U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON
VETERANS SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

OPEN MEETING

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Reported by: Jennifer Razzino, CER
CONTENTS

Welcoming Remarks/Administrative Business 3

OVBD Update - Larry Stubblefield 3

Review Committee Charter - Larry Stubblefield 12

Member Reports:

Labor 39

VA 50

GSA 54

North Carolina Military Business Center 67

Public Comments/Discussions 71

Closing Comments/Adjournment 83
MR. STUBBLEFIELD: So welcome to our Interagency Task Force meeting. I guess we’ll start the meeting by a roll call. I’ll start here to my right.


MR. PHIPPS: Michael Phipps, American Legion.

MR. METHENY: Bill Metheny with the Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service.

MS. TORRES: Beth Torres, VA.

MR. CARTER: DeWayne Carter, GSA OSDBU.

MR. TAYLOR: Houston Taylor, GSA.

MS. GARCIA: Amy Garcia, SBA.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: All right. Do we have any members of the Task Force on the phone?

(No response.)

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. If not, we’ll get started. Again, thank you. Thank you for being here for our meeting today. Our agenda, I guess we’re going to get slides up here, but our agenda starts off with the OVBD update. And I’ll turn it over to Amy Garcia.
to start the update.

MS. GARCIA: Thank you, Larry. Really quick update today. We’ve got two regulatory updates. There are two proposed rules that are SDVO-related that are open for comment right now. So I wanted to make sure everyone had that information today.

There’s a proposed rule as part of the regulatory reform initiative, and the Federal Register -- it’s really the link, but it would be the reference, and you can do an internet search and it will come up. 85F, Federal, R, Register, 6106. 85FR6106. SBA has issued a proposed rule to remove from the CFR four regulations in the SDVO SBC program that are no longer necessary because they’re either unnecessary or redundant.

This is part of the administration’s efforts to reduce regulatory burden. The removal will assist the public by simplifying SBA’s regulations in the CFR. And comments are due April 6th. So that one’s pretty straightforward. When you go in and look, you’ll see that they’re either regulations that are part of another program that may be mentioned as guidance or something like that in the SDVO program. So I wanted to bring your attention to that.

And then the surplus property for veteran-
owned businesses, which also includes Puerto Rico and disaster-affected small businesses, is open for comment. The reference for that is 85FR, for Federal Register, 3273. This proposed rule implements three provisions of the Small Business Act to get access to and manage the distribution of U.S.-owned surplus personal property to three additional groups of small businesses: small businesses owned and controlled by veterans. And this was actually added when they went through interagency review to write the bill -- I mean, write the regulation. They added small businesses located in major disaster areas and also small businesses located in Puerto Rico.

So that was not part of the original act, but it was included in the writing of the reg. So SBA will execute a memorandum of agreement between SBA and GSA and head of the state agency for surplus properties. So, again, comments are due March 23. I think we’ve received about 25 comments so far.

And then another thing I just wanted -- it’s Women’s History Month, so can’t go by without mentioning the women-owned small business federal contracting program certification updates. We’re -- SBA is getting ready to launch that certification program in summer 2020. There will be changes to the
certification process for WOSBs and EDWOSBs, economically disadvantaged WOSBs.

Once the changes go into effect, firms will no longer be able to self-certify as a WOSB or an EDWOSB. Firms will have to either certify through an approved third-party entity or go through SBA’s free online certification at Certify.sba.gov. That site’s available now.

WOSB Ready is SBA’s campaign to raise awareness of the upcoming changes to the WOSB federal contracting program. SBA wants small business owners to consider if they’re eligible and ready to compete in the federal marketplace.

For more information and to keep informed of events, you can go to www.sba.gov/wosbready, WOSBready.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: Can I ask you a question about that?

MS. GARCIA: Yeah.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: So I guess the women-owned businesses that are already self-certified are grandfathered in?

MS. SIMMS: So for technical questions --

MS. GARCIA: For technical questions, there is a fact sheet on there and I think it addresses that.

But I think -- I don’t -- you have to -- I don’t think
they’re grandfathered in. I think you have to be --
sort of go through that certification.

MR. PHIPPS: Michael Phipps. So I know we
talked about this previously, that Certify.gov was
supposed to streamline all certification. So if we
have a veteran woman minority business center, we don’t
want to triple the burden, right, on their
certifications.

So is there -- is that process streamlined
with these new regulations for Certify.gov if somebody
is already in that certification process for another
socioeconomic area?

MS. GARCIA: So I apologize that I don’t have
the technical answers to your questions.

MR. PHIPPS: But we can --

MS. GARCIA: And we’ve asked the WOSB program
to come to the next meeting because really it will be
started to roll out by then. This was just kind of a
heads-up. And you can actually start to submit as of
May 1st, I believe, although, you know, we’re still
finalizing things. So until the actual reg is
finalized and we’ve got the program things in place,
they won’t be evaluating the applications. But you can
still get in the pipeline.

It’s my understanding the SBA will accept CVE
1 verification with proof of gender.
2 MS. GARCIA: Yes, that’s correct. Thank you.
3 MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: Which SBA department is this?
4 MS. GARCIA: So the WOSB program runs out of Government Contracting and Business Development. And there’s -- they’ve been staffing a program office specifically for WOSB, whereas before it was just, you know, staff that was supporting the larger organization. Now they’ve got a dedicated WOSB program staff.
5 MR. STUBBLEFIELD: I was thinking also, Amy, like maybe what I’ll do after this, because we got the large committee meeting tomorrow, we’ll see if we can get somebody to come down, you know, like around 9:15 or so and just give an update on Certify.gov, because there is some things going on with Certify.gov. Any time you’re trying to stand something up, you know, there’s always things going on. So we’ll reach out and see if we can’t have somebody here in the morning.
6 MS. GARCIA: And actually I can do a printout of some of the FAQs just to hand them out today for folks.
7 MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. That would be great.
8 MS. GARCIA: Yep.
MR. TAYLOR: Houston Taylor, GSA. I think that’s an important point, Larry, because as we’re going through some shifts in dot-gov and SAM and IE, you’re starting to see recertification kind of take a slide shift. So it is important to the rulemaking process to see where that -- where that actually ends up. But you’re starting not just in these categories starting to see in the rulemaking, particularly in the GSA portfolios where self-certification is no longer going to be the flavor of the day. So you’re going to start to see some shifts inside of the regulatory body.

The other place -- I’d like to just jump back to 85FR3273. That’s a big point on that surplus. And you guys know that GSA has several warehouses. I think it’s a great opportunity. I take great pride and joy when you talk about Computers for Learning, the ability to give back. And now that we’re going to do it for vets, it’s even a bigger deal.

I actually run the warehouse down in Franconia, right down the road. It’s just part of my day-to-day job, and I would love for you guys and vets to take advantage of that. So as this comes in -- and, you know, what some would consider trash is a treasure to others. So I open that up and even taking that a step farther. So it’s something, DeWayne, I think as
MR. PHIPPS: Mike Phipps. So we’ve always kind of wondered how that process works. Like, is there a website or do we go visit and how do we get the word out to other veterans, because veterans being on this committee are kind of the tip of the spear when all these subjects come up. People just constantly ask and email us.

MR. TAYLOR: Yeah, great point. Clunky is the answer. It works right now. It’s totally manual. There is -- you can go to a website and deal with a vendor and say, hey, how do I go in and grab some furniture? I’m standing up a business, you know, there’s some stuff here. How would I get a hold of GSA’s computers and access?

And I’ve got to tell you guys, we at GSA are getting better at it. Right now it’s purely manual. There isn’t no quick fix to that. So it comes down to us communicating -- sharing and overcommunicating.

And my job is to have you guys tell me where it’s at and then let me shepherd that. Let me have the people at the warehouse. An open house is a great way...
to do it. We do it for the schools. We host open
house communities for local schools. We have political
interest in it as well. That’s not the point, but it
serves a purpose for we’re giving back to the taxpayer.
It would serve a purpose giving back to service-
disabled vets.

And there are certainly some good
opportunities. There’s some good stuff inside that
warehouse. We can take that on to see how that would
 evolve; what that relationship would look like; have an
open house for service-disabled vets; have them show
up. It’s a manual registration, walk the warehouse,
get a tour and then talk about how do you fill out
paperwork to actually get something and what’s involved
there.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: If you do an open house --
this is Fran Perez-Wilhite. If you do an open house,
we’ll happily get the word out to veteran business
owners.

MR. TAYLOR: One of the things we’ve learned
over the last year or so, a lot of oversight from the
Inspector General and actually from criminal activity.
We have individuals that show up at the warehouse who
perpetrate to be something they’re not, whether they’re
school, charter schools. And so there’s information
that we actually ask of the individuals, like TINs, and we do some background checking. So that’s the kind of information we get up front.

So if you’re interested in coming on a tour and receiving some of these goods, here’s what we would ask of you. So that’s the preparatory piece. We have the education, information and how to do that. It takes some time. But I think we should take that on, DeWayne, as an activity.

MR. CARTER: I agree.

MS. GARCIA: And I just wanted to also add to that. So once we go through the rulemaking process, it will kind of lay the law of the land and how we approach it. So we’re ready to promote that within SBA at our district offices. As you may remember, we have veteran business development officers located at each district office with collateral duty. So I do a monthly training with them. So there’s internal mechanisms to, you know, push outreach on the program. So that will happen once the rulemaking process completes.

MR. PHIPPS: Do we have a date?

MS. SIMMS: No. But I think --

MS. GARCIA: I think in general the program is ready to go. I think a lot of work went into the
interagency rulemaking process before we put it on the street. So I guess the intent of that was to get everybody to the table on the front end and then see what comments roll in. So, thanks.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: I was just going to tell you, when you open up for an open house you’re going to have some visitors because we hear from small business owners all the time. We hear from staffers on the Hill, you know, the senator who sponsored the bill we’re reporting back to on a regular basis.

MR. TAYLOR: Mm-hmm. It’s a great opportunity, Mr. Stubblefield. We just had Eleanor Holmes and actually the First Lady last year were giving to a chartered school. So it draws that -- it draws that interest. And I go back to what it really points out is giving back that opportunity. And it’s a good feeling because I’ve got to tell you, just walking the warehouse you’ll see that there is equipment. I’m not a techy guy, but computers and printers and stuff, some never used. And agencies turn stuff into GSA, hence the surplus. And so then it’s our job to dispose of it, and we do as best we can.

So we’ll keep -- we’ll keep this dialogue up. I think it will be a great opportunity.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: All right. Anything else,
1  Amy?
2  
3      MS. GARCIA: No, nothing for me.
4  
5      MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. So I’ll just go into
6  a couple of updates for you -- for everyone here before
7  we go around the room and talk about updates from the
8  agency updates.
9  
10     First, I just want to let you know that we
11  have a new Administrator on board. Jovita Carranza has
12  been our Administrator now for close to two months.
13  Ms. Carranza has an aggressive agenda, if you will, on
14  things that she wants to get done before the election.
15  
16      And her priorities are as follows: Disaster
17  is a -- disaster recovery and support is number one.
18  And we’re already up and running with Nashville right
19  now with the tornadoes that just went through Nashville
20  earlier this week. So disaster, women, veterans,
21  underserved communities and rural are the
22  Administrator’s initiative.
23  
24      She is -- I’m bringing up the fact that she’s
25  interviewing several candidates to serve as the Deputy
26  Administrator for SBA. And the reason why I bring that
27  up is because historically the chairperson for this
28  committee has been the Deputy Administrator. So I’ve
29  asked Administrator Carranza what is her thoughts on
30  the Deputy, once she brings the Deputy on board, will
that person chair this committee. And that’s still something, you know, she’s thinking about, that she’s rolling over in her mind, if you will.

Just real quick, National Veterans Small Business week is historically in November. This year we’re looking at two time periods, if you will, because of the election. So the first time period is the 26th through the 30th of October, and then the second one, the second alternative, if you will, is the 9th through the 13th of November.

And the Administrator -- the reason why she’s looking at possibly switching the date to October is she wants to make sure that the emphasis on veterans and veteran small businesses are not, you know, impeded on because of the election. If people are going to be moving around a lot, things are going to be happening and she wants to make sure that it doesn’t affect our recognition of Veteran Small Business week, as well as she wants to participate, you know, 100 percent participation on her part in National Veterans Small Business week.

So it remains to be seen exactly when we’re going to have -- between those two time periods, the 9th through the 13th of November. The 11th, I know is Veterans Day, and we’re also partnering or partners at
VA because, you know, you have a lot of things going on, too, and we don’t want to take away from there. So there will be more discussion on that, if you will. The next thing I’ll just talk about real briefly is, you know, we at SBA, we received the $100,000 gift from the President. Every quarter he donates his salary to a federal agency. And in our case, he donated his FY18 second quarter salary to the Office of Veterans Business Development. And we took that funding and established a training program that’s going on -- ongoing right now in New Hampshire where we have 20 veteran business owners who are in the space of business owners who have, you know, an additional employee other than the owner, $75,000 in revenue, and in that space between startup and emerging leaders.

For those of you who are familiar with SBA’s program on emerging leaders, the criteria there is revenue of $300,000, you know, four or five employees and so forth. So what we’ve heard for many years is after you go through Boots to Business and Reboot and there’s a startup, there’s nothing in that space to help, you know, a business owner who’s been in business, like I say, for a year. Because I think all of us here would agree that the first one to five years are tough, you know?
Now, once you get to $300,000 revenue, you pretty much got your legs under you. So we’re trying to use that -- the President’s gift to fill that space. And the plan is hopefully to -- we’re looking at this as a pilot and we’re doing it in conjunction with the VA.

And, by the way, you had folks up in New Hampshire who walked the business owners through the CVE process. And all of the feedback that we’re getting is just tremendous. You know, we’re partnering with an organization that’s called Veteran Entrepreneurial Training and Resource Network, and the CEO and president is a guy named Lee Goldberg. Mr. Goldberg is a Vietnam veteran. He’s been a CEO, like, in 30 different companies. He’s part of the Turnaround Management Association, which is a worldwide organization that go into businesses to either help them turn around when they’re having problems or rightsizing and things of that nature. So he has an extensive amount of experience.

And then the Turnaround Management Association is also a part of this effort. So every business owner has a mentor for life. And after they graduate on the 14th of March, the first cohort graduates on the 14th of March, I’ll be there for the graduation. They’ll
have access to the Veteran Entrepreneur Training and
Resource Network. They’re broad resources. They’ve
got, you know, just all kind of additional resources
that they’ll be able to tap into.

And these mentors come from, like I said, the
Turnaround Management Association. So now we’re
talking about legal people, you know, financial folks,
bankers. You know, people that really know business
and work with the business community.

So we’re very proud of what we’re doing in New
Hampshire. The second cohort, we’re looking at
starting it up in New Jersey. And this is a 26-week
program. So it would run from April to September. So
we’re in the process right now of getting the
instructors, going out with the announcements so
business owners who want to participate can apply.

And it’s done on -- it’s on the weekends,
because, you know, during the week business owners are
busy. So it’s -- it’s a Saturday session from 9:00 to
noon for that 26-week period.

So more to follow on that trend. And then in
addition to this graduation that’s going to occur on
the 14th of March, we’re also having a Veteran Summit
in Las Cruces, New Mexico, from the 17th to the 18th of
March. And, again, a lot of help with the federal
This is a result of partnering with the American Legion and Joe Sharpe. Joe and the American Legion have -- they sat down and they’ve looked at where are veterans settling and looking at that in conjunction with poverty levels. And so they’ve come up with 15 most distressed areas, if you will. And Mississippi being number one, and we were going to go to Mississippi, but our Regional Administrator -- because this is an SBA effort. Our Regional Administrator who covers Mississippi is detailed to the White House working on -- I believe it’s the opportunity zones and things of that nature.

So number two on the list, surprisingly, was New Mexico. And so, like I said, we’re going to be in Las Cruces. That’s the 17th and 18th. And I have the agenda here for what we’re going to be doing. But, you know, the focus is going to be on access to capital, you know, training and education, government contracting, all of the things that we talk about on a regular basis.

So we’re up to this point, like we’re over, what, 300-and-something folks, I believe, Stan.

MR. KURTZ: 331 as of this morning.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. These are -- because
It’s out there and folks are signing up. And, like I said, it’s going to be an all-day session on the 18th, to include, you know, lunch and everything at the Las Cruces Convention Center. So this is a really big deal.

And, again, to show your Administrator’s emphasis on veterans, right off the bat she told her staff to block those two dates on her calendar and only change those dates if there’s something coming from the White House. So, in fact, after this meeting I’m up on the -- up with the senior leadership running them through, you know, what the Administrator is going to do and everything. So she is totally focused on what we’re doing, you know, in regards to helping veteran business owners and so forth.

So the next thing on the agenda, I see we’ve got the slides up here. This comes from a request from Joe Wynn. I believe Joe is probably sitting behind me.

MR. WYNN: Yeah.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: I just want to make sure, Joe, you know when you speak I’m listening. And Joe had asked me before about the charter, the charter for this Task Force. And the question then, you know, that we need to maybe review the charter and then kind of focus our effort a little bit more on the deliverables,
if you will, in the charter. So what I thought I would
do is just kind of, you know, walk through the -- walk
through the charter and then maybe we could have a
couple minutes to discuss how we think this committee
could better focus on the goals in the charter.

So the slide you see up here now just talks
about the background on how the charter came about, and
there was the 2008 time period when, you know, we had
the economic downturn, you know, veteran unemployment
was very high and the Federal Government at that time
looked to see what we can do -- what can we do to help
veterans.

So at the bottom of the slide there it just
talks about the membership of the Task Force. And then
with that we’ll go to the next slide, if you will.

So this is -- this is a slide that I want to
focus on and then just open it up for -- open it up for
discussion. Because the bullet points there, after
coordinate administrative and regulatory activities and
develop proposals relating to improving -- improving
access to capital, achieving the federal contracting
goals, and here’s a big one, and this has come up a
lot. I’m pretty sure we’ve all seen the IG report at
DoD about the integrity of the certification process.
And then improving training and counseling services.
So with that I’m going to -- I’ll just open it up for a minute because I know every federal agency is involved in government contracting, if you will. And I know you may not be able to talk to it today. I’m sure VA could probably talk about it all afternoon. But just think about government contracting and access to capital is two areas that we hear all the time. You know, improving access to capital and federal contracting.

And I know there’s -- I know we’ll say that we’re meeting the goals, but then there’s some underlying things where, you know, veteran business owners may say we’re meeting the goals, but then at the same time maybe we’re not. Like, I know Shannon is not here, but like DoD, for example, I mean, one of the largest -- probably the largest federal agency. you know, what are they doing to improve government contracting.

And this is really important now looking at things like category management. You know, this best in class and how contracting officers are beginning to bundle. And so there’s more dollars out there but fewer people being able to participate in these programs.

So I’ll stop right there and just see if
there’s any initial thoughts. And, you know, we have
to -- as part of the Task Force, we do an annual
report. Our report needs to focus on the areas that I
just mentioned, improving access to capital, federal
contracting goals to include helping DoD improve the
certification process because, you know, there’s always
-- Beth, you run into it all the time with folks coming
in with a protest and things of that nature. And then
improving training and counseling.

MR. PHIPPS: This is Mike Phipps. So this is
a subject that we’ve covered for many years. High
level, there’s a little bit of conflict with the DoD IG
report. And so I would really like to dig down into
that IG report. I read it in detail. And there’s some
-- there’s some thoughts on that. However, we’ve
always heard from the VA that the numbers of people
that are fraudulently going through the process are
very, very low; not even 1 percent. All right?

So then when you read this IG report, you
think the earth is falling because there are millions
of veteran businesses out there defrauding the
Government. But when you read the IG report, to me it
seems a little disingenuous about the statistics and
how -- they chose 29 companies, which is not even a
percent of a percent of a percent, but it seemed like
they chose those 29 companies on a single procurement
and not as an actual study or an actual high level
picture.

So it also -- that report gives everybody
outside of our community, oh, yep, there go the
veterans stealing business again. As we know, Congress
never -- there’s a history of Congress using those
reports or using materials like that to vote against
some -- against small business programs from the '70s
on. Right?

And so when you see a report like that, it
seems now -- I would love to talk to SBA and have SBA,
okay, is it really the extent of that, like, 80 percent
fraud compared to the 1 percent the VA says? Like,
there’s a huge gap in that report with what we’ve been
briefed over the years.

And so maybe what that report is, a little bit
of a catalyst or an opportunity for us to dig down to
that from a larger picture. Because -- and to find out
what that IG report really entails and how they did
that study, because I couldn’t discern what was going
on from that report. I don’t know however many people
read it. But it seems like from the SBA standpoint,
especially with certification on the table, you know,
let’s get a better idea and maybe dig down into that
and then address certification.

And there’s still a lot of veterans that don’t even know there is one standard now. What’s happening is that standard too stringent, and then we have all these -- you know, and then if you’re one or more socioeconomic classes, you know, the burden on maintaining three or two -- one, two, three certifications, you know, small businesses, it becomes their job to maintain certifications at one point.

So -- and that is not only applied to government contracting because we know from the VA a lot of companies don’t even do government contracting. They just want that seal of approval. So those are just my initial high-level thoughts.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: No, no, no, I agree with you. And one of the things we’ve done in the Office of Veteran Business Development, like I just had Amy here briefing out of this, created an additional duty, if you will, for Amy as the liaison to Government Contracting and Business Development.

So we’re looking at these things. I agree with you about the report and I know the DoD, I guess, decided not to make a counterstatement but did give indication -- an indication that, you know, there was, like you said, some things that really need to be dug
down a little bit deeper.

So as far as Certify.gov, I mentioned getting somebody from Government Contracting and Business Development here. This will be another topic that we need to add to the list because this thing about -- and, you know, looking at the report, you know, kind of talking to companies that are not necessarily veteran-owned where fraud is coming in.

And as you indicated, we are in a position where we could hurt legitimate veteran business owners when people read things like this and if they propose legislation that doesn’t address the fraud that ends up hurting and sometimes we can swing the pendulum too far to the left, if you will.

MR. HUBBARD: So the other comment, and we’ve talked about this at this committee, is -- and this is government contracting specific. The Federal Acquisition Regulation really doesn’t have a benefit for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

The FAR, when you really break it down, the benefit is just the same as a small business. And so we’ve always had this issue, and this is maybe a great opportunity -- and I was recently looking at something you guys are doing with the Veteran Business Program.

But to get the FAR -- to get language in the FAR that
gives veterans the true opportunity that they need
that’s similar to an 8(a) set-aside, there’s no reason
that the veterans don’t; have that same opportunity in
the FAR.

And so this was a topic told to me five years
ago by Vietnam veteran business owners that were
complaining about this issue in Congress that Congress
voted against those types of things in the past, and I
didn’t understand those -- you know, those issues until
kind of -- I mean, Joe Wynn and I have talked about
this before, you know, why doesn’t the FAR have very
specific set-aside opportunities for veterans. And if
you had it in a veteran business development program,
you would -- it would also circumvent all these other
issues that you’re having with fraud. Right? Because
in the 8(a) program you don’t have that much fraud
because it’s in -- you have Federal Acquisition
Regulation that wraps a program around that process.

So what we have with veteran businesses is a
lot of disjointed programs, a lot of support, and what
the SBA has done since I’ve been on these committees
has been really amazing. I mean, it started out with
nothing with Barb and you, Larry. You’ve really -- you
guys have really done a lot. But if we had that as a
program, you wouldn’t have these issues in those OIG
reports.

So, to me, the opportunity is take that OIG report, and if it is that bad or if we are having these issues, let’s get a government contracting program that has the same parameters as the 8(a) program and wrap it into one program so you avoid all this fraud.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: All right.

MR. HUBBARD: That’s my soapbox.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: I was going to say I didn’t know if there was anything you wanted to say from the VA point of view.

MS. TORRES: This is Beth Torres from VA. I think, first of all, we’ve got to be very careful about throwing around the F word.

MR. PHIPPS: I agree.

MS. TORRES: We tend to call it ineligible because fraud is illegal. So we’re very, very careful with that. My thoughts on this is that if a company knows they are ineligible, if they have not been found to be eligible in VA, for example, they do tend to self-certify and go to other agencies where they can self-certify. So that’s why you might find a higher instance of ineligible firms getting contracts.

So I think that that’s really where that comes from, where it seems like it’s such an egregious
problem and we’re not able to say, VA, we’re having a
big problem with it because we do take steps. I mean,
we have spent -- and the certification programs work.
Our Veterans First program, we spent $6.4 billion with
SDVOSBs last year. It was over 23 percent of our
procurement dollars went to SDVOSBs in 2019. So it’s
something that really can work.

So I think that in the long run we -- all the
programs are going towards cutting out the self-
certification. I think it needs to happen across the
board.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. So --

MR. TAYLOR: I thought the F word was the FAR.

I’m sorry --

(Laughter.)

MR. TAYLOR: But I want to kind of circle back
to really what the VA has done and Small Business
Administration, when we talk about -- you implied 8(a),
FAR 19, if we got into some language like that. But
even in that space we want to be careful because when
you look at the data, the fact is VA, SBA, GSA, we sit
down and we really do hammer out the numbers and goals.

And you’re right, Larry, we are meeting our
goals and we are exceeding the goals. But there’s a
story behind the numbers. And we talk about what we
can do up here to better that. And that’s when we
start peeling back the numbers.

You know, for example, I could sit here all
day long and tell you the schedule is a $40 billion
portfolio; 80 percent is spent on 20,000 supplies -- I
know the numbers. I also know the story behind the
numbers says that when you start breaking that down, of
the $40 billion, that’s a small percent that really
will get to a service -- even a vet, let alone disabled
vet.

So that’s when -- if we can bring some real
value here to operationalize those kind of
conversations, it doesn’t necessarily mean changing the
goals. I think it’s a behavior. I think you’d get a
lot farther dealing with the behavior than trying to
put a FAR change in front of the CAC Council. Because
I’m going to tell you, you will spend years going
through the live process trying to change the FAR. And
we’ll be here another five years if that would be the
goal, to get some language in FAR 19 to reflect 8(a),
opposed to coming up with some operational, more
tactical on how we could actually touch some of the
vets.

And that -- one example of that is the
warehouse, but taking that a step further and then
using GSA in the space because it is what we do. Acquisition service, public building service, it’s not that easy. I pick on schedules just -- I was hoping Matthew would be here, a dear friend of mine. It’s not that easy to, say, get into the multi-award schedule.

And I know now we’re going to a process where we’re going to one schedule. Well, what does that look like? That’s hard work. And if you don’t do that on a steady basis -- now, you talk to the big boys, that’s easy. They’re staffed for it. They’ve got the capital for it. But if you’re a one -- if you’re a small business veteran-owned, it’s not so easy. And we send you all over to trainings and certifications and you’re still somewhere where you’re looking at a schedule, no business, no volume; now what do I do?

So if we’re going to help really move this ball some from where we sit, grab something that we can digest, a big elephant, or maybe grab a hold of one or two real initiatives that we can operationalize and show something where we’ve gained. And I don’t have those answers. I just hear it all the time from the GSA side in-house. You know, we get companies all day long, it took me a year-and-a-half to get on the schedule, I have zero sales.

And you know what we do? After a couple of
years, we knock on your door, tell you you got to go; you have no sales. Low or no sales because a whole 'nother issue, we talked to the supplier today, he says, look, I’m been competing; I’m not winning. You know, what can -- what do I need to do? And then you get into things. One thing -- just a small example. We were doing some things with the -- with one of the federal agencies, and, you know, we started having one-offs with suppliers. So this was real tactical but it worked. You know, like you have an industry day, people come in and everybody golf claps and they walk away and nobody shares anything.

But when you -- when you bring suppliers in one-on-one so you set aside something and if you bring them in and start saying what do I need to use you to do business and professional services? How would your company do this? They start sharing ideas.

Now, if you’re doing that in a presolicitation phase, now you’re driving behavior, we got the program shop, we got the acquisition shop, you really want to make their job easier for them? Because in exchange they’re going to go and put out the solicitation. So if you’re having those kind of dialogues, you’re looking at a forecast, you pick one or two actual procurements out and then we try some of this.
You can’t be afraid to fail, too. That would be my last point. Because some of these things we take on, but the training, the education piece up front, and then operationalize. Grab hold of something and see what it looks like.

And I don’t know where GSA sits in all those spaces. It’s a big portfolio. You got a public building, that’s brick and mortar. Federal acquisition service typically is schedules. There’s a whole lot more there. There’s GWAC, there’s Alliant, $40 billion portfolio across all of the schedules.

Yeah, I would just go back to the very first part, training, education and developing; then give some hands-on training. Give some hands-on training to the veterans that are sitting down. Look, I’m slow when it comes to technology. I’ll tell you that. I’m dated. But if you sit down and take me through a process, I can get it. And I think we need to do that with some of our vets. And I’d be willing to help out in any way that I can.

So I just share that. But back to the F word, showing me FAR is one thing. We want to operationalize and get something done, I think we’re in a better space to actually achieve something as a committee.

MR. PHIPPS: I agree with everything you’re
saying. I still think the FAR needs to be changed.
I’m willing to sit and go through the long process.
The issue with veteran entrepreneurship is right now
it’s a very popular activity to support veterans.
Historically, going from the ’70s, you see this big --
these big swings depending on what’s going on in war
zones, and without legislation, without FAR changes,
the minute veterans are not the flavor of the month,
that support drops off like a -- just straight down.

And so -- and I’m saying this from a point of
being educated by somebody who did a report from the
1970s and showed us the historical value. There’s a
lot being done for veterans right now. But that can be
changed in just a simple vote of the -- of your budget
here. Right? When that is in the FAR -- and the
reason I -- it’s going to take years to get that
changed.

But, Eric, I mean, and I’ve said some things
about the SBA where they voted against this in 2005
because of these types of reports that have come out.
So getting -- getting the FAR -- getting that into the
FAR clause allows that stability blanket that’s going
to happen when there’s not the support. And, you know,
back to the fraud versus ineligible, other than these
GWACs that have -- other than the VA, because for the
VA, 100 percent. Other than the VA, there are those GWACs where, you know, that certification does mean something.

But other than that, there’s no -- one of the issues that people have and they don’t go to the -- go through the CVE program is because it’s -- there’s a lot of -- there’s a lot of -- there’s been a lot of issues with the process. To this -- to the advisory committee over the years, we’ve been -- we’ve been misinformed by the VA repeatedly. And that’s a whole ‘nother subject. But there’s issues with that certification program. People drop out because they don’t want to go through that process. And so they go to the other agencies. And I’m not against certification, but that process has got to be a good process. But other -- we’re putting that process on veteran businesses without the benefit of some of those FAR -- to take advantage of some of those FAR rules.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. Great discussion.

So what I’m going to suggest to the Committee is that we do this: Like, we want to focus this year on some things for our report. So I know during the public comment period we’re going to invite Joe Wynn to speak. And what I would like to do in addition to capturing Joe’s thoughts is for the -- and I’ll get Amy Garcia to
work this around through all of you, is for the next meeting to have a -- what I’m calling a white paper developed on our thoughts on what needs to be done short-term, medium-term, and long-range. Long range would be something like the FAR. But what can we do in the short-term, in the medium and long range.

And I’d also like to share that information with the Administrator, who we were going to have her at the committee meeting. She was interested in coming to the committee meeting tomorrow. But because a number of people can’t make it or they’re going to be calling in, you know, we didn’t want to bring her in, you know, if we didn’t have a full committee here, because one of the things we were going to do is take a committee photo with the Administrator. But she wants to know what the committees are doing and she wants to come and actually sit down and participate.

So now we have her on for June and she’s going to block time on her calendar to come down and spend time with the committee in June. So we’re going to -- we’ll be in touch with you and we can do a lot of this, I guess, through -- speaking of technology, you know, if we were -- you know, we can work our comments through the group, like use the technology as best as we can, and then have a plan for our next meeting in
June. What do we need to attack? You know, the 25-meter target, 75-meter, then 300-meter target.

MR. TAYLOR: I think it’s great, Larry. Then break that bucket out in a policy, process, people. To your point long-term plan, you want to change the FAR. That’s a policy bucket. Then you can get to the people, then get the process. And it’s those different ways to dice and slice the pie. But it helps bring some clarity and it also helps us start to zero in tactically risk managing where we can and cannot be successful to support the people in charge.

And that’s part of the deal, too. That’s another P, or called politics, and it plays as well. So if we’re trying to drive change, we want to be able to take what we can and then show where it benefits. So putting together a paper like that and then dicing and slicing it helps bring some clarity to what we’re trying to do.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Absolutely. I agree with you 100 percent. And Mike makes a very good point about the future because I know we’re going to go around the room in a second here and get member updates, but we always hear from Labor on how well veteran employment is going. And in our office and the Office of Veteran Business Development, you know, we --
we interact a lot with, you know, Fortune 500 companies, you know, the JPMorgan Chase and others, and they all -- and their HR departments all have hiring initiatives for veterans. You know, veterans are usually doing better employment-wise than the rest of the nation.

And there were things like I mentioned earlier, the -- some of the initiatives, category management comes to mind right away. If we don’t keep our interests on the front burner, it can easily -- easily fade away.

So that’s what we’re going to do. So I’ll have Amy reach out to all of you. What we’ll do is it will be -- and Amy will probably do this better than I’m saying we’re going to do it. But it will be sharing revisions, you know, until we finally get to what the group agrees with as the final piece for our meeting in June and when we meet with the Administrator.

So, with that, I know we’re supposed to take a break and we have a -- Larry Webb, who’s our senior legal counsel is coming in to ethics at 2:30. But if you’d like we could continue on right now and just do -- okay. So I see people nodding saying let’s continue on. So I guess we’ll start for the update with Bill
MR. METHENY: Thank you, Larry. A few things to update the team on. VETS, Veterans Employment Training Service, has a new Assistant Secretary that came on about two months ago as well. Fifty-nine days ago, John Lowry was sworn in and joined VETS as our Assistant Secretary. Since then, he has been very active engaging partners and stakeholders around our veterans employment community.

He has deep business roots and background with 20 years in manufacturing with Harley-Davidson and other companies, running factories and so on. So great experience there. And he is leading us to achieve the vision that he’s expressed, which is enabling all veterans to reach their full potential in the workplace.

So we’re very excited to have him and he is making great strides already just in his first couple months with us. Larry mentioned it wouldn’t be a good Task Force meeting if I didn’t give some veteran employment numbers, so let me do that. In January, the report that came out just about a month ago, the veteran unemployment rate was 3.1 percent, which was up slightly from 2.9 percent the month prior in December.

The comparable nonveteran employment rate for
that same period, though, in January was 3.4 percent. So veterans are still doing better than their nonveteran counterparts. That was the 17th consecutive month that veteran unemployment rate was lower than the nonveteran unemployment rate.

Tim Green, if he were here, would tell you that was partly his responsibility when he was over at VETS. But since he’s not, I’ll fill in that blank.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: He might be on the phone.

MR. METHENY: Uh-oh. The veteran employment numbers come out the first Friday of every month. So this coming Friday they will be released as well. So if you would like to get those automatically, you can subscribe. Go to veterans.gov and you’ll see where to subscribe and get those emails yourself rather than waiting to hear about this quarterly.

One other thing that I would highlight is that the wrap-up numbers for 2019 for all of our annual veteran unemployment numbers plus a supplement that happens in the August time frame that asks some very specific questions of veterans, all those get wrapped up and they will be released later this month on March 19th.

So if you watch, if you subscribe to that newsletter, you’ll get it. If you go to the Bureau of
Labor Statistics page, it will be -- that report will be released there Thursday, March 19th, of this month. Great, great data on all kinds of parameters about veterans unemployment based on their service, their disability, the kinds of thing they do, how long they served, their age and so on. So I would encourage everyone to keep an eye out for that.

I think we’re probably all tracking that the Transition Assistance Program went through some major renovations as a result of last year’s National Defense Authorization Act. It reorganized how it happens. It spread out the time period for when transitioning service members start, meaning they’re required to start earlier in the process so they don’t get jammed up at the end so they get to take advantage of some of the opportunities.

On the employment side, there are -- there’s some restructuring that happened, some curriculum updates. And those all took effect January of this year. So it’s up and running, happening all over the country, working out some of the bugs from that. But pretty excited about what we’re seeing and hearing. And just to circle back to our Assistant Secretary, his number one priority is that transition program right now. So he’s really putting a lot of energy into that.
With that, we, the Department of Labor, are also doing an apprenticeship pilot program associated with the transition program. So in addition to a service member going through and deciding do I want to be an entrepreneur, go to Boots to Business; do I want to go use my GI Bill; do I want go to the workplace? They can choose to go into a location track which can often lead to an apprenticeship.

So we, VETS, are setting out at eight installations around the country apprenticeship pilot staff to work on those installations to help veterans get into apprenticeships as a part of their transition, not later stumbling into them or whatever.

So we’re really excited. That will kick off later this year. We will run, learn from it at those eight installations spread around the country that the services have told us that they recommended that we use, and we’ll let you know how those results are and what we’re learning from those.

It is a pilot, so what we learn from those we will try to institutionalize into the broader system of the transition experience. Yes?

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: Do you know how long this apprenticeship program is, and do you know the eight installations? And this is Fran Perez-Wilhite.
MR. METHENY: Thanks, Fran. The pilot will kick off later this year. It will go for about a year based on our funding, unless we get more funding. And then we’ll take those results, compile them and figure out how we can apply them.

The installations, I can tell you some of them off the top of my head, but I’ll miss some of them. Several are out in California. Fort Bragg is one of them. And I can provide the list and add them to our minutes for this if that would be helpful. And I’d certainly be glad to share them with the committee before that so we don’t have to wait. But that was a great question. And I knew it would be asked and I forgot to write them down, so I apologize.

We are always excited about the HIRE Vets Medallion Program, and because this is an opportunity to recognize employers who hire and retain and train veterans. The award is in statute. The application period is open now. It goes until the end of April. And so if you know of veteran-friendly businesses and we -- there are small, medium and large categories. So we would love to put the word out for that. The information is very clear and available on the website called hirevets.gov. So that will be coming out.

We know that this award is a very powerful way
for employers to win the war of trying to get talent into their businesses. And one of the ways we emphasize that, circling back to the Transition Assistance Program, is that when service members go through that program we highlight the fact that they should be looking for that HIRE Vets Medallion award winner category when they’re looking at employers. And we even give them an interactive map that they can go to to find out where the past recipients have been and why not start your search there.

So that’s out there. It goes until the end of April. We announced the winners of this year’s right around Veterans Day, plus or minus a few days, for each category.

And lastly we mentioned apprenticeships earlier. We believe that veteran business owners make great employers of other veterans. And so one of the things that we’ve heard is obviously you talked about large organizations can do apprenticeships and put all those resources, but there’s been a lot of interest and emphasis from the Department of Labor to find smaller businesses to get those apprenticeships stood up, to include those that are focused on veteran businesses.

One article that came out just yesterday, if you go to the website Entrepreneur, there’s a cool
article called Small Businesses Are Now Hiring Apprentices; Should You? Anyway, so a great article, very timely, and it has a couple great examples, but also the principles behind why it’s easier and easier and makes good business sense for small businesses to take advantage of apprenticeships.

And, lastly, for now, the Department of Labor and the VA’s Voc Rehabilitation Employment Program are looking to partner to figure out how can we get the 100-and-something-thousand veterans that apply for that program each year to consider and enroll in apprenticeships. Right now we know that that number is smaller than it could be, and so we’re looking at ways to bolster that. And we will be trying some pilot experiments around the country over the coming year to track -- we think that the major obstacles are not the right information and not the right clear business processes to make that an easy thing to happen.

So we’re going to pick a few states. We’re going to try it out. We’re going to learn as we go, cycle through it so that we can provide the materials out broadly across the country.

I shared this last week in Dallas with 21 states of VETS state directors and their state veteran program coordinators, and they were excited and came up
to me afterwards saying please put me in for one of
your pilot states because this sounds like something we
should do. So I will keep -- report back to the Task
Force on that as well.

That’s all I have to report for this week or
this quarter.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. Thank you, Bill.
Any questions for Bill?
(No response.)

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Comments? Great report. I
will tell you I’m on Mr. Lowry’s calendar and we’ve
moved the meeting a couple times, but I appreciate
everything you just said. That’s great background
information.

And I have to give the VA kudos for the
Medallion Program because when you had your annual
conference, you had reps there and they allowed us to
set up Ms. Harvey. And he got a lot of attention
there, too. So it was really good.

MR. METHENY: Thank you.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. So we don’t have the
Department of Defense here, but if they were here one
of the things I know that’s out there is the CMMC, the
security piece. And so we’re going to call Shannon.
Because, I mean, again, this is going to really affect
-- I mean, it’s going to affect all small businesses.

But, you know --

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: Can they come tomorrow and talk about CMMC?

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: We can definitely reach out to them. I see Stan shaking a no here. To see if that’s a possibility.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: I’d like to make one comment about CMMC. There are already -- I guess you can call them predators that are approaching business owners, a lot of them veteran business owners, saying that to get CMMC-certified, you can just give us $50,000. It’s already out there.

MR. TAYLOR: So, Fran, this is just -- what is that -- are we talking clearances for personnel? What is that? Educate me, please.

MR. PHIPPS: I’m not exactly sure of the CMMC --

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: It’s a clearance, right?

MR. PHIPPS: Yeah. We actually talked about this during our last committee. It’s a certified -- it’s a certification for your -- for cyber-security for your infrastructure for all businesses doing business with DoD. And DoD is going to have different levels of certification. So that’s small business, you know,
medium size, and they’re not sure how it’s going to --
they did say it’s going to be easier for the small
businesses.

But in order to do business, this is a
different type of certification because in order to
just get any contract you’re going to have to be --
you’re going to have to have this. So it’s not like,
you know, I don’t have my veteran-owned certification
so I can still participate --

MR. TAYLOR: In addition to.

MR. PHIPPS: Right. This is in addition to.

And so these companies are already -- it’s not -- DoD
hasn’t come out yet and said this is what you have to
do. They’ve given some IT standards, some special
publication standards, 870 -- security -- IT security
standards. So these companies are coming out and
saying, hey, we can do it, but DoD doesn’t even know
the final certification program. But it’s -- there’s a
lot of people concerned because if they don’t get it,
they can’t even participate at DoD.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: I would like to add also
-- this is Fran Perez-Wilhite. I believe there’s also
a date that you have to have this by. Isn’t it
September or October of this year?
MR. PHIPPS: So DoD came out -- Mike Phipps. DoD has come out and given some timelines. There’s a grace period. I think they said a year. They’re going to have this about a year gross period. We talked about it last -- we talked about it during the last meeting and they’re going to come out with hard dates, and they have some things published on their website, but to the extent -- you know, you’re going to have to spend money most likely to get some of these systems or use very certain products like, you know, Microsoft email, for example, has some security standards. So we don’t know what all that is going to look like. And some of it is process-based. This is how you have to treat information.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: And this is Fran Perez-Wilhite again. Larry, I’m hoping -- I’m hoping we can bring someone tomorrow. I was going to bring this up tomorrow at the meeting. There are so many veteran-owned businesses already beyond concerned about this. I’m not really sure we can wait until our June meeting to discuss it. If possible, tomorrow would be great.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: I was going to say, I know Stan is taking a note. And if nothing more than if they could call in, if we could just give them, you know, 15 minutes or so to call in and have it on the
All right. So DoD is not here. We would hit them up on CMMC. If the Treasury was here, we’d hit them up on the CDFI and let them know that --

MR. PHIPPS: They call in a lot. Treasury, are you on the line?

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: I didn’t -- we asked if there were any members on the phone; there weren’t. So we’re going to reach out to Treasury because, you know, our Associate Administrator in the Office of Capital Access is still looking to have veterans classified as, you know, other targeted populations. And, you know, Treasury has told us repeatedly that that’s a steep climb. And so we’re going to make another effort at it. And we’re also going to discuss it a little bit in this year’s annual report. And Treasury needs to know that. And our new Administrator came from Treasury, so this is going to be -- it’s going to be a different discussion now.

Okay. So we will go over to our partners at VA and turn it over to Beth.

MS. TORRES: Hi. I guess just a few things. We don’t have a lot right now. We had a pretty successful NVSBE in the first quarter of this fiscal year. We are looking at next year moving it out of
first quarter. So for FY21, it looks like it may be
more like late spring. They’re still looking at
venues. We don’t know any venues. It’s still in the
very early stages. So we have -- I’m sorry I don’t
have much more to report on that, but it is more than a
year out.

As far as the -- every time, I know everybody
is interested in what’s going on with verification.
The database itself has remained fairly static in size
over the last several months, last year or two, right
around the 14,000 mark.

Now -- and that is -- has a lot to do with
companies not reverifying. Now, a few months ago, we
did reinstitute our simplified renewal where if they’d
gone through the whole verification process after their
first three years they can fill out a questionnaire of
15 questions and submit that. That gets looked at only
by our Feds. And that usually can get an approval
within one to five days on a renewal. So it’s very
easy. There’s not the whole big pile of paperwork. So
that’s been pretty successful.

As far as the actual certification and
verification process right now, the processing times
are dropping month by month. For FY20, we’re at an
average of 17 days. But for the month of February,
we’re at 14 days. And it’s even dropping from there.

We’ve only had 10 denials this fiscal year.

So, you know, a high percentage of those that go
through the full certification process do -- you know,
it’s up in the 99 percent rate.

Now, there are a great deal of companies who
basically we consider their applications abandoned when
they haven’t replied to us in 30 days. We remove them.
And that’s over 50 percent of the applications that we
get.

We have some webinars coming up, both pre-
application webinars that help firms get together their
paperwork and know what to expect in the process. We
had one on Friday and the next one after that is on
March 20th, Friday, the 20th. And the we have -- on
March 24th we have a webinar on how to stay verified.

And I think that’s -- we are still working
with SBA and OMB on the HR1615, the VA/SBA act. We’ve
got another meeting here coming up. We’re meeting
quarterly at OMB. So we’ve got another meeting coming
up at the beginning of April. So we’re preparing for
that. And that’s about it that I’ve got for VA right
now.

MR. PHIPPS: This is Mike Phipps. Over the
last, say, six months to a year, we’ve noticed a huge
improvement with the communication from the VA, the numbers that have come out. You guys have really --
going back even three, four years, it’s -- we’ve gotten a lot of improvement getting information about the certification process.

One of the issues that we addressed, and I think this is still in the works behind the scenes, the 10 -- the percentage of people that are passing versus people -- they don’t pay attention for 30 days and they dropped out. About six months ago we stated that and we got so many phone calls that were saying I was automatically dropped from the system and I wanted to get an extension. And we got some -- you guys have given us some updated numbers on how you’re fixing that issue with the automatic drops, which kind of skew those numbers about people getting certified or bowing out of the system or dropping out of the system in 30 days on their own.

And so I know you don’t have those numbers now, but I just want to kind of put out there if we could get an update on that because I know you guys were working on getting us some of that information back, especially -- we even -- I’m not sure if we gave you the individual names, but we had some people that were, like, you know, that’s not our experience. And
so you did a very good job about getting some of that information back to us, and I just wanted to have that as a -- as just a followup, because those statistics, when we put them out there, we get a lot of feedback and know people like to talk about their own experiences. So we don’t know if that’s anecdotal or if that’s, like, you know, bigger issues.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: This is Fran Perez-Wilhite. Are you actually capturing those businesses that are dropped out, whether it’s on their own or --

MS. TORRES: Yes.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: -- it just happens?

MS. TORRES: Yes.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. Any other questions or thoughts for the VA?

(No response.)

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: If not, we will go to our friends at the GSA.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Larry. A couple points. First off, on behalf of Emily Murphy, the Administrator of GSA, big, big supporter of small business, Office of Small Business and veteran, to the point I’d like to make a point from a culture leadership perspective.

One of the things that Emily did with all
senior executives was sit us down on our performance review. You say, what does that have to do with this committee? It has a whole lot to do with it when you’re changing leadership and culture; to the point that in every senior executive performance plan in GSA, you have small business goals, including service-disabled vet goals, inside your performance plan. That helps drive behavior. What gets measured gets done.

And to the point when we look at our vet numbers for this year, first off, GSA’s number, $1.4 billion in spend. That’s where we are right now as of the end of February. So that’s our business. Two percent of that, that’s $140 million, just went to service-disabled vets. So that’s 10 percent of where our money is. And that’s tax dollars. That’s not just what GSA spends.

I want to be clear because, you know, agencies come to us and we, in turn, go out. So that says that GSA is doing their job to educate and perform. DoD, Labor, says, hey, here’s what we have to offer inside the socioeconomic environment, and agencies are taking advantage of that. So that’s a great number. We’re on target to meet that goal and far exceed it.

In fact, what we’re tracking right now, I would lean forward and say we’re on track -- Larry,
look, we’re looking for another A because we’re on track right now to exceed all of our goals in that area. Emily is a no-nonsense leader when it comes to achieving that.

And as of either last week, she sits down and says, okay, spend under management. Where are your dollars going? How are we spending it? So all of that is a culture leadership change that helps drive the numbers. You say, you know, I just threw -- that’s 10 percent out that’s going to service-disabled. That’s a big number. It can be better.

The other piece, I want to kind of throw out something for the committee, too. Larry, you here?

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Yep.

MR. TAYLOR: I know Matthew has got his arms all around this category of management, best in class, big stuff, a lot happening in there, a lot of concerns there. We, as a committee, want to continue to be educated and informed. That’s constantly moving. And you guys know that. So we want to -- we want to stay informed to take the story back because unless you’re sitting in that space constantly, say, as a federal category manager, there’s no way you’re up to speed on what’s happening because it’s moving that quickly. And it will fit back into the FAR.
Supply chain, strong risk management, and even IT certifications, there’s some new -- these are new things coming on. We’re asking acquisition contracting officers now to take additional training, and they’re going to tie it right into the FAR. There’s one for you, Michael. They’re going to tie it into the FAR where contracting officers or program folks will have to get certain type of supply chain risk management training and when we start talking about intellectual property.

Now, you think about what happens. If you put that on the acquisition work force, industry feels it. Whether you’re a vet, small business, women-owned, you’re going to feel it because the contracting officer is no better than the service that they’re providing. So these things are happening right now. We, as a committee, need to be smart about it: How does it impact not just how we hire but how we service other federal agencies?

So these are things when we start talking about FAR updates and -- it would be great if we could get some FAR updates on what is moving because, you know, you heard a little bit about moving to the CAC in OIRA. It is painful. But if we got some folks in here to kind of take us through that update. And GSA is one
of the voting members of FAR. I hope I’m not giving
you more work, DeWayne.

But I think what happens is to hear some of
what’s being talked about because some of that
legislation moves through quickly. You can have
interim rules to the FAR done and you’ll turn around
and it’s in the FAR and you’ll be finding out after a
CO is asking you about it. So I think that’s another
important part where we can stay more informed and
engaged.

Last thing on the numbers with GSA. I want to
go back to the point that really Labor was making with
the VA. It is core to what GSA does. Small Business
Administration is a great, great partner of ours and we
want to continue to do that.

And then I haven’t asked really, have we made
any progress as a body in SBA or GSA when we talk about
8(a) set-asides and businesses getting credit on --
when they do an 8(a) contract with GSA? Has there been
any movement. You know, I’m an old, crusty contracting
officer, but I remember way back when you would get
credit that we’re a small business, veteran-owned small
business, and you did work with GSA, you’d get credit
through the 8(a) for that for dollars spent. And I --
there was an MOU done years ago. And I’m really dating
myself. But I think that’s just kind of faded away, Larry.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. We will have to take that as a due out to you. I will tell you tomorrow for our Advisory Committee on Veteran Business Affairs, we do have the 8(a) staff coming to talk about 8(a). So if you’re -- if you’re available to come back over or call in --

MR. TAYLOR: That’s a real -- it’s a wonky thing, but the truth is that’s -- you were talking about driving behavior and change. If agencies get credit for 8(a) contracts under GSA schedules, that helps the business proposition. They’re trying to achieve their goals at the same time. And I just appreciate the time being with you guys, and if I can help any way I’ll certainly do that.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: One thing that does, like, come to mind listening to some of the things you’re suggesting, I’d like to just say to the body if there’s anything that you think we should have on the agenda, you know, feel free to reach out to us. You know, it will give us time -- I mean, because, like, say for example if we need an update on category management or something like that, it will give us time to be able to reach out to the relevant folks and see if we can’t get
MR. TAYLOR: And I can help with that because GSA has several federal category managers. So, you know, and I mean that sincerely. I have them bringing Lauren in, but if they come in here and talk to the committee about what is the impact, process, policy, procedures, where is that, because, look, that’s part of our message to take back and be educated and informed. So, yeah, that’s a great thing.

And then my last plug would also be -- and I’m just putting it out there. I’m feeling a lot of pressure around clearances for contractors dealing in the IT world. There is a lot going up into the space, into the cloud, a lot of federal agencies, a lot of the intel community, this is big business. It is professional services. And it’s integrated services of IT. It’s a lot going on in that space.

And one of the major issues we’re having -- and I would say to any veteran on small business, you know, Mike, we joked about it when we introduced because I asked you, do you got TS clearances? Because if you have that, that is leverage. It’s cost, but it is leverage.

And back to what Larry’s talking about, when we start talking about what’s happening in the cloud
and IT, that’s another must have. And it’s a big deal because agencies are doing more and more outsourcing in that space and it’s not just -- it’s the operations and the infrastructure associated with it.

MR. PHIPPS: And you can’t get those clearances unless you have won a contract. You can’t get those clearances until you’ve won that contract. So if you’re competing for that work, you have to have a contracting officer willing to write you that paperwork, State Department paperwork, in order to do that. And if you don’t get the -- you know, so you kind of are --

MR. TAYLOR: Yeah, you’re in a tough space. You’re really in a no-win situation because really in the intel community they wouldn’t even raise a nothing option, particularly in the DoD. If you’re not already there, you’re not playing. So you’re going to have to do some up-front investment in that kind of space.

And so, Larry, I think going forward helping us help ourselves, those kind of things will be a big benefit.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: I guess and then basically so up-front investments but no guarantee that you’re going to get the contract. That’s what you’re saying.

MR. TAYLOR: And spend -- a lot of spend
MR. PHIPPS: So this is Mike Phipps. There is a clearance for the individual, but then the company gets a facilities clearance. And so you can’t get a facilities clearance unless you have a contract. There are companies that would spend the money to get the facilities clearance so they could bid, but they’re not allowed because that facilities clearance has got to be attached to a contract.

So if I want to compete, I would be willing, for example, to say, hey, look, I’ll invest in a facilities clearance, DoD; what would that cost for me to do that, to at least get the ball rolling so I can compete. But you can’t do that yet. So that’s one of the things that Mr. Taylor is right on about.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: And you wonder if this will be — you can partner with somebody, too.

MR. TAYLOR: That’s a good point. That’s something to think about.

MR. PHIPPS: This is Mike Phipps. You can partner, but if they’re going to sponsor your facilities clearance paperwork, they have to put you on one of their contracts. So what happens in the intel community is there’s all these small businesses that are attached to these contracts that aren’t really
doing anything because large businesses -- they have a hold on there and they can say, well, you know, we can do you this favor, but they’re not really -- you know, they’re consulting on. So I’m sure if you peeled back that onion, if DoD peeled back that onion, there would be all sorts of facilities clearances that would just drop into the water. But that partnership, there’s a whole layer of onions.

So, so I don’t grab the mic again, what Mr. Taylor just said about his Administrator making performance review tied to their goaling is something we have talked about over the years. If this committee could get -- and I don’t know what that looks like for all the other agencies.

That’s something that we brought up, I want to say, three years ago. We said this -- if that was happening at all agencies, this goaling would be a game-changer. And that was one of our recommendations. And I think that there’s probably a little bit -- if we have one Administrator doing it on one of the largest agencies, that would be a huge thing to keep the ball rolling, which leads to the next thing he said, which was -- hold on -- so we have some of these subjects that come up all the time. They should just be permanent subjects, category management, something we
know. If we know -- if we have a permanent subject for
people to report on, then it’s not like, hey, let’s go
get questions. And it’s the same -- 80 percent of the
questions are the same every time.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Would that be -- would that
be Matthew, too, category management?

MR. TAYLOR: Absolutely. Matthew is -- I
ain’t going to speak for Matthew, but I will. So how
do I speak for Matthew? He is really at the tip of the
spear obviously where he’s at. And then when we
operationalize the conversation, it’s going to cascade
down to the General Services Administrations. The VA
has some players, DoD has grabbed some of the
categories, if you will. The business lines, I like to
just talk business, the business lines themselves.

I would submit the space I’m in to facilitate
what we do here is GSA has the lion’s share of those
federal category managers. These are senior executives
that have taken on these categories. I’ll use just our
professional services which takes into every -- IT is
another huge one, surprise, surprise.

So these are category managers. It would
behoove us to have at least a pro service category
manager in here explaining about what is best in class;
what does that look like; oh, give me some numbers
behind small businesses, and then talk to us about that process and how those opportunities exist.

I couldn’t tell you that we actually set aside a category -- not talking Federal Acquisition Schedule. I know that answer. But how do we approach that from a business standpoint? Those are the kind of dialogues -- and we become more educated and informed in that space.

Larry, I will reach out to my colleague to get us -- get on the agenda to have at least an hour brief to the council here on category management. I’ll promise to have IT, pro services, but I’ll work that out.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay.

MR. TAYLOR: To have them come in and give us an overview, and it will stimulate some conversation.

MR. PHIPPS: And my last comment is what you were talking about with contracting officer training. It all starts with the contracting officer in government contracting. We don’t know what is the training contracting officers get about hiring veteran-owned small businesses. If we could get into a little bit of just that knowledge, that’s -- that’s the tactical versus, you know, getting into what -- and we can influence that.
What does contracting officer training look like? We can influence what that training looks like. They are scared to do -- contracting officers are scared to do set-asides for SDVOSB. They’re terrified about it because the FAR is so terrible about the way it’s written. It’s like -- we’ve gone through this at the other committee. But that’s why they’re worried. And that, to me, talks to what Mr. Taylor was talking about, contracting officer training. And then for us at the tactical level, if we knew that, that would be something we could probably make a recommendation on.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: You know, I’m just going to say in the interest of time, a lot of this is going to be in the paper we’re talking about. I’m sitting here thinking, wow, we’ve got a lot of ideas and thoughts right here. So we’re just going to move real quick to -- because I believe --

MR. CARTER: Hey, Larry, can I just add one more thing?

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Sure.

MR. CARTER: So William had brought up a great point about the Voc Rehab Program. And just to add on to that, so we at GSA, at GSA OSDBU, have had four individuals come through the program. We’ve hired two as full-time employees. We currently have one as
administrative staff and one gentleman went on to go outside the Federal Government into private industry. And so it’s a wonderful program. It’s also throughout a couple of other divisions are doing it, but I don’t have their numbers. But we are a constant reaching back in and not only from a central office standpoint, our regional people have also reached out as well. So it’s a great program. I just wanted to touch upon that and how we’re using it at GSA.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: That’s great feedback.

MR. METHENY: Larry, if I can interrupt. I apologize, everybody. I do need to step away, but I didn’t want to just disappear without offering any questions before I leave before the open comments.

(No response.)

MR. METHENY: Okay. I apologize for leaving. I’ll see you soon. And I will send those materials that you asked for, Fran, as well.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: Thank you.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. So we’re up to -- thanks a lot, Bill. Take it easy. We’ll see you on the trail. So we’re up to North Carolina Military Business Center.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: Good afternoon, everyone.

Once again, I’m Fran Perez-Wilhite with the North
Carolina Military Business Center.

    The NCMBC is hosting multiple subcontractor events due to the construction projects necessary resulting from the effects of Hurricane Florence. The NAVFAC projects to be discussed will be performed at Cherry Point and Camp LeJeune.

    At these events, North Carolina subcontractors are able to meet face to face with the prime contractors that have been short-listed by NAVFAC to win the construction packages. Regardless of whether or not the individual prime contractor eventually wins the construction package from NAVFAC, this is still an excellent way for our subcontractors to meet these prime contractors.

    For most subcontractors, these free events are the only way they are able to meet the primes, and it may lead to future collaboration and/or subcontracting regardless of whether or not they are Hurricane Florence-related.

    Today, on the 4th of March, the NCMBC team is at Havelock, North Carolina, and the event is called Hurricane Florence Package 1, Cherry Point. The primes involved are Whiting-Turner, Poettker-Millstone Weber and the ECC.

    The next event will be held on 10 March in
Jacksonville, North Carolina, and focuses on contracts at Camp LeJeune. The primes will be RQ Construction, Caddell Construction and Mortenson Construction.

If you have any questions or would like to be a part of our events, please let me know. If you would like to do an event similar to this with NCMBC, please contact me.

We are holding the new Southeastern Regional Federal and Defense Textile Summit, also known as FedTex, on the 21st and 22nd of April in Charlotte, North Carolina. We will connect DoD and federal agencies to textile manufacturers, supply chains, and R&D resources from across the southeastern U.S. If you would like to participate, please let me know.

Our annual Medical, Biomedical and Biodefense Support to the Warfighter Symposium is scheduled for 17 and 18 June in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. This event connects North Carolina businesses with military and other federal agencies that purchase medical supplies, equipment, devices, pharmaceuticals, medical IT, and medical services. If you would like to be a part of this, please let me know.

And since the VA is here, Ms. Beth Turner [sic], we’d appreciate if the VA OSDBU participated again this year. The VA OSDBU has made a great
difference to our events in the past couple years and we’d like to have them there again.

Senator Tillis’ office just sent the official invitation to VA OSDBU and also for VA Secretary Wilkie to be a part of our event and to do the keynote address, if possible.

If anyone would like to contact me, please give me a call at (704) 806-6858. Once again, that’s (704) 806-6858. Thank you.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: All right. Thank you, Fran. Before we take a 10-minute break, I just want to just take one or two seconds to congratulate Fran on -- she is our new chairperson, if you will, for our Advisory Committee on Veteran Business Affairs. She brings a lot to the table. And I really appreciate her passion and drive, if you will, for helping our veteran business community. So congratulations, Fran.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: Thank you.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: All right. Let’s take a 10-minute break. And I just want to say this real quickly, too. There’s one thing I want to talk -- speak with the committee to make you aware of, but I’m going to do it off the record. Okay? So we’re going to take a 10-minute break and then we’ll come back for the ethics piece.
(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. So we are back on record and we are up to the public comment period. And, you know, we're exactly on time, too. 3:15 is the time for the public comment period.

All right. So is there anyone in the room in the public or anyone on the phone who would like to bring up an issue or put something on the record with the committee? Anyone on the phone who would like to speak with the committee?

(No response.)

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. Anyone in the room in the public domain? I guess Joe Wynn is not here. He had to leave.

MS. HERRIMAN: Can I ask a question?

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Yes, you may. State -- please state your name for the record and then ask your question.

MS. HERRIMAN: My name is Chris Herriman and I am with the Vermont District Office of the Veteran Business Development offices here in Vermont. And I -- I was not on the very beginning of the call because I had another webinar to do, but was this -- were the fee discounts discussed for SBA loan programs for Veterans?

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: No, they were not. No,
they were not.

MS. HERRIMAN: Okay. Can I bring that up as something that has come up quite frequently since they were eliminated?

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Yes, you may.

MS. HERRIMAN: That’s really all I need to do is just bring up the fact that it has been brought up to me and the DVBO and my office, that it’s not really sending a good message that we eliminated the veteran discount for our loan program.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. Thank you very much. We’ve captured that for the record.

MS. HERRIMAN: Thank you.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: All right. Any other public comments?

(No response.)

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: If not, we will close the public comment period.

MR. PHIPPS: Larry, can we -- can we get -- this is Michael Phipps. It would be good from your standpoint, whoever is on the phone, if you could understand why that is because it’s a zero subsidy program. So as veterans understand why the fee program and that education part we had talked about so they could advocate or they could go -- you know, whether
it’s the congressional route or the SBA route so they could participate in understanding why that fee program was eliminated and at least have a voice in this process as opposed to just, like, it’s eliminated. Because --

MS. HERRIMAN: Okay. What do we do?

MR. PHIPPS: Well, first understanding why it was eliminated. And we don’t have probably the time to talk about that it’s a zero subsidy program --

MS. HERRIMAN: No, I do understand that. And I do explain that to people, yeah.

MR. PHIPPS: Okay. And so what’s the feedback?

MS. HERRIMAN: Well, for me personally, of course I don’t speak for anyone else, but for me personally the biggest concern is that it appears that we have “veteran programs” and there really aren’t any. There aren’t any benefits or -- and I’m talking about monetarily. I mean, there are no, you know, benefits to being a veteran-owned small business besides the training and counseling, which they get a lot out of and they really appreciate those.

But a tangible thing that is not necessarily based on, you know, if you’re an existing business and you want to get an equipment loan, you know, you’re not
going to go to a training program, you’re not going to
do a lot of the stuff that we have with the newer
businesses.

But that fee discount was definitely something
that we could go out and pitch when we’re at events and
we’re at outreach activities and you can say, you know,
this is a tangible thing that we offer for veterans.
And I do explain it. And, you know, I don’t know if it
goes over their head, but I don’t know if they just
think that it should be a -- more like a grant program
or something like that. But I just thought I would
bring it up because it has come up.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: No, no, no, that’s a great
point. And we do -- we hear it here at the
headquarters as well. You know, I know this is -- you
know, this is above SBA because, you know, we’re really
not the ones who, you know, recommend and put the fee
relief out there. And as Mr. Phipps indicated, you
know, it all ties into the program being under the zero
subsidy piece. In other words, you know, we’re not
doing this at the expense of the public.

So if the committee thinks it would be helpful
maybe for the next meeting to have someone just come in
and discuss it from Cap Access, we can certainly do
that.
MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: This is Fran Perez-Wilhite. Will the caller -- is that what we call them? The public comment person, give me a call sometime at (704) 806-6858, (704) 806-6858. It’s about a different topic, but I reach out to Vermont often to get word out to veteran-owned businesses. I’d love to collaborate with you.

MS. HERRIMAN: Sure, I’d be happy to.

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: Thank you.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. Thank you very much for the comment, and we’ve captured that for the record.

Okay. Well, the end of the public comment period. This is closing comments. Any final thoughts from any of the committee members? And, if not, the big takeaway is we’re going to -- I just spoke with Amy. We’re going to start working on that paper and we’ll circulate it around, get everyone’s thoughts. And then that’s going to be the basis of what we share with the Administrator and the basis of what we’re going to focus on for the annual report.

All right. So thank you all very much for your time and attendance here today.

MR. KURTZ: Larry, there is a couple -- this is Stan Kurtz with OVBD. Just a couple other things I
I want to make sure that we capture. One was the paper you had just discussed. But I’m also trying to get Shannon Jackson to either call in -- so I have an email in to them. We tried to call them as well. But we’ll try to get them on the schedule either, you know, as soon as possible. And maybe he’s even open to doing a separate call. So we’ll look into that.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. And then for him to call tomorrow if at all possible.

MR. KURTZ: Yes, sir. I left a message -- well, I emailed him.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay.

MR. KURTZ: And then one of the other things is we were going to look into the certification issue that Larry brought up. I guess we’re going to pursue that and take a look at that. And then I’ll reach out to Treasury and see if they can get him on the next meeting as well.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Yeah. Treasury needs to know that this is going to be on the Administrator’s calendar now.

MR. KURTZ: Okay.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: If that’s coming from Treasury, you know, it’s going to be a different discussion.
MR. KURTZ: So is there anything I missed as far as our do-outs and what we talked about?

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Not -- I was going to say --

MR. KURTZ: All right, thank you.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: -- I know we talked about category management, too. So we’re going to reach out to, I guess, GSA and OMB. And, Mike, you were getting ready to add --

MR. PHIPPS: So when you had discussed earlier that we were going to go -- we were going to put in their topics in terms of, you know, your 10, 50, and 300-meter targets --

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Mm-hmm.

MR. PHIPPS: -- how are we going to -- are we just going to -- do you have a format you want us to correspond in? Are you going to send us an email?

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Yeah, I’m going to leave that up to Amy. Amy, if you could come back to the table for a minute and just kind of talk about how to do it. I know if we were, like, all in a shared Skype type of forum where we could, you know, share input and see what people are doing and things of that nature, but we’re not. So I know Amy’s got some thoughts on how we’re going to do this.
MS. GARCIA: I think we’ll just get started with initial input. So we’ll just frame it up maybe like a matrix or something and add some bullets, make it kind of easy so we don’t have to spend lots of time writing lots of content just to get the ideas rolling. And we’re just looping it back around and it will just be a work in progress. And as we send that out, maybe we’ll talk internally about a good time frame, what we want that to look like and add some time frames and next steps to the paper. Because we want to have this all kind of wrapped up by -- well in advance of the next meeting.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Yeah. And any of the -- if the members are available, I guess from time to time we could probably have maybe what I would call an in-process reviews where we’re kind of on the telephone, on a call-in and just discuss it. You know, and I know everyone’s busy, but, you know, we can do something like that as well.

We want to have a really good product. And at the discussion, I’m really glad we captured everything on the record, too. It was a robust discussion today. And if we can capture that, you know, for moving forward, you know, it will be a great thing.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Hi, excuse me?
MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Yes?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: May I speak to the advocate about a number that I can contact that is able to help with the veterans and spouses that are currently overseas? I’m having a hard time finding information that I need to get my business launched and I was just hoping to hear some on the call, but is there a special office? I know there’s not, like a region for over here, per so...

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Okay. Where are you at? Where are you located?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I’m currently in Tokyo.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Oh, you’re in Tokyo.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I am.

MS. GARCIA: Hi, this is Amy. If you could send an email, if that’s possible, to veteransbusiness@sba.gov, with just some minimal information about -- you know, you said you were located in Tokyo, but about your company, then we’ll have something that we can connect internally with and get back to you to find out what the best way is, you know, who covers international.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: That’s great. I just have some questions about (inaudible) over here (inaudible) -- and I either get, hmm, that’s a great
question or I have no idea. So I’m trying to find somebody that knows the answer to that question.

MS. GARCIA: Okay. So that’s veterans with an S, business, veteransbusiness@sba.gov.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Fine, will do. Thank you.

MS. GARCIA: Oh, and (202) 205-6773.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: 6773.

MS. GARCIA: Is our main line, too. So if you’re able to call that when we’re back at the office, we can have a personal conversation about that, too.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yes, ma’am. That would be great. Thank you so much and sorry for interrupting.

MS. GARCIA: No problem. And actually if you could ask for Larry Stubblefield when you call in, that would be great.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: All right, will do.

Thank you very much.

MS. GARCIA: Thank you.

MR. PHIPPS: So tomorrow there is a committee called the Advisory Committee on Veteran Business Affairs that you can dial into as well. And those are veteran business owners on that committee. There’s a lot of information you can get there. We’ve actually
addressed the OCONUS entrepreneurs that are out there for the SBA. And so at some point there were actually Boots to Business programs going on in different overseas locations. So -- still is. So, yeah, so definitely try to call in tomorrow. You’ll get a ton of information. And that OCONUS piece is something that our committee has addressed in the past. So, you know, as Amy said --

MS. PEREZ-WILHITE: Did she already start her business?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Would it be the same phone number and same (inaudible)?

MS. GARCIA: Yes.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: Well, I mean, if the -- I mean, she got the number, so I think for the public information that we put so I would imagine she’d have that. The main thing I wanted to make sure she just had a name because, you know, sometimes you can call an office and you can go crazy trying to get in touch with --

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Just bounce from phone number to phone number, yeah.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: No, we’re just -- like Amy said, when we call the (202) 205-6773, just ask for Larry Stubblefield.
MR. KURTZ: Have you had a chance -- this is Stan Kurtz with OVBD. Have you had a chance to look at our website? Because it also talks about Boots to Business. And so we do Boots to Business overseas, OCONUS. Have you attended any of the Boots to Business classes?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I have not. They haven’t had them at the OCONUS as far as I know (inaudible) year. So I’m not sure. I’ve never heard of them having one here (inaudible).

MR. KURTZ: Okay. Yeah, just give us a call and we’ll figure it out.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Sounds good.

MR. KURTZ: All right. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: May I ask what time the call is tomorrow?

MR. KURTZ: Yeah, it starts at 9:00 eastern standard time.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: It is a different conference ID number, though.

MR. KURTZ: It is.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Okay. Does anybody happen to have --

MS. HERRIMAN: I do.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Oh, that’d be awesome.
Thank you.

MS. HERRIMAN: 137290192.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Wonderful. Thank you very much, ma’am.

MS. HERRIMAN: You’re welcome.

MR. STUBBLEFIELD: We got an international caller. Okay. Again, this concludes the meeting. Thank you all very much for being here. Great discussion and work going forward. Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 3:29 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.)
CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, Jennifer Razzino, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings were recorded by me and reduced to typewriting under the supervision of For The Record, Inc.; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were transcribed; and further, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

JENNIFER RAZZINO