

BREA Zoom Meeting Minutes 03/14/2023

Minutes recorded by G. Cisco and M. Israel

Contact Information:

Brookhaven Retired Employees Association BREA

BNL Bldg. 400A

BERA Recreation/ Attention BREA Meeting

Upton, NY 11973

Present: A. Moodenbaugh, R. Backofen, J. Baum, G. Cisco, D. Cox, S. Duffy, R. Evans, L. Feierabend, L. Fishbone, V. Ghosh, J. Hurst, B. Lin, J. Lemley, B. Leonhardt, M. Rowe, S. Shapiro, D. Sievers, B. Siskind, G. Williams

Officers 2022-2024: President: Arnold Moodenbaugh, Vice President: Vinita Ghosh, Secretary: Laura Miller, Treasurer: Les Fishbone, Membership Chair: Beth Lin, Newsletter Editor: Mona Rowe

1. Meeting called to order at about 1:00PM by A. Moodenbaugh.

2. **Minutes:** January and February meeting minutes are still being assembled. Laura Miller is absent. Gretchen Cisco took detailed notes that are the basis of the minutes.

3. **Membership:** Beth Yu Lin. 251 members; 231 with email contacts. Two new memberships since last report. One of those members needed to have email revised. We should attempt to increase enrolment of retiring members. Some BREA info is included in the separation packet but is often not noticed. Mona Rowe suggested that we invite potential members by email. Arnie received approval from Christine Carter to use BNL email info to contact employees receiving longevity awards. He will mention health benefits information, our website, our newsletter. A member asked Beth how many new memberships were received – about 10 per month. [additional discussion on topic of health benefits follows this; see New Business 10 a) for continuation]. The membership report was approved

Action: Arnie will work with HR to make sure BREA information is included in employee retirement packets.

Action: Arnie himself will contact employees receiving longevity awards, or he will share the responsibility with other members.

4. **CAC report:** Mark Israel was absent, but sent a written summary of the March 9 meeting to Arnie. Arnie noted that Eena Mai Franz contacted him and is willing to continue as CAC alternate. She is new to ZOOM and may not have optimum computer capability to take part in the regular remote CAC meetings (the next meeting is Apr 13).

Action: Arnie provided Mark Israel with Franz's email address and phone.

Arnie provided some brief highlights of the March CAC meeting. The following summary is based on Mark Israel's notes from the meeting:

Jason Remien provided a brief environmental update. The Medical Research Reactor demolition waste has been shipped out and was officially accepted by the waste site. Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Systems are all up and running. There will

be a more detailed update on the status at the next CAC Meeting in April, with a presentation entitled “All Things PFAS.”

Tim Green gave a presentation entitled “Natural and Cultural Resource Management Update”. He discussed the Laboratory’s Deer Management Program and reviewed a little background/history for the newer CAC members. For 2023, the “acceptable” deer population is between 80 and 250; we are presently at approximately 375. Therefore they need to take 125+ this year to overcome reproductive growth and maintain desirable numbers. To date, 65 have been taken; another culling weekend is planned for later in March. Every tenth deer is sampled for Cs-137 prior to release for consumption. The deer meat is donated to various NYS food banks, Tick samples and blood samples are also taken in coordination with NYSDOH tick-borne disease studies,

Tim also discussed Fire Management on the BNL site which includes “Controlled/Prescribed Burns” and “Mechanical Clearing Treatments” on a rotational basis for mapped out sectors of the Laboratory. He also talked about the impact of the Southern Pine Beetle, which has impacted hundreds of acres at BNL. BNL is working with the U.S. Forest Service to thin out the forest to build resilience and monitor impacts.

Tim stated that the Laboratory is working with the Long Island Coyote Study Group to collect and study coyote colonization of Long Island. Data will be used as a baseline to document environmental changes due to coyote populations. There are several breeding pairs in Nassau County and Eastern Suffolk County.

Lastly, Tim discussed the Cultural Resource Management Program which, under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), requires evaluation and documentation of potential historical significance of buildings 50 years or older, of which there are 32 at BNL. This Act also requires archaeological evaluations prior to any ground disturbance such as construction. Sites include the Gamma Forest and WWI trenches and foundations, as well as two archaeological sites.

Michael Jensen, Meteorologist in the Energy and Environment Department, presented “A Climate-Energy Modeling Framework – Projecting Energy Demand & Infrastructure Resilience”. Michael spoke about the interdisciplinary project team, a part of this clean energy initiative which includes meteorologists and electrical engineers. There is an urgent need for research that provides a better understanding of and a predictive capability for the relationship between extreme weather events driven by climate change and existing and future infrastructure. The project has three goals. 1) It is planned to build an integrated modeling framework to relate extreme weather under warming climate scenarios to mitigate weather effects on energy infrastructure in areas of high energy demand. 2) The project plans to relate existing urbanized weather/climate community models to electric grid and power outage prediction models in order to assess and mitigate impact. 3) Finally, an Urbanized Weather Research and Forecasting (WRF) Model for Energy Applications (uWRF-Energy) will be developed. This model should offer a long-term planning tool for grid energy needs and resiliency under climate change scenarios. Graphics illustrating the modeling process were presented.

Our BREA membership in the CAC has been accepted and approved for another five years. The CAC has been accepting applications from and hearing presentations by various interested community organizations and local governments that would like to become members. When these are completed and the revised CAC membership is

finalized, Mark will provide BREA with the updated membership listing.

Before the CAC Meeting was adjourned, I mentioned that our March/April BREA Newsletter featured an article by Mona Rowe discussing PFAS. The article was informed by prior CAC coverage of the PFAS issue and follow up discussion with Jason Remien and Douglas Paquette of BNL. Amy Engel, from the BNL Public Affairs Office acknowledged the article, the pictures that BNL provided for us, and thanked BREAs Mona Rowe for working with Jason and Douglas.

The next CAC Meeting is scheduled for April 13th and will still be on Zoom. They are hoping to have a hybrid CAC Meeting for May and provide a BNL Site tour for CAC members prior to that meeting.

5. Newsletter. Mona Rowe. Mona is planning a newsletter article on the use of social media. She asked members who are users to contact her so she could recount some of their experiences. Rick Backofen, Ronnie Evans and Gwyn Williams responded.

6. Treasurer's Report. Les Fishbone. Les is away, had not received the February credit union statement, so could not give a report this month. Steve Shapiro noted that \$10K donation to the nonprofit Tesla Science Center at Wardencllyffe (Mark Alessi, director) has been approved, but not yet disbursed. We are waiting to assure the viability of the project. The intention is that the funds will be commemorated with a plaque noting the BREA/BNL contribution.

Action: Steve Shapiro will update the members and Les Fishbone on this subject as needed.

7. Books for Africa. Les Fishbone. Some contributed physics books were carried by travelers to South Africa without cost to BREA. Chemistry books should not be donated to Ketevi. Concerning another donation, Les said that he issued two checks totaling \$230.30 (of \$600 approved) for Adopt a Platoon shipping costs.

8. Future speakers for BREA Zoom meetings. Arnie has a couple of possible speakers he will contact. Steve Shapiro mentioned Dr. Hailu on the Worker Health Protection program (WHPP).

Another member suggested Dr. D. Schlyer, who is associated with medical research at BLIP (linear isotope production).

Action: Steve Shapiro will provide Arnie M. Hailu's contact info.

9. COVID status at BNL. *BNL is now open to retirees (those having retiree badges)* without restriction. Gym and pool are open, with some popular times restricted to employees. Check the BERA website. Arnie will investigate the possibility of having ZOOM meetings on site. An issue might be the large number of support personnel working remotely, and not available regularly on site.

Action: Arnie will consult with Christine Carter and provide an update.

10. New Business.

a) Retiree health benefits. HR needs to emphasize to new and potential retirees that any loss of BNL health benefits for enrolling incorrectly is **permanent (lifetime)**. It was suggested that a small BREA contingent speak to HR about clarifying delivery of

health benefits to retirees. Arnie and Dave have had some discussions about benefits delivery from SelectQuote, but with little response from HR. G. Williams, retired from Jefferson Lab, cited his similar unsatisfactory experience with SelectQuote in his retirement health plan. He has changed Part B supplement insurer to reduce costs. Note that Part B supplements are standardized. All insurers offering a letter denoted (ex. Plan F or G) have identical coverage, but differing rates. Arnie noted that in most states (**not** NY) you may be rated for health or age and may not be offered the lowest rate when changing plans. NY guarantees each company's basic rate whether you are enrolling initially or are changing plans. A member asked whether a retiree could change plans without contacting SelectQuote. **Arnie reminded us that we cannot enroll directly with insurers or their agents (other than SQS).** Although we can contact insurance companies directly using the contact info at the Medicare website or in the annual booklet, he strongly recommends avoiding insurance agents other than SelectQuote Senior to obtain detailed information (especially needed to evaluate Part C). And again, do NOT enroll with them. We always should contact SelectQuote to enroll when changing B supplement, Part C Advantage, or switching between B suppl. And C. Part D - Pharmacy plans – are the only plans that need not be purchased through SelectQuote. A member discussed how Navia provides her supplement. Arnie said the benefit is \$180 monthly. Some use it to cover all or part of premiums. In cases where SelectQuote premiums are less than the benefit, the retiree can submit copays, deductibles, and pharmacy costs.

Action: Arnie will organize a group, possibly including D. Cox and G. Cisco, get talking points, and contact HR to discuss this on-going issue.

b) Les Fishbone suggested we have a more complete succession plan. Steve Shapiro suggested we are in a reasonably good position

Action: Arnie will try to identify areas that could be improved.

c) Gwyn Williams mentioned that Jefferson Lab is more open to retiree participation in work and provides continuing official email services. Mona Rowe observed that the stricter environment is likely not due to DOE rules but is a result of BNL security and legal opinions. She believes that BNL is not open to any suggestion to ease restrictions. Mona noted that LLNL took away retiree badges so they could not access that site at all.

Motion to adjourn by Siskind; seconded G. Williams; approved without dissent.

The next BREA meeting will be held April 11th at 1:00 pm via Zoom.