

FEDERAL PREVAILING RATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

636th FPRAC

DOUGLAS FEHRER, Chairman, Presiding

Thursday, November 19, 2020

Virtual Meeting by Teleconference
Office of Personnel Management
Washington, D.C. 20415**ATTENDANCE:****Members/Alternates:**Management Members:Mark Allen, OPM
Christopher Lynch, DoD
Gary Buck, Army
Kendra Atiz, Navy
Sheila Willis, VALabor Members:Dale Troll, MTD
Richard Loeb, AFGE
Lee Blackmon, NAGE**Staff Specialists and Visitors:**Brenda Roberts, Designated Federal Officer, OPM
Jeanne Jacobson, OPM
Madeline Gonzalez, OPM
Timothy Rice, OPM
Karl Fendt, DoD
Gary Kistner, DoD
Erica Abiera, DoD
Chrissy Wlezien, DoD
Charles Arnold, DoD
Jerry Dollente, DoD
Ethan Smith, DoD
Angelica Novegil, DoD
Mandy Laughlin, Army
Kimberly Eidson, Air Force
Alethea Smalls, VA
Peter Wahnnon, NAGE
Howard (Boyd) Sanderson, NAGE**Recording Secretaries:**Mike Eicher, OPM
Ana Paunoiu, OPM

[Transcript prepared from digital audio produced by FPRAC.]

C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
I. <u>Opening/Announcements</u>	
• Introductions.....	5
• Announcements.....	9
II. Review of the Minutes of the 635th Meeting.....	9
III. Old Business.....	9
a. Letter from the American Federation of Government Employees, Dated September 6, 2018, Requesting FPRAC Review a Proposal to Not Allow Federal Wage System Wage Area Boundaries to Split General Schedule Locality Pay Areas and a Proposal to Redefine Monroe County, PA, from the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA, Wage Area to the New York, NY, Wage Area, 620-AFGE-1	
– Estimated 5-Year Cost Projection of Application of FPRAC Document 620-AFGE-1, 622-OPM-1	
– Paper Pay Disparity at Tobyhanna Army Depot by Joseph P. Lynott Sr., 623-OC-2	
– Email Message from Steven R. Kester in Support of the Proposal to Move Monroe County, PA, to the New York, NY, Wage Area, 623-OC-3	
– Letter from Steven R. Kester Regarding the Pay Disparity Between FWS and GS Employees at Tobyhanna Army Depot, 627-OC-1 and 633-OC-1	
– Employment Distribution at Tobyhanna Army Depot, 634-OPM-1	
– Market Rates vs Schedule Rates for Electronics Mechanics (Series 2604) Tobyhanna Army Depot, 634-OPM-2	
b. Letter from the American Federation of Government Employees, Dated September 3, 2019, Requesting FPRAC Recommend Redefining San Joaquin County, CA, from the Stockton, CA, Wage Area to the San Francisco, CA, Wage Area, 627-AFGE-1	
– Review of San Joaquin County, California, 629-MGT-1	
c. Letter from the National Association of Government Employees, Dated September 25, 2019, Requesting FPRAC Reexamine the Placement of Wage Grade Employees Working in the Salinas-Monterey, CA, Wage Area, 628-NAGE-1	
– Review of the Salinas-Monterey, California, Federal Wage System Wage Area, 629-MGT-2	
– Request for the abolishment of the Monterey/Salinas wage survey area, 632-NAGE-1	
d. Letter from the Association of Civilian Technicians, Dated November 9, 2019, Requesting FPRAC Consider Moving the Puerto Rico Wage Area into the Special Appropriated Fund Schedule for U.S. Insular Areas, 629-ACT-1	
– 2016 Study by NOAA Describing the Ocean Economies of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, 629-ACT-2	
– Review of the Puerto Rico Federal Wage System Wage Area, 631-MGT-1	
– Puerto Rico Wage Grade Adjustment 2020, 631-ACT-1	

- IV. New Business.....10
 - a. Request for the abolishment of the Monterey/Salinas wage survey area, 636-NAGE-1
 - b. Presentation: Remarks on NAGE’s Proposal to Abolish the Salinas-Monterey, CA, Wage Area and Redefine Monterey County, CA, to the San Francisco, CA, Wage Area
 - Guest Speakers:
 - Mr. Peter Wahnnon
 - Mr. Brandon Craft
 - Mr. Howard (Boyd) Sanderson
 - c. Letter from the Association of Civilian Technicians Requesting FPRAC Delay the Vote on the ACT Puerto Rico Proposal until April/May 2021, 636-ACT-1

P R O C E E D I N G

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: This is Doug Fehrer, Chairman of FPRAC. We'll go ahead and call this meeting to order, and I'll start by doing a roll call to see who we have with us. I will start with our members. Mark Allen with OPM?

MR. ALLEN: Mark's here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Chris Lynch with DoD?

MR. LYNCH: Chris is on.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Kendra Atiz at Navy?

MS. ATIZ: Good morning. Kendra is here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Gary Buck at Army?

MR. BUCK: Good morning, sir. Gary Buck here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Sheila Willis at VA?

MS. WILLIS: Good morning, everyone. Sheila is here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Dale Troll with MTD?

MR. TROLL: Good morning. This is Dale.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Thank you.

And, Jacque, are you here with us from AFGE?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Jacque, are you on the line?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Richard Loeb?

MR. LOEB: Richard Loeb here. Yes, thank you. I don't know that Jacque is going to make it.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Is there anybody sitting in for Jacque?

MR. LOEB: Not to my knowledge, no. I'm here representing the second AFGE seat.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: I was just checking.

Lee Blackmon with NAGE?

ATTENDEE: Are you talking about Jackie with Air Force?

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: No. That was Jacque with AFGE.

ATTENDEE: I just wanted to make sure. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: No problem.

MS. BLACKMON: This is Lee with NAGE. I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Travis with ACT?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Do we have anyone from ACT on the line?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Let's move on to everyone else. Brenda, OPM, Designated Federal Officer?

MS. ROBERTS: I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Jeanne Jacobson?

MS. JACOBSON: I'm here. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Tim Rice?

MR. RICE: Here. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Madeline?

MS. GONZALEZ: I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Ana?

MS. PAUNOIU: I'm here. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Mike?

MR. EICHER: I'm here. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: With DoD, Melissa?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Is Melissa on the line?

MR. LYNCH: I don't think Melissa is on the line.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Karl?

MR. FENDT: Yes. Karl Fendt is on the line. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Gary?

MR. KISTNER: Yep, I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Erica?

MS. ABIERA: I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Chrissy?

MS. WLEZIEN: I'm here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Charles?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Charles with DoD?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Jerry?

MR. ARNOLD: Do you mean Charles Arnold?

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Yes, Charles Arnold.

MR. ARNOLD: Yes. Here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Very good.

MR. DOLLENTE: Jerry Dollente?

MR. DOLLENTE: I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Ethan?

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir. I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: And Angelica?

MS. NOVEGIL: I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Mandy with Army?

MS. LAUGHLIN: Yes, sir. I'm here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: From VA, Alethea?

MS. SMALLS: Hi. This is Alethea.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Keyonna?

MS. SMALLS: Keyonna is not on the call today.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Air Force, Jackie?

MS. EIDSON: Jackie is not here, but Kim Eidson is here in her place. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: And then our guest speakers from NAGE, we have Peter

Wahnon?

MR. WAHNON: Yes, sir. Peter Wahnon is here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Okay. Brandon Craft?

MR. WAHNON: We had some complications with workload. So it's just me presenting today.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: So Howard is not there either?

MR. WAHNON: Howard is here. Sorry. He's not really a presenter. He's just letting me use his office.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Oh, okay. Thank you.

MR. WAHNON: You're welcome.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Is there anyone else on the line that I did not call?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Moving forward, this is the 636th meeting of the Federal Prevaling Rate Advisory Committee. It's now about 10:05 a.m. here on the East Coast, and based on our roll call—Mark, correct me if I'm wrong—I don't believe we actually have a quorum today.

MR. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, we have a quorum to meet, but we do not have a quorum to vote on any agenda items, not that I had any plans to put anything to a vote today anyway.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Thank you for the clarification, Mark.

Let's move on. Just as a reminder, we are attempting to record this meeting, and as always, the meeting minutes will be provided to all members. And to help with this, I would ask that members and participants and presenters today, please identify yourself prior to speaking. That will help the folks who will transcribe today's meeting.

And with that, are there any announcements?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Hearing none, we'll move on to the approval of the minutes of the 635th meeting of the Committee, which we held on September 17th. We received no edits to the transcript. Are there any final edits offered today?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Hearing none, do we have a motion to accept the minutes?

MR. ALLEN: Move to accept the minutes.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Do we have a second?

MR. TROLL: Second.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Because we're doing this by phone, I'll ask, is there any opposition to accepting the minutes?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: And again, hearing none, let the record show that the minutes of the 635th meeting of the Committee have been approved.

Looking at Old Business, we continue to carry over items (a), (b), (c), and (d) from our past meetings.

I guess, Richard, is there anything new on your front on item (a), the Tobyhanna issue, or item (b), San Joaquin?

MR. LOEB: Not that I'm aware of, sir.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: On item(c), the Salinas-Monterey issue, we're looking forward to the presentation today from our friends at NAGE when we get to New Business in just a moment.

If I'm correct, the Management Study was completed and reported out sometime ago, but we can review that following the presentation as well. And I am anticipating NAGE's presentation will address any issues with Management's findings as well as provide other information.

And then last but not least, in Old Business, we have item (d), the Puerto Rico wage issue, which ACT has requested we hold off taking any action on until next April or May, and we'll address that under New Business as well.

Having no other Old Business, we'll move right on to our New Business. As I mentioned, we have a request for the abolishment of the Monterey-Salinas, wage area, and that request is item 636-NAGE-1 in your packet which was emailed out. In support of this formal request, we have item (b), which is a presentation on NAGE's proposal to abolish the Salinas-Monterey wage area.

The document that we were provided, 636-NAGE-1, is lengthy and provides a lot of good information to review, but having said that, I guess I will turn it over to NAGE and Lee; your presentation.

MS. BLACKMON: Thank you. Thank you, Committee. We appreciate your time today. As you know, this has been on the agenda for quite some time. So I'm going to go ahead and defer to Peter who is on the line who will be presenting on behalf of NAGE.

MR. WAHNON: Thank you, Lee. Good morning, everybody. My name is Peter Wahnon. I'm an electrician. I work for the Naval Facilities Engineering and Systems Command. Their headquarters is in San Diego. I'm based out of Monterey at the Public Works Department here at the Naval Postgraduate School.

As you guys know, we've had this request pending for several months now, but in reality, it's actually been probably about 20 years or so that we've been trying to do this, ever since the GS's were moved back in 1999. I believe we got something fit into FPRAC the following year with Congressman Sam Farr, but it ended up being shot down. So here we are.

Let me just get right into it. The first thing I want to point out really about

Monterey-Salinas is that it's kind of a tale of two counties. We're a standalone wage area, meaning we don't have any areas of application. San Benito County was moved, merged with Santa Clara County and the San Francisco wage area, I believe, in 2016. So now it's just us.

The area around where I'm at, the Monterey-Salinas area where Naval Postgraduate School is, is really—it's kind of a really high cost-of-living area, and we're referred to locally as the "Tri County" because of our close proximity to Santa Cruz and San Benito County.

The other side of Monterey County, as soon as you leave south of Salinas, the cost of living in that area drops dramatically around Fort Hunter Liggett, Camp Roberts, with the other two entities where WG employees are. I mean, the difference between the two is not even comparable, not to mention that we actually don't believe that Camp Roberts should be in our wage area because Camp Roberts is actually in San Luis Obispo County. It's partially in ours, but if you look at the address, the address is in San Luis Obispo County. So it's something we just wanted to point out. We're not sure if it really affects our numbers being below 100, but that's also one of the issues we've been having.

The last survey we have access to is 2018, and we didn't get access to that survey until this year. And we didn't get access to it until after we filed a congressional inquiry to get it, and we're not even sure if it's the actual survey or if it's just something that was given to us just to kind of appease us. We don't have the 2019 survey information. We don't have the 2020 survey information. So it's really frustrating for us because we really don't know what's going on with the—if the surveys are adequate or if there—we do know that the 2018 survey wasn't completely adequate. The lower section of the rate scale failed to meet OPM's requirements of having at least one grade with 20 observations.

I could probably ramble about this for a while. I was wondering if you guys have any questions for me.

MR. ALLEN: So you work at the Naval Postgraduate School. Can you share any sort of anecdotal information you may have about any of the people that you've worked with in the recent past who have left to take other positions in the private sector?

MR. WAHNON: Oh, we've had—actually, I had the numbers here. We've had 15 people since 2018 leave for higher positions. We've lost two locksmiths. We've lost a welder. We've lost, like, probably five electricians, several HVAC techs, maintenance mechanics. Yeah, we've lost quite a bit, and I think even going beyond that, since 2018, we've had 10 people accept tentative offers, only to turn them down specifically citing cost of living as the reason why they declined the job offers, after we went through months and months of trying to on-board them. As soon as they took a look at the cost of living in the area, they're—you know, it's just—I mean, really, it's more than a paycheck for most people. Discounted military—privatized military housing, that's really the only option a lot of people have to live here and work for the Naval Postgraduate School. To rent in the area and especially this year, it's probably gone up maybe 10 percent now. The cost of a three-bedroom house is \$3,500 around the base and up.

So I do have the specific numbers. For people who took jobs elsewhere, we've lost five maintenance mechanics, one welder, two locksmiths, four electricians, and three HVAC technicians.

MR. ALLEN: That's good to know. Do you know if they all left for jobs in the private sector, or did they go to work in other wage areas? Or did they move on to other Federal positions?

MR. WAHNON: Yeah, it's about 50-50. Half of them took GS jobs here. I mean,

it's a drastic raise in pay once you go from WG to GS. You get 41.44 percent cost-of-living adjustment. So, I mean, that's really what a lot of people fight for, but I think all five maintenance mechanics left for other Federal positions in other areas.

For instance, we had a guy leave to work in the Social Security Administration. In the San Francisco area, we had a guy take an HVAC job in Reno because the pay was the same almost, but the cost of living was like about a third. And we had a guy leave to go back to North Carolina, another maintenance mechanic. We had a locksmith take a job with the local hospital where his pay went up to about 15 bucks an hour. That place was only 5 minutes away from us, but they survey their wages in San Francisco.

MR. BUCK: I had a question, sir. Do we know how many employees actually commute into Monterey County from elsewhere?

MR. WAHNON: We have two employees that live in San Benito County—oh, we had more than two? Well, we have a few employees that live in San Benito County. For them coming in, it's about a 35-minute drive, and we have some employees that live out in the Santa Cruz County area. And their commute in is about 25 minutes, and we have some guys that are in Southern Monterey as well.

MR. BUCK: I'm sorry. I didn't catch that last remark that was said?

MR. WAHNON: Oh, it's about a 45-minute drive coming in from Southern Monterey, like two guys that live out there.

I feel bad for the guys from San Benito County because they live in San Benito County. They're in the San Francisco wage area, and they come here to work. As soon as they cross into our county, they basically lose about 5 bucks an hour. So we've actually lost two guys. We have about four guys that live in San Benito County. We lost two that took jobs elsewhere

for higher pay.

MR. BUCK: Thank you.

MR. WAHNON: Any more questions?

MR. ALLEN: I do have some more questions. Have you all been in touch with any of the people who work at, say, Fort Hunter Liggett or employees at Camp Roberts? I should explain why we have employees listed as being in Monterey County for Camp Roberts. That is because the employing agency has their official duty station in Monterey County.

MR. WAHNON: Okay.

MR. ALLEN: That's how they pop up there. I don't have the information at hand as to whether there are additional employees with another duty station of Camp Roberts or nearby in the county to the south of Monterey, but yeah. Have you all been in touch with any of the employees who work at Fort Hunter Liggett or Camp Roberts?

MR. WAHNON: No, sir. And to be specific, I guess he's our formal local wage survey committee chairperson—I'll explain that in a second—he tells us every year when he sends out requests, like, for the hearings for the full surveys, and he never hears anything back from them.

MR. ALLEN: I agree with you that what we're looking at here is probably, as you put it, a Tale of Two Counties, where the recruitment and retention rates based on the rates that DoD collects, on the pay level that DoD collects in Monterey County are probably different in the southern part of Monterey County than they are in the northern part. We don't measure cost of living, of course, with the local wage survey, but most private-sector employers are going to take the cost of living into account when they set their own wage levels.

I think you are on to something. Monterey is unusual in that it's a very long

county, long coastal California, which is—don't think we have another wage area that's quite the same—don't know if we have another county that's as big as Monterey County and that has more employees in the southern section than in the northern part. This wasn't always the case, though. If we would take a look back maybe into the 1970s—or early 1970s, late 1960s, when the Monterey—Salinas-Monterey wage area was established, Fort Ord would have been a much bigger presence at that time, and there were, I believe, probably hundreds more maintenance employees working at the Naval Postgraduate School.

From my perspective, I think I'll need more time to go over the information that you've provided here, and I do appreciate the information you've shared. I will, however, say that the more expedient, the quicker way to approach any recruitment and retention challenge there may be at the Naval Postgraduate School is for the employer to consider using things like recruitment and retention incentive to get people on board as people leave or to request special wage rates to be established for certain occupations, if they haven't already been explored at the Naval Postgraduate School.

MR. WAHNON: Yes, sir. That's actually up to management. I know that they've explored those. We've actually ended up hiring contractors to fill positions in lieu of being able to hire actual employees, like especially electricians and HVACs. But we've also had issues hiring pretty much every position we have.

You're absolutely right about the numbers in the northern part of the county. Even the Defense Language Institute was another big employer of WG employees, but they actually turned their maintenance over to the city. Like you said, Fort Ord closed down, and the La Mesa housing, a military housing area, they actually went to privatized military housing. So the privatized housing, they employed their own maintenance people. So, yeah, our numbers are

considerably less these days. Unfortunately, we haven't really seen—but I know here, we only have about 40 billets.

Just a side note, in terms of cost of living, the reason why I bring it up is specifically because of the recruitment and retention issues. I mean, there's more things that we could draw attention to specifically about the wage survey, but I don't really know how pay is set. I've tried to figure it out. I don't know.

I know that some jobs that we observed in 2018 were definitely higher than what we get. I do believe I put that in the handout that you guys have reviewed. I think we already have data that shows that pay out here that we survey is higher in many instances, but it's just not getting translated into raises in wages, because I've been a part of the wage survey since 2014. And I don't think it's ever gotten us higher pay.

But one thing is for sure. The cost of living keeps going up, and we're definitely starting to clamor for better opportunities around here.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: I wanted to ask the folks over at DoD if it's possible to take another look at the data to ensure what is being collected is going back through the survey process in a timely way and accurately, if there's a concern about that on your end, Peter.

There is one thing in the written request you folks submitted that I have a question on. You just mentioned you have about 40 billets, and you did list the contractors and what they're making out there; what their rates of pay are. Do you have data on how many contractors you're actually employing or that are actually employed there?

MR. WAHNON: Well, we've had three. We've let a few others go. Currently, we don't have any—well, we had one. We had an HVAC tech contractor who we actually were going to try to—he broke his ankle. So we were going to try to move him into an HVAC spot,

but he broke his ankle. The contracting agency is going to replace him with a different contractor. So, at the moment, we have one pending.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Do they fall within the list that you gave us? There was a carpenter, electrician, painter, plumber, and pipefitter. Would they piggyback in on any of those, or is that a separate—

MR. WAHNON: Well, they're going to eventually fill the billet of somebody that we can't hire. We have, I think, two open HVAC billets, and so the contractor is going to occupy one.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: I understand that. I was just wondering from a pay standpoint, what would the pay rate in the private sector as a contractor look like compared to the wage grade equivalent?

MR. WAHNON: Oh. No, they're paid more. They're paid through their agency, and then we pay the agency their rates and fringes as well. They do make more than us.

MR. LYNCH: I just wanted to add in, one of the problems that we've run into, especially in Monterey County, is this is a good example of where the pay cap has become an issue, and I would guess that we're lagging the prevailing rate in Monterey County. And this is probably a very conservative guesstimate of, I would say, at least 10 percent-plus of the local economy when it comes to wage grades. So this is another situation where we are beholden to the cap rates where we have our WG rates based on what the GS increases are.

Once again, we can't provide the full increase. We can't pay exactly what's being paid in Monterey County, what the similar positions are making, because of the caps, the pay caps.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Thank you for that information.

Are there any other thoughts or comments? Any further discussion?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: And, Mark, I want to ask, did you want to make any comments regarding what was previously presented on Management's position?

MR. ALLEN: I haven't heard any information today that would cause me to question the data that we put into the Management report. However, I would like to have some time to absorb what the local guys from Monterey have shared with us today. There's some important information in there. However, increasing the wage schedule for all employees in Monterey County may not be necessarily the best solution to any recruitment and retention issue, given that their big difference, it appears to be in the northern part of the county compared to the southern half of the county. So that's something I'd like to take a further look at.

But generally speaking, given that it takes, as everybody is aware, a very long time to make changes in any wage area boundaries through regulation, what I'd usually encourage is that if there are recruitment and retention problems that pay flexibilities should be considered and other human resources flexibilities, such as student loan repayments or that sort of thing.

I guess I'll just leave off on that by saying that I don't see anything that we would need to change in the management report, but I would like to have some time to absorb some additional information that's been presented today.

MR. WAHNON: I'm kind of curious about what the pay cap is, especially in terms of the GS's, because the GS's make considerable—about—I'm sorry—a considerable amount of money, more than us. So I don't understand how our pay cap is—I mean, I guess it would be 30 percent less or something? It's probably about what we make less than the

equivalent GS grade because of their cost-of-living adjustment, but I'm also curious about the special rate survey, because what we do specifically at Naval Postgraduate School is more akin to construction and facility maintenance. And we're just not really sure how to request it or if it can be key to our industry category of construction and facility maintenance.

MR. ALLEN: I can address some of those questions. Each year since 1978, the Congress has found it appropriate to put a limit on the maximum wage schedule adjustment for Federal Wage System employees. That was mainly done for budgetary reasons during a period of what then was known as "stagflation."

When they're doing a wage survey, they're finding that some employers had their wage rates tied to increases in the cost of living through the consumer price index, so they had escalation clauses in those, and that would have caused pretty big increases in wage levels for Federal Wage System employees in different parts of the country that the government at that time determined they could not afford to pay and did not want to pay for budgetary reasons.

Once that was put in place, it's continued every year since then up until the current year, and the method for doing that was to provide that the cap would equal whatever the General Schedule pay adjustment was. So, if there is a 1 percent pay adjustment for the General Schedule in January, that would mean that the cap would be 1 percent for the Federal Wage System wage schedules. Because of that cap, the wage rates in most wage areas these days are trending below what the private-sector rates are in comparison. Those, what we call "pay gaps," also vary by grade level. Since I am working from home today, I was able to pull up the wage schedule and pay gap information for the Salinas-Monterey wage area, and I am looking at it right now to see what pay gap actually is.

I'm seeing that for FY2020, it was 16 percent below at Wage Grade 2, and let's

see. Wage Grade 10—the majority of the employees in the Salinas-Monterey wage area are between WG-8 and WG-10, and as Chris had mentioned, the pay gap for that—sorry for talking slow. I'm trying to scroll through my spreadsheet.

MR. WAHNON: It almost sounds like the wage surveys can't help us if there's a pay gap.

MR. ALLEN: Well, I think what Chris is saying is that if there were no pay cap, if the pay cap was removed, then the wage rates in Monterey County would be higher because they would need to be equivalent to the full market rates.

So, the pay gaps for the WG-8 through WG-10 positions, I believe they're somewhere between maybe 6 and 2 percent, in that general range. We see most of—the high pay gap there is at the lower grade levels, if what I'm looking at is the right thing.

There's legislation that sets the pay cap amount each year, but OPM has the authority to waive that as a recruitment and retention flexibility if an agency needs OPM to do that.

MR. WAHNON: I understand what you're saying, sir.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Thank you for looking that up.

MR. LYNCH: Actually, Mr. Chairman, if I could jump in really quick again?

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Certainly.

MR. LYNCH: I just wanted to touch base on the special salary rates, the question that was asked. If they do want—if the command does want to go that direction, what they'll need to do is there are—there's a certain set of paperwork that needs to be completed, and they just need to work with their leadership at the Naval Postgraduate School, the HR folks, and it will have to go up through their command and up to the DCPAS special pay team, and then

they'll work with the Navy leadership—or the Navy HR folks to make sure everything is in place and then send it on to OPM for final approval.

I can work with them or at least make sure they get to the right people. Gary Kistner, who is on the call now, is the main point of contact, as would be Mr. Karl Fendt. He's the head of the Wage and Salary Division. They're the experts in this field. So, if you do want to pursue that, please let us know. I'm on the email list for this invitation. So please feel free to reach out if you have any other questions on the special salary rates.

MR. WAHNON: Yes, sir. Could you give me your name one more time, please?

MR. LYNCH: Christopher P. Lynch, L-y-n-c-h.

MS. ATIZ: Hi, Chris. Everybody, this is Kendra from the Department of Navy, OCHR headquarters. Sir, if you have any questions pertaining to how to request those, you can also submit the inquiry to me as the Policy and Program Compensation Program Manager for the Department of Navy. If the Naval Postgraduate School requires any assistance, they are more than welcome to reach out to their head of HR, which is the DCHR, Tammy Barbarin, or to me as well. And our office reviews those requests prior to routing to the DCPAS, which is Mr. Lynch and Mr. Kistner.

MR. WAHNON: Yes, ma'am. What was your name?

MS. ATIZ: Atiz, Alpha Tango India Zulu. My first name is Kendra.

MR. WAHNON: I just want to clarify that our HR isn't Naval Postgraduate School. Our human resources is in San Diego.

And just to touch on a point that I mentioned earlier, I think just up until this year, our local wage survey committee chairperson was actually a part of Naval Postgraduate School locally. That was the only support that that HR department gave our command. So they are two

separate commands.

But now our local wage survey committee chair has been moved apparently to San Diego. Nobody really knows who they are or how to get ahold of them. I've requested—like I've told you guys before, we don't have the 2019 or 2020 survey information. I've triad requesting it. I have no idea where to go to get it. I don't even know if that even counts as actual wage survey committee if they're not even in the survey area.

MR. ALLEN: I would like to address that question about the wages that are gathered in Monterey County. I would suggest, Peter, you talk offline with Chris Lynch to see what information DoD could provide to you there. There are certain limits that DoD operates under for confidentiality purposes, but DoD may be able to provide you with some kind of sanitized information on what's actually gathered there.

MR. WAHNON: Yes, sir. I just want to thank you guys for the opportunity to present our case to you. I really appreciate it, and hopefully, we can—I've got some good information. I look forward to working with you guys further. Thank you for your time.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Peter, thank you for presenting your information, and, Chris and Kendra, thank you for your offers to help them fill these jobs and keep their work moving.

That said, we'll continue to carry this over to our future meetings as we do more research and review, and we will move on then to our last item under New Business, the letter from ACT requesting that FPRAC delay the vote on the ACT Puerto Rico proposal until April or May of 2021.

Does anyone object to this request?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Hearing none, we'll carry this over until April or May.

Future meeting dates. Pursuant to what's been published in the Federal Register, we have one last meeting scheduled for this year, Thursday, December 17th, at 10 a.m. The meeting dates for next year will also be published in the near future. I think that covers all of our agenda items for today.

Is there anything else from the group?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Okay. As always, I hope and pray that you and your families remain well and especially this month, have a very Happy Thanksgiving.

Is there a motion to adjourn?

MR. ALLEN: Move to adjourn.

MR. TROLL: Second.

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Is there anyone opposed to the meeting being adjourned?

[No audible response.]

CHAIRMAN FEHRER: Hearing none, we will officially adjourn, and again, stay well, everyone. And thank you to the OPM team for all their great work. Have a good month ahead.

[End of recorded session.]