending to it, so that may be something we take in the future, but I don’t think we’ll take it up for action until we get an administrator within --

MR. WYNN: Deputy administrator?

MR. GREEN: -- yeah, well, yeah, because supposedly they’re going to be looking at going through -- getting an SBA administrator looked at soon. So once they’re in place and have got running, we may -- that may -- that could be -- potentially combine it with the other committee, but I don’t know.

MR. WYNN: And, yeah, you just got over there.

MR. GREEN: Yeah.

MR. WYNN: What, a couple of weeks now?

MR. GREEN: A couple of weeks, yeah, so I’m happy to be here. Again, Larry is really -- wasn’t happy he wasn’t able to be here because, you know,
Larry likes this meeting, he likes the group and the
great work you’re doing, so we would like to get it
documented, though, and put into the record so we can
get, you know, a report on the record which would be
something we’d like to get caught up on.

MR. WYNN: Yeah, the report from last year,
you’re saying that’s still not been published.

MR. GREEN: Correct, it has not been public,
so we’re going to try to consolidate a report and get
it out this year, so we’re --

MR. WYNN: One other thing I was going to ask
about, at one point in this -- excuse me. When this
committee started, it was interagencies like senior-
level officials from different agencies representing
those particular agencies. Has that changed now?

MR. GREEN: That has not changed. Nothing has
changed in the requirement. The level of participation
has changed, and I think we’re going to need SBA
leadership on that to engage in that. That would be
part of the discussion when we get a -- right now, we
have an acting administrator, very supportive of
veterans’ programs, but until we get a confirmed
administrator, I think we’re going to be -- it’s going
to be a little bit of a challenge to get that level
back to this.
So if we’re going to do this Task Force, I think we need to do it the right way, at the right level, and we’re looking at all those issues and I’m relooking at them with Larry and acting administrator, and then we will take it up for action when we get a new administrator onboard for SBA.

MR. WYNN: Okay, thanks.

MR. GREEN: That’s all I can promise for now, so...

One other topic that some people have discussed, if we have the meeting, is it more convenient -- we could potentially do this in person every other one. We could do one call-in, one in-person. We have flexibility to do that. I know sometimes it’s hard to get into SBA, hard to get over here. Any thoughts on that, any opinion if we’d want to do alternating one with a call-in? You know, we have technology that seems to somewhat be working. Any opinions on that?

MR. PHIPPS: This is Michael Phipps. I have a lot of opinions on this one. So this coordinates, we changed this whole schedule so this meeting occurs the day before the Advisory Committee on Veteran Business Affairs, so we can brief the Advisory Committee beforehand, because it used to be flipped, and so we’d
have to wait four months before we got a brief.

The in-person meeting, to me, changes everything. To be able to see everybody’s smiling face and have that face-to-face discussion I think is completely lost when you do a teleconference. And at our committee, even the people that really have a strong opinion on things, when they’re not physically there, it’s just -- they don’t -- you don’t get a powerful opinion and you don’t get that -- to be able to talk through things sometimes that you can get just from sitting around, and the interactions that occur before, during breaks, after the meeting is also very important to just moving certain agenda items to what happens in between meetings. So that’s just -- this is my second term on the Advisory Committee, and that’s just what I’ve seen. Thank you.

MR. GREEN: Yeah, and I don’t have a strong opinion because we’re -- it’s easy for us to get here because we’re here. So I just kind of wanted to hear -- we’re trying to make it as, you know, painless and productive as possible.

So any other thoughts?

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: I’d like to also say, even though I come a long way, I think in-person is best. The conversations that we have and the sidebars really
make a difference. The strength of a lot of boards are measured by the conversations that are unofficial, so I’d like to continue in-person if possible.

MR. GREEN: Sounds right now, most people are in favor of keeping the in-person meeting, so we’ll continue with that. Is there any other topics anybody would like to bring up? Second thoughts? Something you want to finish up on?

(No response.)

MR. GREEN: So Stan was reminding me that I’m the DFO, according to the policy, which I used to be the designated federal officer at the Advisory Committee over at the Department of Labor, and I was so happy when I got to end that reign, but now it looks like I’m back involved, but Larry will be chair, chairing the next meeting, if we can’t get the acting administrator in -- you know, his schedule allows, so we’ll continue with that. Unless there’s any other topics, I suggest we adjourn early and then start those sidebar discussions and continue on.

Maybe in the future we could look at getting other offices from -- I know we’ve probably done this in the past, but other offices from SBA to come down and give updates as well. So if you have any thoughts on that, please let us know if there’s an office within
SBA that you haven’t heard from for a while if you’d like to come and speak.

We just got a new -- I don’t know if they call them a director -- of 8(a) loans, so that -- I can’t remember her name now. They just walked in the door, so they’re moving forward on strengthening that program. And so there’s a lot of things going on here at SBA, so if you want some more information from another office within SBA, please reach out and we’ll ask -- we’ll invite them to the next task force meeting, and I suppose some of you will be at the meeting tomorrow.

So thank you for your participation. I’ll adjourn the meeting unless there’s any other comments?

(No response.)

MR. GREEN: Okay, meeting adjourned. Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 2:25 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.)
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