

# BREA Minutes

**Meeting Date and Place:** Tuesday, November 12, 2013; Bldg. 400, Room RSB 2

**Attendees:** Elliot Auerbach, Carmen Benkovitz, Robert Brown, Nate Carter, Dave Cox, Louise Hanson, Ken Mohring, Arnie Peskin, Lloyd Schairer, Liz Seubert (by phone), Steve Shapiro, Joyce Tichler (by phone), Richard Skelton, Alan Smith, Joan Watson, and Ronald Yuhas.

**Invitees:** John Carter and Louis Sadler of DOE's Brookhaven Site Office.

Dave Cox opened the meeting at 1:04 pm.

The minutes of the October 8, 2013 meeting were accepted as presented.

Steve Shapiro gave the Treasurer's Report. BREA spent \$330 for the printing and mailing of the Nov/Dec Newsletter. Because the BNL Bulletin has ceased publication, HR has asked BREA to include items in the Newsletter. If we do so, we may be able to negotiate for them to cover the costs of the extra issues (now six per year; the Lab finances four). Steve is also renewing BREA's TFCU CDs that have come/are coming due.

## **Business:**

Membership: Carmen Benkovitz said that there has been a substantial increase in membership renewals in the last month. She has also made considerable progress on reducing the number of incorrect email addresses.

DOE former worker medical screening and compensation programs: Steve Shapiro has invited Joe Falco, Manager of BNL's Occupational Medicine Clinic, to make a formal presentation on these programs at the December BREA meeting. Arnie Peskin thought that BREA members should be encouraged to attend this presentation. It was decided that Steve will provide Carmen Benkovitz with an email announcement that she can then forward to members. Ken Mohring will try to book Conference Rooms 1 and 2 in Bldg. 400 for the meeting – they are back-to-back and can be opened up into one larger room. Arnie also suggested that Joe Falco be asked for a brief write-up that can be included in a future Newsletter.

Election of Officers: Arnie Peskin said that ballots have been coming in, by mail and email. They will be counted at the December meeting.

Special Presentation on the BNL contract renewal process: The current BSA contract to manage and operate (M&O) BNL expires on Jan. 4, 2015. DOE has decided to create an RFP (Request for Proposals) for the new M&O contract, opening it up to competition, rather than just extending the existing contract with BSA as it has done twice already, in 2008 and 2010. BREA's concerns are (1) what the new contract will say about retiree benefits, and (2) how to provide input into the process.

As the result of an invitation by Steve Shapiro, at 1:30 pm, Louis Sadler, Assistant Chief Council, Office of Science, Brookhaven Site Office, DOE, gave a formal presentation to BREA. He spoke on the history of the current BSA contract, gave a very brief overview of the new M&O contract, and described the M&O contract competition process. Also in attendance was John Carter, Brookhaven Site Office. A Power Point copy of the presentation is available by emailing one of BREA's officers. A brief description follows:

The new BNL M&O contract will be for a 5 year base period with up to 15 additional years, not to exceed a total of 20 years. DOE is currently in the preproposal phase. An information website has been established –<http://bnlcompetition.science.energy.gov/>. This website serves as the primary source of information and the primary means of communication with prospective respondents and the public. It includes questions posed by the public and DOE's responses. With regard to the RFP, DOE will determine its content. Unlike the past (1997), no draft RFP will be issued and there are no designated parties of interest. The RFP release date is yet to be determined, but will most likely occur during the second quarter of fiscal year 2014. Upon release, it will be posted on the website. The time to submit comments and/or requests for input into the RFP is *before* the RFP is issued. Sadler reassured the audience that DOE wants to hear from the community.

Medical benefits: Dave Cox distributed tables comparing medical benefits (coverage and cost) for "Retirees On Medicare" and "Retirees Not On Medicare" for 13 DOE Labs. He then appointed a committee – "Special Committee on Medical Benefits" – to be chaired by Ken Mohring. Other members include himself, Elliot Auerbach, Louise Hanson, Arnie Peskin, Mona Rowe, Liz Seubert and Steve Shapiro. The purpose of the committee is (1) to investigate the costs and coverage of alternative supplemental medical plans should BSA follow the lead of several other DOE Labs and significantly change its retiree medical benefits for 2015, and (2) to draft a statement concerning retirees' medical benefits for BREA to submit to DOE for inclusion in the new BNL M&O contract RFP. The first committee meeting will take place before the Dec. 10 BREA meeting.

On a somewhat different topic, Elliot Auerbach reported the change in 2014 relative to 2013 for Social Security payments (up 1.5%). There will be no change for Medicare Part B premiums or the annual deductible. The BNL retiree medical premiums (including prescription coverage) will increase by 50% for people who retired before 2002, and by 33 1/3% for more recent retirees.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:28 pm.

December 2013 meeting: Tuesday, Dec. 10, 1pm, Bldg. 400, Rm RSB 2

January 2014 meeting: Tuesday, Jan. 14, 1pm, Bldg. 400, Rm RSB 2

Minutes submitted by Louise Hanson