

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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ALL EMPLOYEES MEETING

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TUESDAY,
OCTOBER 11, 2022

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The Commission met in the Commissioners' Conference Room, First Floor, One White Flint North, Rockville, Maryland, at 10:00 a.m., Christopher T. Hanson, Chair, presiding.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

CHRISTOPHER T. HANSON, Chair

JEFF BARAN, Commissioner

DAVID A. WRIGHT, Commissioner

ANNIE CAPUTO, Commissioner

BRADLEY R. CROWELL, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT:

BROOKE P. CLARK, Secretary of the Commission

MARIAN ZOBLER, General Counsel

NRC STAFF:

DANIEL H. DORMAN, Executive Director for Operations

MAXWELL C. SMITH, OGC/LRAA/RASFP

RENU SURI, OCFO/DOB/BOB

ALSO PRESENT:

SHERYL SANCHEZ, President, National Treasury Employees Union, Chapter

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

10:02 a.m.

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2
3 MR. DORMAN: Hopefully people online can hear me
4 better now. Like prior years, the Chair and each commissioner will begin the
5 meeting with individual remarks, and the remainder of the meeting is reserved
6 for questions and answers, and we'll try to get to as many questions as
7 possible in the allotted time. We've already received questions through the
8 Power app, and the commissioners will be responding to some of the
9 questions that received the most likes from the staff.

10 For those of you joining us online, you can submit questions
11 using the Q&A feature in Teams, and for those of you here in the Commission
12 hearing room, please use one of the two microphones when asking questions.
13 Additionally, we've provided note cards if you would prefer to write in your
14 questions, and you can pass your written questions to one of our volunteer
15 staff, and your questions will be read by one of our readers.

16 Also, in order to minimize distractions, I'd ask that you
17 please power off or silence your cell phones and smart watches. Now, I want
18 to take a moment to thank everyone who helped prepare for this meeting. I'd
19 like to start by recognizing and thanking Renu Suri and Max Smith, two of our
20 NRC toastmasters, for volunteering to serve as question readers today. I'd
21 also like to thank Sharon Bennett, and Stacy Schumann, who are here in the
22 Commission hearing room ready to collect your questions on the note cards.
23 And thanks also to Helen Chang, Kate Raynor, Jacki Storch, and Sophie
24 Holiday, who are helping to ensure the meeting goes smoothly here in the

1 room and online via Teams.

2 And thanks to everyone in the Office of Administration, the
3 Office of the Chief Information Officer, the Office of the Executive Director for
4 Operations, and the Office of the Secretary for all of the support they have
5 provided over the last few weeks as we have been preparing for this meeting.
6 Finally, I'd like to recognize Ms. Sheryl Sanchez, the President of NRC's
7 chapter of National Treasury Employees Union. NTEU will have an
8 opportunity to address us near the conclusion of the meeting. It's now my
9 privilege to turn the meeting over to Chair Hanson.

10 CHAIR HANSON: Thanks Dan, appreciate that. First of
11 all, welcome everyone, it's great to have so many people in the room this
12 morning. It's great to almost be back to normal. Maybe someday we'll be
13 back at the Marriott depending on interest, but I'm glad a lot of folks could join
14 us online as well. I'd like to echo Dan's warm welcome to Commissioner
15 Caputo and Commissioner Crowell.

16 This is Commissioner Crowell's first public meeting, so we
17 just thought we'd throw him into the deep end here. But it is a good
18 opportunity I think to get acquainted with the various activities going on here
19 at the NRC. I know we have a significant number of submitted questions
20 regarding re-entry and telework, and I'd just like to address that head on, and
21 kind of dive right in, and say a few words on the topic to start our conversation
22 this morning.

23 Last fall and into the spring, senior leaders with good
24 intentions sought to introduce some certainty by creating a re-entry plan based

1 on data and input gathered through interagency working groups. Many of the
2 contingencies that we planned for never came to pass, and many of the
3 scenarios we expected gave way to the unexpected. And as you've heard
4 from Dan, we all recognize the need to pause and re-evaluate. And we
5 recognize the need to listen to you, to hear about your experiences, and to
6 learn from them. Thank you again for speaking up, and being involved in the
7 efforts underway to gather ideas and feedback.

8 Last week we all received the action plan, and
9 communications report from the Hybrid Environment Assessment Review
10 Team, or HEART. Thank you first to those directly involved in the effort:
11 Aaron McCraw, Sean Peters, Stephanie Morrow, Christine Steger, Mat
12 Burton, Dan Frumkin, Patrice Reid, Allison Robinson, Fanta Sacko, Neil
13 Sheehan, and Alexis Willus. I'd also like to thank those of you who
14 contributed input and considerations to the team to help them put their report
15 together. Senior leaders are looking at the report closely and are anxiously
16 awaiting the upcoming report of the Telework Policy Implementation Working
17 Group.

18 I can tell you I have read at least the core of the HEART
19 team, and appreciated their product very, very much. And as we digest that,
20 I ask now for your continued patience, even as I understand that you all have
21 been waiting. The questions being raised about schedule and telework
22 flexibility don't necessarily have easy answers. And any solution must
23 balance organizational needs with those of individual employees doing their
24 best in a difficult time.

1 In order to honestly re-evaluate our policies, we need this
2 time to gather input and ideas, dig into the data to really think about our next
3 steps. Please continue to participate where you can and be assured that your
4 feedback matters. These efforts are critical to the future of the agency, and
5 it's important to me that each and every one of you is a part of that. We must
6 move forward together.

7 I know this has been a journey. The pandemic has
8 changed things, plain and simple. We aren't living in the same world we were
9 three years ago and yet, our mission hasn't changed. In fact, it is more vital
10 than ever to public health, safety, environmental protection, and national
11 security. We have more reactors running longer, we have more facilities in
12 decommissioning, more new reactor designs and technologies under review,
13 more Agreement States, more technologies, and uses for radiological
14 materials, and more demands for the NRC's help and counsel around the
15 world in both developed and developing countries.

16 It is your commitment to the mission that I was most
17 impressed with in starting my term here at the NRC. And it is this
18 commitment that makes the NRC a world leader in nuclear regulation, and
19 gives us the opportunity to increase nuclear safety and security around the
20 globe. Each of us is part of this call to service, and I look forward to continuing
21 to serve with you as we work together towards our common future. Thank
22 you.

23 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Well, I'll just jump right in.
24 Well, welcome everyone, it's great to be here with my colleagues, all of you

1 here in the room, and everyone on Teams for this hybrid meeting. I
2 appreciate you taking the time to join us. This annual meeting is a good
3 opportunity for you to share your thoughts about how things are going at the
4 agency and ask questions you have on your mind. I want to start also by
5 welcoming Commissioner Caputo and Commissioner Crowell, it's terrific to
6 have you join us on the Commission, and to have a full complement of five
7 commissioners. We have a lot of important issues to tackle, and I look
8 forward to benefitting from your experience, perspectives, and ideas.

9 As an agency, and as individuals, we've all experienced an
10 incredible amount of change over the past few years. We're still developing
11 new routines for our work, and in our daily lives, and I know that it can be hard.
12 Some people are glad to be back in the office getting some separation
13 between work and home, and interacting with colleagues, and friends in
14 person. Others are less enthusiastic about coming in and worry about
15 balancing new life challenges, with commuting again and being in the office.

16 Either way, major adjustments can be frustrating or
17 stressful. Of course NRC is not alone in trying to work through this, like other
18 federal agencies and pretty much every federal organization or company.
19 NRC is trying to figure out how to accommodate the growing interest in a lot
20 of telework while maintaining a strong organizational culture.

21 As we bring new employees into the agency, we need to be
22 able to mentor them, to pass on knowledge, and to instill a sense of
23 community. It's not easy to find the right balance. We also want to make
24 sure that the time folks spend in the office is valuable, productive, and

1 collaborative, so I appreciate the work and recommendations of the HEART
2 team.

3 Most of us are doing hybrid work, and we all want that to be
4 both effective and satisfying. As we work together to get our arms around
5 this new reality, I want to thank you for participating in the surveys, the focus
6 groups, and the other ways that the senior leadership team has reached out
7 to hear your thoughts, experiences, concerns, and suggestions.

8 As we continue to navigate where we are going, I've been
9 reflecting on where we've been, and the major changes I've seen during my
10 time on the commission. A lot has changed since 2014. We've seen major
11 shifts in work load, budget, staffing, hiring, and overall outlook for the future.
12 When I arrived on the commission, these factors were all on a downward
13 slope. Our work load was shrinking, our staff, and budget were shrinking, we
14 had project AIM, narrowly avoided a reduction in force, and essentially had a
15 hiring freeze. Plants were shutting down, and there was little talk of new
16 construction beyond Vogtle. There was some interest in small modular
17 reactors, but almost no discussion of advanced non-light water reactors.

18 Today we're in a very different situation. The Inflation
19 Reduction Act included a clean electricity production tax credit for nuclear and
20 funding for domestic HALEU supply chain. Few, if any nuclear power plants
21 are expected to close any time soon. With more potential applications for
22 advanced reactors, small modular reactors, subsequent license renewal, new
23 fuel designs, power uprates, and risk informed programs expected, NRC's
24 overall work load is increasing.

1 We're hiring again, and our budget has stabilized, or even
2 expanded a bit to allow us to do this new work. The outlook has changed,
3 and it's an exciting time to be doing important work. So, as we work through
4 the challenges and frustrations of a hybrid work environment together, I think
5 it's important to recognize that a lot of positive things are happening. I'm
6 optimistic about what lies ahead for the agency, and for all of us. Thank you
7 for all the work you do, and I look forward to your questions and a good
8 discussion.

9 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Good morning and happy
10 Tuesday everyone. Thank you, Dan, for your remarks, and opening the
11 meeting, and thank you Mr. Chair, and Commissioner Baran for your remarks
12 as well. First, it's great to be here this morning. I think for every one of these
13 all employee meetings I've attended, I've had a different number. I started
14 out as commissioner number five, then I moved up one when Commissioner
15 Hanson and I were confirmed together. Then I dropped to last again when
16 he was made Chair. Now, with the addition of two new commissioners, I'm
17 number three. But what that means is that we've got a full complement of
18 five now, so I'd like to publicly welcome back Commissioner Caputo and also
19 welcome Commissioner Crowell to the commission, and to your first all hands
20 meeting.

21 As always, to each of you, I look forward to continuing to
22 work with each of you. I value and appreciate the discussions, along with the
23 perspectives and insights that each of you bring. And my team, on behalf of
24 my team, I want to let you know that they appreciate the relationships that they

1 have with each of the members of the team in your office, so thank you.

2 Now, a huge welcome to everybody here in the room, and
3 to those of you joining us via Live Stream. I believe this might be our third all
4 employees meeting where we've kind of had a handful of people in the room
5 along with the commissioners, and everybody else attending virtually. And
6 it's nice to be in person with my colleagues, but I have to say it'd be much
7 better if we were all here together. Because I for one, do miss seeing each
8 of you in person.

9 To each of the regions online this morning, I'm grateful for
10 having had the opportunity to get out to see many of you in the last month, or
11 so. Most recently last week I was in Region I to see the new office space,
12 and it was very impressive, and a really good meeting too. My favorite part
13 of every visit though is actually meeting with, listening to, talking with our
14 people. It's where we get to share with each other, and I get to hear people's
15 candid feedback directly on how we, both the commission and the agency are
16 doing, and how we can better support you, and how you can better support us
17 in meeting our mission. Whether it's feedback on process improvements, or
18 just hey, can you just hurry up, and get this paper done, so we can get on with
19 it? Your feedback does help inform me and I appreciate it. During my
20 travels though, I will tell you that I discovered that people in various parts of
21 this agency who feel invisible at times, or feel underappreciated for what they
22 do or for what they contribute to the agency. I can certainly understand this,
23 especially during the government wide shutdown from COVID.

24 But I can tell you every one of you are important, and

1 necessary to the successful operation of the whole body, which is the NRC.
2 For example, our regional resource management staff, technical staff, and
3 inspectors, you carried the torch through all that's going on. And the
4 residents, the operating licensing staff, and examiners, through all that
5 happened over the past two plus years, you really didn't miss a beat.

6 To my administrative team, and to admins across the
7 agency and facility personnel across the agency thank you, because you
8 make the world go round. If it weren't for my admin, I can tell you, I wouldn't
9 be anywhere I was supposed to be. And if I knew where I was supposed to
10 be, I'd be late. So, thank you so much for having my back.

11 Now, it hasn't been easy for some of you, or us through the
12 transition with all that's gone on in life, both professionally, and personally
13 these past couple of years. Perhaps still there's uncertainty and anxiety for
14 some, maybe even some frustration. It can be a challenging finding the right
15 balance, and meeting the needs and wants of the agency, and staff. But one
16 thing is certain, and that's meeting our critical safety mission, and upholding
17 the NRC's principles of good regulation. And while not everything has gone
18 perfectly since the mandatory shutdown on March 13th of 2018, nothing rarely
19 does.

20 And I'm still humbled by the NRC staff's willingness and
21 ability to adapt, to find innovative ways to meet our safety mission as well.
22 The NRC has achieved some big things since we last met. The first ever
23 103G finding for Vogtle Unit Three. The first ever small modular nuclear
24 reactor design certification for NuScale. And you continue to work on Part

1 53. Not to mention all the ongoing work, and innovations with operating
2 reactors and materials, and the whole side of the agency that supports them
3 as well. All of this under less than ideal circumstances, you've been creative,
4 and you've been innovative where and when it was called for. And your
5 dedication to our mission is obvious, as it is with the commissioners, so thank
6 you.

7 I know there are many questions to get to this morning, so
8 I'm just going to not take up any more time. I just want to end this by letting
9 you know how much I appreciate you, and I appreciate the fact that you've
10 taken time to be here in person, or to be here online with us today, because
11 there is a lot going on for everyone. And for me, know I'm just a phone call
12 or an email away, as is my staff, and we look forward to speaking with you
13 whenever you call and trying to help you. So, again, thank you for everything
14 you do for the agency and the American people.

15 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Thanks and good morning.
16 Thank you very much my colleagues, for such a warm welcome, glad to be
17 back. Also want to give a special thank you to my team, most of whom have
18 rejoined my office after a long hiatus, and I am thoroughly appreciative to that,
19 plus one new person who has also joined us. So, I am thrilled to have the team
20 that I have, and I feel very blessed.

21 I also am very thankful for those of you who I've already met
22 with since coming back to the agency, helping me get my sea legs again.
23 There's a lot that's changed, some things that haven't changed, but I really
24 appreciate all the help I've had from the staff on bringing me up to speed, and

1 getting me reoriented as I return to the commission. I also want to add my
2 thanks to what my colleagues have said about just all of the work that goes
3 into today's meeting. It's a lot of planning to bring us all together, and sort of
4 have this big group conversation each year, and I do appreciate all the work
5 that goes into it.

6 This meeting is particularly important to me, because it is a
7 chance to have that group conversation, and to hear folk's concerns, and
8 ideas, and what's on your mind. And it's important for us, I think, to hear the
9 questions, and address the questions, and to have this conversation. So, I
10 look forward to hearing your thoughts today. Since I returned to the agency
11 a couple months ago, I spent some time walking the floors at headquarters,
12 and I have made my first foray out to visit some plants. And part of one of
13 the most important benefits I think of these forays, is that I've had the chance
14 to have conversations with staff. Whether it's residents, or whether it's
15 employees I've run into in the buildings, I've had some wonderful insights
16 through these conversations.

17 I think I want to give a particular shout out to a delightful
18 woman I talked to, who is working on the sixth floor, and shared her
19 experiences about working in that newly remodeled floor. Those are insights
20 I think that is very difficult for our commissioners to really get a feel for without
21 having that personal interaction. And I was very grateful that she was
22 gracious with her time and spent the time to give me those insights. So, I
23 look forward to many more conversations like that going forward in this term.
24 So, we often talk about how our employees are the agency's greatest asset.

1 Particularly just the wealth of expertise that we're blessed with and the
2 dedication. We are all one team, we're dedicated to a very important safety
3 and security mission, and I want to do my part to enable everyone to be able
4 to do their job well, but also to find that work/life balance that's so important to
5 all of us. And with that, I will turn it over to Commissioner Crowell.

6 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: Thank you, Commissioner
7 Caputo. Good morning everyone. As you know this is my first all employee
8 meeting, and indeed it's my first full and public commission meeting. So, I
9 appreciate you all being here, and I am thankful to be here as well. As a new
10 commissioner, I don't think the timing of this meeting could be any better.
11 Hearing from and meeting the NRC staff, who are the heart and soul of the
12 agency, is an invaluable opportunity for me as I begin my tenure as
13 commissioner.

14 I'd like to start by thanking my commission colleagues, Chair
15 Hanson, Commissioners Baran, Wright, and Caputo. Commissioner Wright,
16 I gladly take your position as last now, as we're a full complement of five, if
17 that makes you feel better. And quite frankly I'm happy to stay here for a little
18 while, as long as it keeps the five of us together, because I think we're going
19 to do great things as a commission.

20 They have been great in welcoming me to the agency and
21 assisting me on my first days of the job. Today is day 47 for me, including
22 weekends. I've learned something new each and every day, and today will
23 be no exception. I look forward to the questions, and the conversation. I
24 want to thank Dan and his staff for their ongoing help in getting my commission

1 office up and running.

2 A special shout out to Brooke Clark at SECY for everything
3 that they've done from start to finish for me, once Commissioner Caputo, and
4 I got across the finish line. It's always a bonding experience to go through
5 the nomination process with someone, so that was an enjoyable, and as much
6 as you can say that it's an enjoyable experience, it was at least an expeditious
7 experience, and we made it across the finish line.

8 I think many of you can appreciate that it's been an
9 adjustment moving my family back to the east coast from Nevada, and that
10 adjustment is still ongoing. The two highest hurdles in that process have
11 been keeping up with the work flow here, which is intense, but is a reflection
12 of how much work is going on and continues to get done, and doing so while
13 trying to hire staff.

14 And then the second highest hurdle has been finding
15 daycare for my 18 month old daughter. And those two things go hand in
16 hand, because with one I can't do the other, and vice versa. I very much look
17 forward to meeting as many of you as possible today, and having discussion
18 and working together in the time ahead. For those of you in attendance both
19 here and remotely, thank you for being here.

20 I look forward to hearing from you all not just today, but in
21 days, months, and years ahead, my door is always open. I have the mostly
22 good fortune of joining the agency at an exciting, dynamic time. It seems like
23 every part of the agency is faced with new and interesting applications of
24 nuclear energy and technology. This includes not only new reactor designs,

1 including fusion reactors, but also advanced nuclear fuels, possible new uses
2 of nuclear energy, and even new developments in nuclear medicine.
3 Importantly, nuclear energy is likely to play an important role in the country's
4 approach to combating climate change. But many challenges exist as well,
5 including the rapidly evolving geopolitical dynamics of nuclear energy, and of
6 course the seemingly ever present challenge of safely managing spent fuel,
7 and nuclear waste. I'm excited to be a part of the NRC's contribution to these
8 important efforts.

9 So, as we take our next steps together, I'd like to share a
10 few thoughts on who I am if that's okay, what's important to me, and what
11 guides my decisions. As I mentioned, I'm a native Nevadan, but I spent many
12 years in Washington D.C., working on Capitol Hill, as well as in the Executive
13 Branch as Assistant Secretary of the Department of Energy.

14 During my time at DOE, I had the good fortune of working
15 with Chair Hanson, and it's good to be back here working with him again.
16 Most recently, I had moved back to Nevada to run the Department of
17 Conservation and Natural Resources. That was an invaluable experience for
18 me in a variety of ways, but to see how the different levels of government work,
19 we often lose sight of the challenges that local and state government has in
20 managing their programs and responsibilities. And so, I bring that
21 perspective to the commission, and to the agency as we do our work going
22 forward. Because without our state, and local partners, we are not going to
23 be successful in our jobs either.

24 My career has almost been exclusively in the public sector.

1 I'm a big believer in public service, and the importance of maintaining the
2 public trust and serving the American public, who obviously pays our salaries,
3 and looks to us to do our jobs holistically and responsibly. For each agency
4 I've been at, whether at the state or federal level, my goal has always been to
5 leave it better than I've found it. Sometimes I've found when I arrived things
6 have been in not great shape, and bringing them back into a better place. I
7 think the NRC right now has always been a great place to work, has a great
8 reputation where you need time in trying to maintain that with some challenges
9 that are faced by everyone in the U.S. and around the world. But this is how
10 we approach those challenges, and do so collectively with good
11 communication that will define how we move forward together.

12 So, with that, I'm going to skip over some of my remaining
13 remarks, and just say thank you to all of you being here today. I look forward
14 to the questions, I look forward to learning more from everyone as we engage
15 going forward. At some point in the not too distant future, I look forward to
16 getting out to our regional offices, and our sites, and our agreement states,
17 and meeting as many of you and the people you work with as possible. And
18 I really do appreciate the welcome that I've had from all of you, and look
19 forward to all of those engagements going forward. Mr. Chairman, thank you,
20 I'll turn it back to you.

21 CHAIR HANSON: Thank you, Commissioner Crowell.
22 Thank you everybody. I believe we'll start with our first question, so I'll hand
23 it over to Renu, and Max.

24 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Chair, and good morning. Many

1 employees have expressed discontent with going into the office to perform
2 work that can be done at home, like Teams calls, or individual desk work.
3 This work also requires an office, and cubicle and some level of privacy. Do
4 you believe it's beneficial for these employees to continue to come into the
5 office for this work? Do you think the purpose for coming into the office
6 should outweigh the arbitrary two day in office requirement? Essentially
7 should the agency reduce telework and reduce in office times to only those
8 activities that need to be done in person?

9 CHAIR HANSON: Thank you. Well, given that I kind of
10 jumped the gun in my opening remarks, I'm going to hand this off to Dan to
11 start, and then give my colleagues an opportunity to respond.

12 MR. DORMAN: Great, thanks, Chair. Well, first I want to
13 take us back two, and a half years, and say I'm very proud of how the staff
14 and several of you have touched on this, how the staff quickly pivoted when
15 we went to a virtual environment during the pandemic. That experience
16 transformed us in significant ways over a very short period of time, and our
17 work environment has changed as a result.

18 It's clear that we can accomplish a lot more of our work
19 virtually than what we were doing before the pandemic, and that skill set will
20 help us to be adaptable in the future. Like other federal agencies, and really
21 organizations across the world, we're all walking through this together as a
22 number of you have touched on, as I talked to industry leaders in drop-in
23 meetings. And as we heard from our regulatory counterparts just two weeks
24 ago at the general conference in Vienna, we're all walking through this, and

1 trying different things, and seeing what works and what doesn't.

2 We knew coming into this that there was a high likelihood
3 that we weren't going to get it exactly right, right out of the chute. And so, we
4 established the HEART team that the Chairman referred to, that issued their
5 report at the end of September, on schedule. We shared that with the whole
6 staff, I encourage everybody to take a look at that if you haven't. I want to
7 share my thanks to the Chair, thanks to all of you who participated and
8 provided your insights to the HEART team. They also did a tremendous
9 amount of external bench marking. So, there's a lot of insight in their report
10 about ways that we can be more effective in a hybrid environment. And I
11 think a lot of that is built on best practices of what the team has done during
12 the pandemic and since the pandemic. And so I think there's a lot that can be
13 done at the local level.

14 The project teams and work units to take some insights
15 already from the HEART. We will also be bringing the senior leadership team
16 together in early November to explore what are some things that we can do,
17 initial return, what needs further development, which office will have the lead
18 on various things in a timeline, for when we can get things done.

19 There's also -- the Chairman also mentioned the telework
20 policy and implementation working group which I chartered in July, partly from
21 the insights from HEART. I had asked the HEART to focus on
22 implementation issues and bring any policy issues that came up. And it was
23 clear early on that there were going to be policy improvements that we could
24 make. So, we put that telework policy working group together, and gave them

1 a pretty short timeline, to the end of October, to bring us recommendations.
2 And I just want to note I think just in the last couple of weeks they've drafted
3 some recommendations, and they've got some thoughts, but they also went
4 out and surveyed the staff. They had the listening sessions in August, where
5 it was very important that they heard the insight directly from the staff that
6 reinforced what they had heard from the HEART team. And then now they've
7 gone out with some thoughts in mind and had an additional survey, and I look
8 forward to getting their recommendations on the telework policy later this
9 month. And just as we did with the HEART team, we'll put that out to the staff
10 promptly.

11 And then the next steps, one of the things that the telework
12 policy working group heard was staff wants to have an opportunity to weigh in
13 on their recommendations. So, we're going to get that out as soon as they
14 issue it to me, we'll get their report out so staff can digest what their
15 recommendations are, and then on November 9th would be my normal
16 periodic Town Hall with the staff. And it's going to be just on the
17 recommendations. We're going to have HEART team come in and give a
18 brief overview of their report, we're going to have the working group come in
19 give a brief overview of their report. And then we're going to have a
20 conversation with the staff, and then were going to engage with NTEU, and
21 we'll figure out together the changes that we'll make.

22 So, I think that's briefly where we are. I think on some
23 specific elements of the question, it's clear from the feedback from the staff,
24 both through HEART and the telework policy working group that flexibility and

1 presence with a purpose are the key elements that we need to make sure
2 we're addressing, both in elements of policy and how we're implementing it.

3 CHAIR HANSON: Thanks, Dan, anyone else?

4 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Well, I don't have too much to
5 add to that, because that was pretty comprehensive. But I just wanted to say
6 when I read the HEART report, just in talking with folks around the agency, I
7 really understand this frustration that a lot are feeling, where in a hybrid
8 environment you have your days in the office, you come in, you're sitting in
9 your cubicle, there might not be anyone around you, it's kind of like a ghost
10 town in some cases. And you spend the whole day doing exactly what you
11 would have done at home, which is do one Teams meeting after another, or
12 kind of head down work. And I can understand why that would be frustrating,
13 I think everyone understands that we've got to figure that out, so that if we're
14 going to be in a hybrid environment, and we will be, that that's productive,
15 useful time. I mean from an organizational point of view, and I think just all
16 of us wanting to have a good, productive day, we're going to want those days
17 in the office to be interactive and collaborative, and do all the things that will
18 be good for our work, but also for the organizational health, and I think it's
19 clear that in these early stages of trying to figure this out, we have not really
20 hit that mark yet. And so I appreciate all the efforts that are going into trying
21 to hit that mark. And I appreciate all of you for being so forthcoming with your
22 experiences, and what's working, and what's not working, so thanks, and
23 thanks, Dan.

24 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: That was comprehensive,

1 thank you for that, Dan, and Commissioner Baran as well. You know, just
2 like in a resident program, and how important it is to have boots on the ground,
3 we all recognize that. I think nothing beats in-person communication in
4 mentoring. I mean that's just intuitive right there. But having said that, there
5 are adjustments we may have to make. But I'm of the opinion I don't think
6 one size is going to fit all in this anyway. So, whatever decision we make, or
7 however we decide to go as an agency, I think it's critical that it's mission first.
8 And then whatever decision is being made for whatever flexibilities, or
9 whatever we get as individuals who work at the agency, it should be about
10 what the benefit is that the NRC is getting out of it. I think we need to factor
11 that in as well.

12 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Well, let me just start by
13 saying thanks, Dan, for that comprehensive answer. I also agree with much
14 of what Chair Hanson said in his opening remarks, and I also agree with David
15 about mission first. But this is a huge personal issue also for all the
16 employees. And so I've made the time to tune into a listening session, the
17 first of the four, and it was very helpful to me to get that window into what
18 people are thinking.

19 I skimmed the chat for the fourth one as well, and I think one
20 of the things that really struck me was just the uncertainty that people are
21 facing. Because I think there are a lot of comments about well, I could accept
22 a promotion, but I have no idea if my current telework agreement will be
23 afforded with that position, but I have to make the decision about the
24 promotion first, without knowing. And these are the sorts of uncertainties that

1 really affect people's lives, and how they manage their families, and support
2 their families. And I'm really -- I'm touched by that. But it's also very
3 reminiscent, I think I might have mentioned this once before. I was working
4 for a company that went through an extremely large merger. And that puts a
5 lot of employee's work and employment in a measure of uncertainty. And
6 one of the things that made that easier is just the amount of communication
7 early and often. You never got the full picture right off the bat, but you could
8 be fairly confident, and have a measure of trust that you were getting the
9 information that was available as soon as it was available. So, you at least
10 had a window into the decision-making and how things were going to play out
11 over time.

12 And so, I feel like with re-entry having been almost a year
13 ago, that's a long time to live with the uncertainty. So, I hope going forward,
14 this is a complicated decision, and we need it to be data driven, we need it to
15 be purpose driven and flexible, and help people balance work and life. But
16 it's also going to be extremely complicated, and it's important to get it right for
17 the long-term health of the agency. So, I do hope that we will be in a position
18 soon to make whatever decisions need to be made to give people certainty so
19 that they can at least plan. Whether it's plan how they want to chart their
20 careers, plan how they want to support their families, but at least give some
21 sort of certainty to allow them that ability to make their own decisions. So,
22 thank you, I'll turn it over to Brad.

23 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: I'm going to pile on here
24 only because this is such an important topic, and I think it's important for all

1 the commissioners to speak on it. I'm going to say it again, my fellow
2 commissioners have said it, but there's no one size fits all, and that's got to be
3 remembered. I was working for a state governor during the height of COVID
4 and there was -- responding to COVID didn't really have a political ideology.
5 There was no right answer, everyone was trying to figure out the best thing in
6 real time, and it's hard to assign blame to those things, because we were
7 learning as we went. But looking at what worked and what didn't work, and
8 then applying them now is what's important. The challenges of COVID
9 provide an opportunity now to have a different, more dynamic work
10 environment that can -- where we can support our mission and our employees
11 at the same time in a way we haven't done before.

12 So, I really think we need to look at it as an opportunity, and
13 one that's going to be dynamic and iterative and evolving. Because it's going
14 to be iterative, we need to communicate. That's the most important, basic
15 thing we can do, is communicate as we figure out how we're going to move
16 forward. We may not get it right 100 percent out of the box, and we're going
17 to have to make adjustments. But if -- for those who love what they do, there
18 will be part of this conversation in a way that helps us find the right answers,
19 and that evolution will bear fruit over time. So, I appreciate everyone's
20 patience, input, and Dan, I appreciate the efforts from you and your staff in
21 communicating what we're doing, when and why, and why we may change
22 things going forward.

23 It's critically important that we're all communicating, so that
24 we can figure out how to do this, and every federal agency is dealing with this.

1 So, I hope that we can look at our fellow federal agencies, and steal or
2 replicate best practices, not repeat mistakes that may have been made by
3 others, and really come out to shine like the NRC has over its long existence.

4 CHAIR HANSON: Thank you, Dan, and to my colleagues.
5 I'd like to just pick up on a thread as we kind of wrap up this question. I
6 wanted to express appreciation to the staff for really the high participation
7 rates that we've seen in the listening sessions and the Town Halls. I think the
8 last town hall that Dan, and Cathy, and Darrell did had 15, or 1600 employees.
9 The listening sessions have averaged 4, or 500 people. And I know that
10 there's a lot of frustration out there with our current situation, but I have to say
11 I take a lot of -- I have a lot of gratitude, and I take a lot of comfort in the fact -
12 - in the high level of participation that we've seen. Because that means that
13 even though people are frustrated, and they want things to change, and they
14 want to send messages to the senior leadership, and I want to say along with
15 my colleagues that we are listening, and we are hearing you. It also belies a
16 real commitment there; it says to me that people haven't given up. I would
17 be a lot more -- I'm trying to be -- I think we're all trying to be thoughtful about
18 how to navigate this, but I would be extremely worried if we had a listening
19 session and 50 people showed up. And so again, I want to express my
20 sincere thanks to the staff for the level of engagement that we've had as we
21 try to navigate this. So, I take some comfort from that, honestly. Renu?

22 MS. SURI: The NRC is currently engaged in a significant
23 hiring effort to hire to within one percent of its budgeted resources. My
24 understanding is that this is primarily to address years of under staffing due to

1 declining budgets, as well as recent increases in attrition. The last time the
2 NRC engaged in a hiring effort of this magnitude in the mid-2000s, we ended
3 up significantly overstaffed when new reactor applications didn't materialize.
4 And had to offer early outs, buy outs, and had a potentially RIF, and had nearly
5 a decade without any promotion opportunities. What is the agency doing to
6 ensure that we do not repeat the past should external factors significantly
7 change our needed resources in the future?

8 CHAIR HANSON: Thanks for that question. I have a lot
9 of thoughts about this, but I'm going to try, and keep them focused and concise
10 to let my colleagues have an opportunity to talk. And Dan, and others can
11 correct my math if I get this wrong. When we started the hiring initiative -- let
12 me talk about the hiring side of the equation first. When we started the hiring
13 initiative, we're budgeted in this agency for about 2850, 2860 FTEs. We were
14 down to 2600 because of attrition and other kinds of issues. So, we needed
15 to kind of back fill those in a serious way, and there were strains starting to
16 show in the system, in licensing actions and rule makings and other kinds of
17 things. And so there was a need for kind of a concentrated effort in this
18 direction, so there's that.

19 I share the questioner's concern. I don't want to have -- we
20 went on this roller coaster ten years ago. For my part, I have no interest in
21 doing that again. We're all going to staff up and try to -- I don't want to get
22 back to, necessarily, unless we really need it, and the volume really speaks to
23 that, right? I think one of the key things that's come out of the transformation
24 initiative is this notion about signposts and markers. Well, what are those,

1 how do we know that? The other piece of this is strategic workforce planning.
2 We're not hiring just anybody off the street to do this, we're filling key positions
3 of skills that we really need in order to accomplish our mission, so there are
4 those two things. And that really kind of speaks to the other side of the
5 equation for me, which is this isn't just about hiring, this is also about our
6 transformation initiatives. And I know there's some change fatigue out there,
7 particularly with COVID and the other change initiatives that we've had. But
8 through transformation, and using data better, being data driven, changing the
9 way we work, focusing in, by using the Be Risk framework to focus in on the
10 most safety significant, and security significant issues that we face in
11 rulemakings, in licensing, and other kinds of things.

12 All of these things kind of go together. Hiring isn't a thing in,
13 and of itself. It's part of this broader issue. Attrition in this agency is running
14 six or seven percent a year. That's not out of bounds with other government
15 agencies, but it means we have to hire 150 to 200 people just to stay flat.
16 Okay, well Dan's initiative was -- the initiative that we started was, I think 300
17 people. Okay, well it was regular attrition, and then filling these key positions,
18 right? Double encumbering. I'm seeing Theresa Clark over there, she's
19 been beating the bushes for CHPs, because there's a dearth of them both
20 here at the NRC and out in the industry. For people that we actually need in
21 order to do our work in a timely way, to perform those efficient, transparent,
22 and timely reviews that our licensees, and frankly, the public expects of us.
23 So, with that I'll hand it over.

24 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Well, I agree with everything

1 Chair Hanson said. I don't know that I have too much to add. Just as I think
2 about kind of the ups, and downs we've had over time, it really is, this case,
3 largely about attrition, right? As Chair Hanson said, we have to hire 150, 200
4 people just to stay flat at this point. Which is a lot more hiring than we're used
5 to, right? We all know this, those of us who have been in the agency a little
6 while, we had a period there where we were doing very, very little hiring,
7 almost none. And so 200 seems like a lot, and it is a lot, and I applaud the
8 staff for really ramping up that ability again to hire and bring people into the
9 agency.

10 When I look at this last fiscal year, we bring in a couple
11 hundred people, that's not some kind of huge growth, that's just what we
12 needed to do to make up for the folks who were leaving, whether they were
13 retiring, or going somewhere else. So, I think it's been a very measured
14 approach, very thoughtful, and it's getting us back in the mode of being able
15 to do the hiring we're going to need to do just to kind of maintain our size over
16 time. So, I'm optimistic about it, and I think that people have the right focus
17 on it. Thanks.

18 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: So, to agree with the
19 Chairman here, I'm not interested in repeating the past. There was a reason
20 for doing what happened years ago, that reason did not actually come to be,
21 and we've still been dealing with that. I do think that the whole plan going
22 forward has actually started pre-COVID, we started identifying we were going
23 to have needs, and it just has made itself a little bit more known as we came
24 out of COVID. And people who have stayed longer than probably they had

1 intended on staying, because it was a pretty good gig during COVID, they just
2 decided now is the time to maybe move on, and I respect them for that, I think
3 that's probably a good decision on their part.

4 You've got three options you can look at here. You can stay
5 status quo, which that's not going to work. You can go find it outside the
6 agency, and that's only going to work for limited things. But we're seeing that
7 as people come, and look at us too for the needs that they have. And then
8 the third thing that you can look at is to be proactive about it, and to quote
9 someone here in this agency, to go build it. And if you do that, as we're trying
10 to do with our strategic workforce plan, I think that when we're identifying what
11 our needs are, we're able to, even through attrition, do we need a 13 or 14 to
12 do this, or can we get a 10 or a 9 in here, and train them up? And I think that
13 we've expanded our -- I guess our field of view, and I think we need to give it
14 a chance to work. I think that's the way to go, and I commend the staff on
15 their efforts on this so far.

16 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Thanks. I want to start by
17 saying I think the concern is really valid, that this person's expressing. I also
18 agree with what Chair Hanson said, and what Commissioner Wright said
19 about mission first. But attrition and retirement is something that has been
20 playing out for quite a while. We've known that we have been blessed with
21 significant expertise, a significant number of our people are very advanced in
22 their careers. And so, as much as we'd like to keep everyone, sooner or later
23 people will move into a well-earned retirement. And so we've been preparing
24 for this for a while, but here it is, I feel like we're in it now. So, obviously there

1 needs to be a fair amount of hiring to manage that attrition. I also think, one
2 of the things that I try to focus on in attrition is to look at who's leaving.
3 Because if it is our experienced people heading into retirement, that's natural,
4 and to be expected. If we are losing mid-level managers, I think that's a big
5 concern for me. Because these are the people who need to be advancing in
6 their careers into the shoes of those headed into retirement. And if there are
7 not enough advancement opportunities for these folks, or other agencies or
8 industry are able to offer more compelling opportunity, that's something that
9 we need to be looking at closely.

10 But I also think we need to now be looking at retention for
11 the people that we've hired early in their careers. We've started with several
12 -- we've got several NRAN classes now, and are these to folks that have gone
13 through training choosing to stay with us? Are they finding rewarding
14 opportunities and really committing to their career now that they've had a taste
15 of the agency for a few years?

16 And so, I think looking at all of these numbers and dynamics
17 will do a lot to sort of inform our hiring efforts. But I do think that we need to
18 be focusing on staffing to ensure that we are mission first, and focused on the
19 most safety significant and security significant work as Chair Hanson said.
20 And when I look at that, when I look over the last five to six years, our workload
21 in terms of oversight and licensing work, which is our core mission work, it's
22 down over 40 percent. So, that I think gives us another challenge to manage.
23 So, the existing workload has decreased, and we are seeing some advanced
24 reactor work, and the prospect of potentially significant advanced reactor

1 work, but what we've seen so far are design reviews with vendors, a few
2 partnerships between vendors and the government to build three plants.

3 But what I find fascinating is the fact that the bulk of the
4 nuclear industry, and those who are existing owners and operators seem fairly
5 quiet at this point. We have the voice of an industry group expecting to see
6 90 gigawatts built by 2050, which I think is incredibly optimistic given the length
7 of time that it takes to develop these facilities. But what I find fascinating is
8 how quiet the bulk of the nuclear industry seems to be. And I think that's
9 something that should give us a little bit of pause in terms of our planning.
10 So, focusing on having the workforce that we need to do the work that's in
11 front of us, and planning forward to continue managing attrition, whatever age
12 group that it's happening within, I think is incredibly important. But I do think
13 it's tempered by the nature of being careful about how we assess the workload
14 going forward. Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: I'll just add quickly here, as
16 the new guy I don't know exactly where the answers or the rubs may be on
17 this one, but from a high level, what I've noticed in my time thus far is that the
18 current workload, but more specifically, the expected near-term workload, and
19 the expectations that Congress and policy makers have on us seems to be
20 increasing. And that is diametrically opposed with what I seem to see on the
21 staffing side. We're losing more people than we're hiring. I don't know what
22 mix of skills we need to focus on to manage that dynamic, but I see the two
23 things going in opposite directions for now, and that the need for solutions
24 now, if we're going to meet the needs of our agency's missions and the

1 expectations of policy makers.

2 MR. DORMAN: Thank you, appreciate all of those
3 perspectives. I just wanted to add a little bit of data to the stream here. In
4 the renaissance of 2005, the agency grew from 2700 employees to over 4000
5 employees. That was in response to industry expectations that we'd have 30
6 new reactors. Well, we've got the first one made a load of fuel this week.
7 There's nothing in the near term that's going to drive that kind of magnitude of
8 change.

9 We have a number of innovators that are in conversations
10 with our staff about prospective applications. So, I think the signposts and
11 markers initiative through the transformation is a key one. We didn't pay
12 attention to the price of gas, and it burned us. And I think the question when
13 we hear the industry out, and industry spokespeople talking about replacing
14 90 gigawatts of power, is what are the things that we can put our finger on the
15 pulse of to see if any of that's becoming real? But it's going to take time.
16 We're going to get several applications over the next year or two; we'll move
17 those through our process. We'll see how they do on building it, and we'll see
18 how that impacts. So, what I do see that's a little bit different in this one, than
19 what I've seen in the previous one is there's conversations with other than the
20 traditional utility operators. So, we've got Terra Power Plants to build their
21 own reactor. They're working obviously with the local grid in Wyoming, but
22 they're not looking to our traditional nuclear power operators, so we'll see how
23 that works out. Dow announced in August that they plan to have an Xe-100
24 from X-energy operating at one of their chemical processing facilities by the

1 end of the decade. That's not our traditional licensee.

2 So, I think we'll watch the electrical industry, we'll watch
3 what happens with interests in process heat. The other thing that has
4 changed in the last eight months is the focus on energy security. So, climate
5 has been a big part of it but energy security is a new piece, and we had a lot
6 of conversations with our counterparts in various European countries who are
7 interested in the companies that we're having -- the developers that we're
8 having conversations with. And so, those are some of the things that we'll
9 keep an eye on, and watch for what the impact may be to our prospective
10 workload.

11 On the attrition question, 10, 12 years ago we were
12 generally looking at four, to five percent attrition agency wide, which included
13 retirements, and other than retirements. Today, we're hitting four to five
14 percent just on retirements. That's the result of the gradual phase we went
15 through where we weren't hiring as many people early in their careers, and
16 our demographics moved to the right, and we're happy for people who hit that
17 point where they decide it's time for their well-earned retirement, but that's the
18 150 to 200 people that we need to hire every year just tread water. And so,
19 I think I want to take this opportunity to welcome the 200 plus employees who
20 are new at the agency since the last time we had this gathering, which includes
21 the second cohort of the Nuclear Regulator Apprenticeship Network. And
22 note that I expect that that kind of hiring is going to need to happen over the
23 next several years just to maintain. And so we could be here three years
24 from now saying I'd like to welcome the 40 or 50 percent of the agency staff

1 that have been new to the agency since 2021. And so that is a very important
2 component of how we accomplish the mission now and out into the future.
3 Thanks.

4 CHAIR HANSON: Thanks, Dan. Max?

5 MR. SMITH: Thanks, Chair. This question asks I have
6 heard of numerous stories regarding the unreasonable amount of time for the
7 Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, OCHCO, to complete the process
8 to make an offer to hire a candidate. This leaves many branches short-
9 staffed, thus over burdening the current staff to perform the same work that
10 generally takes two NRC staff members. This causes a great deal of stress
11 among the current staff. I've also heard of numerous candidates that were
12 eventually offered a job, but went to another agency because of NRC's
13 telework policy, which required them to move to the D.C. area, and would
14 result in a significantly lower standard of living for their families, due to the high
15 cost of housing and long travel times to perform a job in a cubicle, when they
16 can perform the same job at their home. I know of outstanding NRC staff that
17 have left the agency solely because of the NRC's telework policy. How does
18 the commission become aware of OCHCO's performance regarding the
19 timeliness of hiring, and how does the commission become aware of the
20 reasons NRC staff are leaving the agency, or why new hires are not accepting
21 offers to the NRC?

22 CHAIR HANSON: Thanks, Max, for that question. Let me
23 start off by kind of saying a couple of things. First of all, the pace, and level
24 of hiring that we're doing around here is something we haven't done in a long

1 time. It's a set of muscles we haven't exercised and overall, I've been really
2 impressed with the work that Eric and Mary have done in this area.

3 I know that there are pockets where it's harder to find people
4 and get the kind of skills. There's a lot of competition out there. There are
5 these innovators, as Dan called them, they're all hiring like crazy. There's our
6 existing utilities, the traditional licensees, our folks that they're hiring as well.
7 And while I think all of us here are really enthusiastic about our mission, and
8 really believe in serving the American people, there's a lot to think about. As
9 somebody, if you're out there in the world, and your skills are in high demand.
10 So, I just want to kind of give a shout out to the folks in OCHCO, and recognize
11 how hard they're working, and what they've accomplished. As Dan said,
12 we've got 200ish new people that we've brought onto the agency in the last
13 year. Those are new people outside. I think if you had gone back a year or
14 so, the day that Mary had given me was we had 180 hiring actions, but only
15 100 of those were from outside the agency, right?

16 So, we're doing a lot of work here, and I think it's getting
17 done fairly well. As opposed to -- with regard to the specifics of the question,
18 how do I become aware? I mean I personally, I don't know about my
19 colleagues, I meet with Mary monthly, I meet with Dan weekly, and I'm getting
20 data reports. I mean Dan and I have gone over exit surveys together, and
21 the aggregation of surveys to find out why people are leaving. And to
22 particularly probe into this question about are people really leaving because
23 of telework policies? And so on and so forth. Because I want to be, and I
24 appreciate Commissioner Caputo's emphasis on this, too, be data driven

1 about this. And to really look at the numbers, and look at what people are
2 telling us in these exit surveys, and in the entry surveys, right? What are we
3 learning, who didn't we get to hire, and what's the reason for that? I know
4 OCHCO and other parts of the organization are really trying to maximize the
5 use of flexibilities that we already have. But I think part of what I'm expecting
6 from the telework policy implementation working group will be some of this for
7 existing and for new employees on how we move forward. So, with that I'll
8 pass it off to my colleagues.

9 COMMISSIONER BARAN: I would just add because we
10 haven't been doing this level of hiring for a number of years, we're also I think
11 as an Agency relearning all this and learning, and we're seeing those
12 adaptations as we go. We're understanding, to Commissioner Caputo's
13 point, about people want to have certainty before they say yes to an offer
14 about what their telework status could be. OCHCO is adapting and figuring
15 out how do we post this to make sure that we put ourselves in a position to
16 attract as many applicants as possible, but then also have them come on
17 board if we make an offer. We talked about this at length too at our most
18 recent human capital meeting and it's tough, it's a challenging area. There is
19 no one answer why someone decides to come or not come, but we look at the
20 data and OCHCO looks at the data and we try to adapt so that we get better
21 at this as we go.

22 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I really don't have a whole lot
23 of to add at all here. When we're out and about, we've been traveling around
24 and we recognized when we were just in Romania recently and met with a

1 regulator there, they're competing not very well against the state utility who's
2 able to pay five times what the regulator is paying, and that's hard to compete
3 against. And I'm sure we're going to run up against things like that when
4 we're trying to hire, and if that situation arises I will tip my hat and say
5 congratulations, man, go! But I think we're trying to adapt and I meet with, as
6 the Chairman mentioned, I meet with Dan regularly and meet with Mary
7 regularly. And we know they're aware, we know they're trying to make those
8 changes that are necessary, so that we can compete successfully against
9 other agencies out there.

10 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: I think one of the things that
11 I struggle with the most in this kind of a question is the fact that in trying to
12 create a fair amount of flexibility to try and address a variety of circumstances,
13 that also seems to be leading to a sense of a concern about a lack of fairness,
14 depending on how that flexibility is implemented. So and so got telework but
15 this person didn't, why is that? How is the flexibility ultimately being used?
16 And I think that's a challenge for us to wrestle with in trying to reach a better
17 way of managing a hybrid work environment. And so I'm very sensitive to
18 that and I think that's one of those things that's probably inherent in this
19 question where DOE may offer telework to people when we aren't. But I
20 would also say that our safety and security mission is different than DOE's
21 mission. And there may be positions that we have that are not necessarily
22 amenable to telework.

23 And so in focusing on that, I think it's important to us to
24 develop the workforce that fits our mission and for people who decide that they

1 want to choose a different position with a different agency that has more
2 telework, that may be the right decision for them. And we may be very, very
3 sad to lose them, and we need to look very hard at how to be competitive and
4 try to retain our qualified people. But I think that becomes one of those
5 situations where it's incredibly difficult to balance the flexibility and the fairness
6 and try to provide these rewarding and competitive positions. So, I think
7 that's once again one of those areas where it's really important to look at the
8 data and see what it's telling us, and try to shape these decisions for the
9 maximum benefit.

10 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: I'll just say quickly here,
11 and this was informative to me just to hear the remarks on recruitment and
12 hiring and those timelines. I'll just say anecdotally, Commissioner Caputo
13 and I were nominated for our positions in early May and we were confirmed in
14 late July, that's just under three months. If we're not moving faster than the
15 U.S. Senate, we have a problem. So, let's hope we are.

16 CHAIR HANSON: Please, Dan.

17 MR. DORMAN: Thank you, Chair. I want to start by
18 thanking the HR Ops team because over the last decade, along with the rest
19 of the Agency, they got smaller and then we asked them to do a Herculean
20 task this year and will continue that going forward. So, one of the specialties
21 we've been hiring in that group is HR specialists, but I also want to emphasize
22 that it's not all on OCHCO. This is an all-of-Agency effort. Part of the
23 timeline to get somebody on board includes the security clearance piece and
24 Admin is doing a great job on focusing on that and making sure we move those

1 through in a timely way. Some of those come up to me, I sign a 145B waiver
2 every Friday for new employees coming in without a clearance, and that sits
3 in my mailbox for all of about five minutes; you can check with my AA. That's
4 my top priority when it lands.

5 We are using a variety of flexibilities to try to address the
6 competitiveness issues. We'll continue to look for creative ways to do that
7 and be fair about it, is very important. So, I think it's also to the hiring offices.
8 At the beginning of this, I challenged the first-line supervisors when they have
9 a vacancy in their staff and the action is on their table to make that the first
10 priority for them, unless there's an emerging safety concern. So, it's an all-
11 of-Agency effort, I just wanted to get that point out. Thanks.

12 CHAIR HANSON: Thanks very much. Renu?

13 MS. SURI: Do you think expanding the telework policy
14 would result in a cost savings to NRC, to office space reductions or consider
15 letting people work remotely from regional offices? Do you think it would
16 inhibit our ability to do our mission? Many staff want to really work for
17 Headquarters offices but don't want to move to the Greater Washington D.C.
18 area, but would be happy to work from the geographically closest regional
19 offices.

20 CHAIR HANSON: Thank you. Let's see, there's a lot to
21 unpack there. Do I think there will be a cost savings? I don't know, maybe?
22 There's a lot to trade off there, right? First of all, I think we'll start with the
23 mission and our people. How do we accomplish our mission? What's the
24 best way to do that? How do we formulate telework policies that give people

1 the appropriate flexibility? And I think Commissioner Caputo raised a really
2 good point, also treat fairly and consistently across the organization in order
3 to accomplish that mission.

4 Then, what is the space that we need actually, that
5 facilitates the interactions, whether remote, not just space but also IT
6 infrastructure that we need then to support the people and the
7 accomplishment of that mission? What does that space look like? I'm not
8 really sure. Maybe Region I, Dave Lew is back there, maybe Region I
9 provides a model. They've got something like 60 percent hoteling space in
10 Region I now. And I met with somebody I know, my colleagues have been
11 traveling in Region I and it's early returns in terms of the staff's judgment on
12 that. I met with somebody last week and she said, ask me again in a couple
13 of months what I think, and I said all right, fair enough about the space. That's
14 entirely fair feedback about how they really think that suits them for when
15 they're in the office. So, is there a cost savings? We'll see. Space, is in
16 important follower and it's an expense to the Agency and we absolutely need
17 to look at it. And kudos to admin for having the space strategic plan that
18 we've been working through. A lot that's in that strategic plan will need to get
19 readjusted based on how we formulate our plans going forward. So, there's
20 that.

21 In terms of the geographical aspect of this, I've been
22 intrigued for a while about people working out of the closest regional office
23 that they have and you've seen other companies kind of go to this model, this
24 work where you live kind of thing, over time. And that, in combination of

1 cross-training of staff, particularly inspector staff, we've shown that people in
2 diverse geographic regions can come together online to accomplish important
3 tasks. And so I just think that ought to be part of the equation, part of the
4 things that we consider as we move forward.

5 COMMISSIONER BARAN: I agree with all that. I'm not
6 sure why I have to go second every time, but the one nuance I was just going
7 to mention is that there is this interaction with the HEART team focus and how
8 we make hybrid work. And so if people are evenly spread out on telework
9 across all of the days, that has one implication for space planning. But if
10 we're going to try to have people here at the same time for in-person
11 collaboration, then you have more of a surge on those particular days, which
12 has different outcomes on space. So, it's complicated. I've mentioned to
13 Jen and to Dan that I'm glad I don't have to figure that part out, it is complex,
14 but everyone is absolutely focused on that and what are the implications for
15 space planning.

16 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: This is a really difficult issue
17 to grapple with but the most important part of that question that I heard was
18 do you think it will inhibit our ability to do our mission? And I think we've got
19 to focus on that first and foremost. I can speak to Region I, I was just there
20 last week and the people that I met with, there was well over 100 people that
21 were around that might have been there, they were very excited about it. And
22 a lot of them had bought-in in a big way already, but I do agree with you, Chair,
23 the comment that you heard, give it a few months until we really get a feel for
24 it. I think this is like you've got a new sucker and it's got plenty of sugar on it

1 and let's see how it goes when you lick it for a little bit.

2 So, I think they are excited and I was excited to see how
3 excited they were. I did not anticipate that and so that was really good. Dan,
4 you referred to we're having 5 to 10 percent turnover and over 5 years from
5 now we may be looking at half the staff turnover. That just begs to how we're
6 going to do the knowledge transfer, the mentoring of the new onboards that
7 are coming on. And this is me, but I do believe nothing beats that in-person
8 communication, training, mission, mentoring.

9 I think we've got to figure out how we do that, because
10 although we can't put a number right now on would we save money or not.
11 There are a lot of unintended consequences that would come along with that
12 if you look really deep into it underneath the surface. There's obviously space
13 requirements, parking, some stuff that's important but some people might say,
14 well, that's trivial, but food, we found people really missed the cafeteria. You
15 can't have a cafeteria if you don't have people to support it. Nobody is going
16 to come and run that business. So, there's a lot of things we have to look at
17 and we've got a lot of building space that we'd have to figure out what to do
18 with. So, I think it's a much more complicated thing to deal with but obviously,
19 mission and people are the best and the topline.

20 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Let me just start by saying
21 I'm glad to hear there's a space strategic plan. That, I was not aware of yet
22 in coming back to the Agency. How we manage our infrastructure here in
23 Headquarters with these two buildings has been an issue for me for quite a
24 while in that a lot of, in that I believe all of, the floors in Building 2, which we

1 lease, have been remodeled. But then I walk through the floors in this
2 building, which we own, and a lot of them still have not been renovated, some
3 of them since the building was built in the '80s.

4 So, renovation, having some sort of a strategic plan for how
5 we renovate and provide people a pleasant work environment, a pleasant
6 effective comfortable work environment that's going to enable them to be
7 productive, I think is certainly a priority for me. So, having a strategic plan
8 that's going to look at that I think is incredibly important. But that, obviously,
9 will be heavily influenced by the nature of how we move forward with the
10 workforce and the hybrid environment. So, I am glad to see there is a space
11 strategic plan.

12 I would anticipate that there may be space savings
13 depending on how we go forward, but I would also counter that that probably
14 would need to be balanced to a certain extent with productivity. And do we
15 have metrics in place to ensure that we are as effective with telework as we
16 are with people in the office. I think we need some sort of a baseline
17 measurement to be able to tell going forward because I think a lot of people
18 feel they are as effective at home, but if the teams are not interacting and
19 collaborating as much as they used to, does that really translate into the team
20 as a whole being more effective? And that becomes one of those things that
21 I think is difficult to measure and I certainly wouldn't want to pummel people
22 with a ton of metrics that everyone has to track. But I would be all ears to try
23 to find some way of examining and figuring out how to make sure that we don't
24 lose productivity in terms of how we move forward.

1 I think there may be a fair amount of busy work that people
2 are subject to that perhaps could stand a review, things that have become
3 day-to-day activities that are not necessary for being safety-focused and
4 security-focused in our mission, but may sort of be distractions from more
5 important work. And to the extent those are out there, I would be interested
6 to hear notions about how to figure out what those activities are and filter those
7 off of people's desktops so that they can be more productive with their time in
8 work that's hopefully more satisfying and rewarding. Which, once again, gets
9 back into the overall balance of how productive we are and what kind of a
10 hybrid work environment we have and how we shape our space to achieve
11 that.

12 CHAIR HANSON: Great, thank you. Online or in-person
13 questions. Yes?

14 MS. MAUPIN: Hi, I'm Cardelia Maupin. I've been here for
15 38.5 years so I'm bringing a lot of experience to this microphone. You talked
16 about retaining qualified people. Well, in the materials area I would really like
17 you guys to look at this concept of silo management versus horizontal
18 management. A lot of the people in the materials area are not going into
19 management, are not being accepted in management in the materials area.
20 We have a number of influx of people with reactor experience in the materials
21 area, as well as some people who have no technical background over
22 technical area, especially in the materials area.

23 So, I would like to hear something about that. You're
24 talking all about the new people that are coming in. What about the people,

1 like me, who remain? I remember having a cell phone carrier, they offered
2 all these benefits if you switch, but what about us who remain? How are you
3 going to encourage the qualified people, especially in the materials area, to
4 remain? Because I had a lot of friends who left. Thank you.

5 CHAIR HANSON: Thank you, Ms. Maupin, very much for
6 that question. I think we've seen this, there's a question submitted online kind
7 of along these lines, where some concern by existing staff about going out into
8 the world to hire staff rather than potentially developing staff from within.

9 And I hope along with this hiring, we are in a position now to
10 look at providing some additional promotion opportunities for people within the
11 Agency. One of the things, I think this was in NSIR, where they said, look, they
12 always posted for two positions, right? One was to fill the position they
13 needed to fill and the other was to backfill the position for the person who, if
14 they hired internally, for the person who would then move up or take that other
15 position. And I think that's a really good way of thinking about it. And
16 certainly, I know in the materials area there are key skill sets that we need to
17 fill. And I would encourage, I think this is happening, although Cardelia, I very
18 much appreciate the feedback because I would want managers to think hard
19 about how to develop from within or hire from without and be thoughtful about
20 that, and give people the right opportunities. I think people should be
21 promoted based on having the skill sets that are needed for that promotional
22 opportunity, and not necessarily because they're good at their current job.
23 That's not a criticism of the NRC, it's something that I think happens in all
24 organizations. And we just need to be cognizant of that and take that into

1 consideration as we go about filling positions. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER BARAN: And I think it's just clearly
3 going to need to be a mix. We're going to have a mix of new people coming
4 in from the outside and a mix of folks moving up from within the Agency, and
5 then among the hires it's going to be a mix of people who are kind of entry-
6 level and people who are more mid-career. But we do need to as an Agency
7 get that mix right because, as I think it's been alluded to in a couple of these
8 questions and as we've been talking about this, there was a long stretch where
9 there was very little hiring happening, the Agency was shrinking, and
10 promotional opportunities were extremely scarce. So, I understand that folks
11 who have stayed with the Agency all that time, now there are these openings
12 and people want to be able to compete for them, and that makes perfect
13 sense. So, it may be that we have a bit of a domino effect, where a 14 moves
14 up into a 15 slot and someone new comes in from the outside for that 14, it's
15 maybe it's a 13 moving into that 14 and someone comes in from the outside
16 to fill the 13.

17 So, I think I would just encourage folks and you've been
18 patient a long time, there was a long period where they weren't promotional
19 opportunities, but this is this first year of really getting the hiring going again.
20 And I understand there was a lot of focus on we need people coming into the
21 Agency just to maintain our numbers, and I've said that myself many times.
22 And so it's a tough balance to strike, but it's one we've got to be striking, so
23 thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: That's a really tough

1 question, too, because from the 4000 employees that we had at one time,
2 we've had people who have been here many, many years, like you, 38.5, you
3 must have started out of kindergarten. But you picture our employees and
4 it's like a pyramid, right? You've got your 15s and 14s and 13s, and so there's
5 not as many opportunities for people at that range to move up into a new
6 opportunity, as there's fewer people leaving. But now that we're getting into
7 this period where we are losing people for retirements, because it's time, there
8 will be more opportunities. And since the day I walked on this campus here,
9 the one thing that stuck out to me was how siloed we were. And one of the
10 things that I wanted to see that the senior staff has been encouraging is the
11 breaking down of those silos and starting to get more into a team concept.

12 So, hopefully we're getting there but I will tell you, you and
13 others, you're the teacher, you're the mentor. You're the one that's going to
14 have to show that new onboard what life is like at the NRC and you're going
15 to have to educate them on the things they don't know in hopes that they can
16 then blaze their own trail like you have blazed yours. We're aware and I know
17 that they're trying to tackle that, but it is a very difficult issue for us to deal with
18 at this time. But we're aware and trying to address it, so thank you for the
19 question.

20 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: I don't have anything to add.
21 I just thank you for your 38 years of service, that's absolutely impressive.
22 Thank you for dedicating so much of your life to this Agency.

23 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: And I'll just say from a very
24 high level, one, thank you for raising the issue. I see the materials work at

1 the Agency as important as the reactors work and if there's an imbalance on
2 that front then we need to address that head on and make sure that we correct
3 the imbalance or head it off if it's something coming down the pike. So, I
4 appreciate you raising the issue.

5 MR. DORMAN: Thanks, Cordelia, for raising that. I want
6 to leverage off of that to just emphasize one of the things we've done
7 differently over the last year in the hiring is a lot more nationwide posting
8 where it may have been an internal posting in the past. And we've been trying
9 to consistently communicate to staff that just because we've posted it
10 nationwide doesn't mean that you can't be considered. So, please do apply
11 to those postings. Because the reason we did that goes back to I think
12 Commissioner Baran's comment earlier that the previous year we had 180
13 hiring actions and only 100 of them were external.

14 As we look at hiring 200 to 300 people, if we do everything
15 sequentially, that time to hire, you add up the time to hire to fill the 15 and then
16 to backfill the 14 and then to backfill the 13, the time to actually gain 1
17 employee gets much longer. So, we've tried to take some of that
18 sequentialness out of it so again, I'd encourage people, as you see vacancy
19 announcements go out nationwide, but you think that's an opportunity for you
20 internally to move up into greater responsibilities, please do apply to those.

21 MR. CRISCIONE: Good morning, I'm Larry Criscione, I'm
22 with the Office of Research. I just had a couple of comments on what was a
23 discussion on the telework and then a question about partnership.
24 Commissioner Caputo, you talked about that. I've been the author of two

1 Union surveys recently. One of them was on telework and the other was on
2 space design. I'm more than willing to meet with you or whoever else wants
3 to talk about data. Because the Union does have data, it's kind of unfortunate
4 that we don't see a lot of it from the Agency. But the Union does have data
5 on both space and telework.

6 One other comment on telework is what a lot of us would
7 like to see is the first-line supervisor being given a lot more leeway in deciding
8 if their staff can telework. We don't like arbitrariness and you talk about
9 fairness, and one thing to be fair, is no one teleworks. We obviously don't
10 want to see that. Fairness is important but we understand that everyone's
11 job is different, everyone's ability is different. We'd like to see more input and
12 the handcuffs removed from the first-line supervisors when it comes to the
13 liberalizing telework if they feel their employee could do it.

14 The question I have is on partnership. I've been involved
15 in four bargaining teams in the last four months with the Union, and quite
16 frankly none of those were necessary. Every one of them was an issue that
17 I feel really should have been addressed in partnership. One, space design,
18 one is the fact that we did the re-entry without a memorandum of
19 understanding, one is the current office moves and the last one is the hoteling.
20 These are issues - we have an Agency Labor Partnership Committee, I don't
21 expect the Commissioners to show up to that or even the EDO, but it is an
22 important way to get feedback from the Union and to work through a lot of
23 these issues. And quite frankly, my recent experience of it has been
24 negative.

1 We brought some telework issues up to them last week at
2 our meeting, the specific concern is that a lot of employees have what we call
3 a dual-pay-period telework schedule, where I live in Illinois, some live in
4 Tennessee, some live in San Diego. They come in here to do their telework,
5 they like to telework the last week of one pay period, the first week of the other.
6 It's not a complex arrangement. We brought that up with management and
7 said, look, the telework forms don't address these arrangements, people have
8 to write them out in longform and get them approved. There's a lot of
9 confusion. The Agency came back using the data we brought them and says,
10 look, you're not allowed to do these. So, via an email from Labor Relations
11 sent out on a Friday, they're nullifying like 40 people's telework agreements.
12 That's not the way to partner.

13 But I guess my question would be how do you expect
14 partnership to work? How do we engage the Agency and the Union to solve
15 some of these problems without bargaining?

16 CHAIR HANSON: Larry, thanks very much for sharing
17 that. I do have a copy of the Union's survey on space in my office, I can't
18 claim to have gotten through all of the pages. No offense, it runs probably an
19 inch and a half thick. But I did page through it and appreciated the feedback
20 and the insights that were included in that. So, I want to thank the Union and
21 the membership for that.

22 As you said, as even the Chair and my colleagues can
23 speak to their involvement, I haven't been intimately involved with negotiations
24 with the Union but let me just say at a high level, I would hope that it is a

1 partnership that everyone is engaging constructively because I think we
2 should kind of leave no good idea unturned. And there have been issues, I
3 know, throughout the pandemic with folks having experiences about the
4 consistency and fairness issues and the implementation of some policies.
5 And I think you touch on something really important about devolving
6 management decision-making to the lowest possible level and empowering
7 first-line supervisors, but also the need to have that fairness and have that be
8 a part of this equation as well. I'll leave it there and let my colleagues
9 comment.

10 COMMISSIONER BARAN: This is maybe throwing Dan a
11 little bit under the bus, but I'm interested, it wasn't that long ago that we talked
12 about some of these issues, Dan, how much flexibility versus rigidity was
13 there? If someone had a telework agreement that said I want to telework but
14 I'll come in the office Tuesdays and Thursdays, but then it didn't make sense
15 that week for the way the work was laid out, Monday and Tuesday made more
16 sense. And I know you were sensitive to that and there was some work going
17 on to figure out how much flexibility there was there so that people could
18 manage their time in way that really made sense? I don't know if you want to
19 talk a little bit about that whenever you want to.

20 MR. DORMAN: Let me start by saying I've been in
21 management in a number of LMPCs around four Headquarters offices in one
22 region and my experience over 20-plus years has been our partnerships have
23 been fantastic by and large. And I know the last year has been very hard on
24 that and it's not the local partnerships, it's the Agency-level issues. So, I

1 know that's been hard. The first priority in my mind is to sort out the how-we-
2 work issues. So, we'll get the telework policy working, we'll get my all-
3 employee meeting, my Town Hall in November and we'll get with the
4 partnership, and I hope we can have good constructive conversations to get
5 some clarity going forward. And part of it is that flexibility and I think I've been
6 exploring what flexibility exists that maybe we're not taking advantage of, but
7 we haven't gotten that to a partnership discussion. But I think that's part of
8 HEART, as I look at the HEART report, I think there's some things that we can
9 look at an Agency partnership level but those are best practices from within
10 the Agency and from our external benchmarking and I think some of them can
11 be done by folks today at the project and business-unit level.

12 And then it's the space, and we've been at an impasse on a
13 particular issue in space and we're in remediation right now. But once we
14 figure out the how we work, then we get to what are the space needs to
15 support that to support the mission effectiveness? And that will be another
16 partnership issue. So, I think we've got some opportunities in front of us to
17 engage constructively and work through those issues together.

18 CHAIR HANSON: Commissioner Wright?

19 MR. DORMAN: So, Larry, thank you for your comments.
20 This is one of those issues and like the Chairman, I have not had any real
21 involvement with the Union communications and stuff and how that's worked.
22 I trust you at your word, what you say, and I take it very seriously. I do think
23 from what I have seen, though, since COVID happened and we were forced
24 to go into mandatory telework status, everyone has dealt in good faith here.

1 I think that messaging has been mixed but it's been mixed from the Federal
2 Government to us, right? And then we've had to try to understand what it
3 was we were being asked to do. I think the staff has done the best they could.
4 Did they get it right all the time? Probably not. And the one thing I do know
5 is that you can't overcommunicate. So, we have had issues probably with
6 communication and probably can do a better job top to bottom. I think in the
7 whole thing, though, we've got to look towards wherever we go with this, it's,
8 again, mission first. Whatever we decide to do, what's the benefit that the
9 NRC as an Agency gets out of it because our work is for the American people
10 and that's what we do. I don't get a telework arrangement because I'm
11 special, right, for something. It's not about me, it's going to be about the we,
12 that's how I kind of look at this. But I think respect and transparency are
13 critical in this as well.

14 So, what I'm hearing, though, even just based on what I just
15 heard from Larry, is that one size is probably not going to fit all here. And so
16 the flexibility that's got to be built into it, you've got to trust the employees, the
17 first-line supervisors, whoever they are, the Branch Chiefs or wherever it goes
18 to, that they're going to be taking that one-on-one relationship with whoever
19 they're dealing with that goes beyond what we determine to do. So, I do think
20 flexibility is important.

21 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: If you wouldn't mind, could
22 we chat briefly after this? Because I think I'm not clear exactly what measure
23 of decision-making is within my role but at a minimum, I would certainly like to
24 understand what's in the minds of the workforce and what information is in

1 those surveys. So, like the Chairman, I may not get all the way through them
2 if they're like this, but I certainly want to be able to skim those and get a sense
3 for what's going through people's minds so that that can inform any
4 decision-making that I do going forward. Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: I'm just going to focus on
6 quickly on your comment about flexibility and first-line supervisors because I
7 think you nailed it and that's where the crux of this issue lies. And flexibility
8 is paramount, but right along with that is accountability, and if you have
9 accountability for managers at all levels, to make sure that flexibility is being
10 applied in the right way, then you can get to where we're trying to go.

11 We've said it over and over again, there's no one size fits
12 all. There's rigidity built into the federal bureaucratic system that we want to
13 try to avoid here because no one's job in here is the same as the other
14 person's job in here and that has to be understood and respected. This
15 concept of fairness is a challenging one because it needs to be a broad
16 concept of fairness. Is it fair to the security workforce and the janitors that
17 they have to come in and do their job in person and others get to telework
18 because they have a more computer-based position? No, in the traditional
19 sense of fairness, but it's fairness to achieving the mission, and if managers
20 are being held accountable to provide flexibility such that we are maximizing
21 our resources to meet our mission, then we're scratching the itch that's here.

22 And so everyone needs to just have a broad view of what
23 works in one division or in one sector is not going to be the same as elsewhere.
24 But as long as managers understand what is incumbent upon them, then we

1 can get there and again, as Commissioner Wright said, trust is going to be
2 paramount as well. So, thank you.

3 MS. CASTO: Hello, my name is Mary Casto, I'm part of the
4 NRAN 2.0 Cohort and I'm very happy to be here. Commissioner Wright
5 talked about a few times this morning about mentoring and I think that
6 mentoring is really key, as a new person who knows very little because I'm so
7 new to be able to my place at the Agency, what the Agency needs, and a lot
8 of the technical information that people like the woman who spoke earlier has,
9 because she's been here and so many people have been here for such a long
10 time.

11 So, I wanted to ask, outside of NRAN, I don't know how
12 many people are part of formal mentoring relationships, but I think that we
13 could increase the number of people that are mentors and mentees. And I
14 wanted to bring up this topic and ask if you'd like to share any ideas for how
15 to increase the number of people that are mentors and mentees and also how
16 to help mentors know how to be good mentors and mentees know how to be
17 good mentees. Thank you.

18 CHAIR HANSON: Mary, thank you. It's great to see you
19 again. I'm going to defer this and let my colleagues go first, if there's a thing
20 at the end I'm happy to jump in.

21 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Terrific topic, I don't know if I
22 know the answer to it, maybe Dan wants to weigh in. One thing I've noticed
23 over the years and this is not a systematic data-driven polling I've done, but I
24 get the sense that we have a lot of great mentors within the Agency and those

1 folks tend to be mentoring a number of people. And so I do think figuring out
2 how to scale up mentoring but not have it overwhelm a small number of very
3 dedicated, wonderful people is going to be important.

4 But I have to say, it's a great question, I don't know really to
5 what extent we have programs within the Agency that are focused on
6 preparing mentors for that role in trying to locate as many mentors as we can
7 to make sure that everyone who wants one has...I don't know if qualified is the
8 right word. But someone who is prepared to take on that role and knows what
9 it means and knows how to go about doing it.

10 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Mary, thank you for your
11 question. The fact that you asked that question begs an even bigger question
12 for you and for the other onboards, the new people. You should really already
13 know what the mentoring opportunities are for you. The fact that you ask that
14 question for yourself and on behalf of the others that are new here is
15 something that really ought to slap us in the face right there. Because I think
16 you've hit on what's going to be the most important thing for this Agency going
17 forward. If we're losing a couple hundred people a year and we're bringing a
18 couple hundred people or less on, the Agency is turning over a lot and in five
19 years, you're going to be old-school. And we're going to have to rely on you
20 to help mentor the people who are coming on. So, it's a critical need, a critical
21 issue, so thank you for bringing that up.

22 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: I want to add my thanks to
23 that question. I know I certainly benefitted a lot early in my career from
24 mentors and I have often thought that I feel like I don't do enough to mentor

1 those that will come after me. So, now you've given me an idea, so thank
2 you very much.

3 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: It's a great point. A strong
4 and effective mentoring program is going to help solve many of the issues
5 we've talked about today. That being said, I've seen mentoring programs that
6 are superficial and ineffective, and I've seen ones that are involved and very
7 effective and I just hope that we can design a program that encompasses the
8 latter. So, thank you for raising it.

9 MR. DORMAN: Thanks, Mary, I'm going to actually
10 address most of my response to the rest of the NRC staff because that's a
11 call. We do have resources in OCHCO to assist mentors and help them
12 understand how to be good mentors. What I've always encouraged as I've
13 come through the organization is for you Staff to look about two steps down
14 your career path in the direction you see yourself going and identify somebody
15 outside of your reporting chain whose opinion you value and go ask them to
16 be your mentor, if you can have that relationship.

17 We do have a formal mentoring program It's managed out
18 of OCHCO so to all the rest of you staff, if you want to be a mentor but you
19 don't know how, reach out to OCHCO and they can connect you up with
20 resources to help you do that. And they can probably also connect you up
21 with some people who are looking for a mentor. I think it's tremendously
22 important, as Commissioner Wright said, as we look at the turnover over the
23 next number of years that we support all the people coming through.

24 The other thing I wanted to just throw out there, when we

1 celebrated the completion of the first cohort of the Nuclear Regulator
2 Apprenticeship Network, I told that class they were the network, they were the
3 first cohort of the network. And they have two years of knowledge that you
4 don't have. So, I hope we're able to connect the first cohort with the second
5 cohort to help you guys experience a little bit better than what they
6 experienced. So, I think there are a lot of opportunities and I'd just encourage
7 anybody listening to my voice to welcome the opportunity to be a mentor.
8 Because that's the opportunity that those of us who are later in our career,
9 whether later in our career is in 2 years in or 38 years in, to pass along our
10 experience and knowledge to the folks who are going to keep the Agency
11 great when we move on.

12 CHAIR HANSON: Thanks. Cognizant of the time, Sheryl,
13 I know we were going to have the Union speak to us at around 11:50 a.m., but
14 if we've got a couple of folks in line or if we take a couple more questions and
15 then invite the Union to speak, is that okay? I'm getting the nod, okay, great.
16 Yes, please?

17 MR. CUSUMANO: Thanks, I'm Vic Cusumano, I'm a
18 Branch Chief in NRR and I heard a lot of comments about first-line supervisors
19 and Branch Chiefs and how we plan to do this. So, we meet as a Branch
20 Chief cadre in NRR fairly regularly and I get to hear some of my peers. And
21 Commissioner Caputo mentioned the data on efficiency is hard to come by, I
22 agree. Are we more efficient in person or are we more efficient as a hybrid
23 organization? We were pretty darn efficient as a completely full remote
24 organization, but that's when everybody was remote and it's different in a

1 hybrid. So, data is going to be hard.

2 Having talked to a bunch of my fellow Branch Chiefs that
3 have large numbers of vacancies in their branches, some of them, half the
4 branch is vacant at the moment. They'd take a little hit to efficiency if they
5 could open up hiring to people outside the Agency that would be willing to
6 work for us but not come here. That's just the perspective of some of my
7 fellow Branch Chiefs, a little efficiency, even if we assume you're more efficient
8 in person, which I'm not 100 percent convinced on, they take that hit. And
9 the second thing is I heard someone mention that maybe Branch Chiefs
10 should be the ones driving the train on deciding whether someone gets
11 telework or not? Great in theory, I'd love to make that decision for my people.
12 I think I could, but I'd be worried that the next Branch Chief that follows me in
13 that job may not agree with my call and he or she would be stuck with it, or
14 the nature of the work might change and it's always hard to take away
15 something you've given.

16 So, I prefer an Agency policy on that, thank you very much.
17 Also, if I approve it for one of my staff and she decides she wants to take a job
18 in another Branch or another Division or go to NMSS with John or whatever,
19 how does that work? Does my decision bind them when they move to
20 another Division, Branch, or Office? There's not a real question in there but
21 we talked about first-line supervisors, I thought I'd share those perspectives.
22 Thanks.

23 CHAIR HANSON: Thanks a lot for that. I've long felt the
24 Branch Chiefs have the hardest job in the Agency as being front-line

1 supervisors and others. And you highlighted it I think quite well with the
2 panoply and the range of decisions that you have to make. And I'm certainly
3 sensitive as we put some of these changes in place that we're really focused
4 on the key tasks that need to be completed and we're not just moving the
5 boxes around. Because a lot of that change has kind of fallen down onto the
6 Branch Chiefs over time. Yes, that's right, you guys have broad shoulders
7 and I appreciate that, but I do want to be sensitive to it. So, I appreciate those
8 comments and particularly that feedback as we get into this.

9 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Real quickly, you've just
10 pointed out why we need to take our time and get it right, we've got to take the
11 appropriate time to get it right. So, thank you for your question on that.

12 CHAIR HANSON: We'll take the last question, and then
13 we'll hear from the Union.

14 MR. GLOWACKI: Good morning, my name is Brian
15 Glowacki, I am in NMSS as an Environmental Project Manager and I'm also
16 on the younger extreme of the workforce. I'm 23 years old, I graduated in
17 December from Ohio State. I was not a part of the NРАН program but one
18 of my main concerns since I've been here for the last now 10 months working
19 for the Agency, I was a co-op and an intern before that so I've been around a
20 bit, but full-time, I'm a bit concerned about knowledge management and
21 maintaining the institutional knowledge that we have. And I think Mary hit on
22 it really well when she talked about mentorship, but a mentor-mentee
23 relationship is still more so oral traditional. There's nothing codified there, it's
24 not necessarily something written down that anyone can go to reference. It's

1 a relationship between two people or maybe a couple of people.

2 My main concern looking forward is, yes, we have this large
3 attrition rate from our very experienced people that are in our agency. And if
4 those people leave and they're not codifying the knowledge that they have
5 learned, if they are not putting that pen to paper or hands to keyboard in this
6 case, we will lose that knowledge. And people like myself, people like Mary,
7 this next generation of the NRC that's trying to work their way forwards and
8 maintain that mission are not going to have that knowledge and we are going
9 to struggle for it. The mission, achieving that mission, will suffer for it. So,
10 I'd like to ask if there's any sort of Agency-wide invested initiative in place to
11 try and capture this knowledge before it slips out of our hands?

12 CHAIR HANSON: Brian, thank you very much. I think
13 Nuclepedia is our effort to bring the Great Library of Alexandria, if you will, in
14 terms of knowledge management. But you highlighted something also really
15 important, Brian, which was the interpersonal interactions and how that
16 happens. And I know as we hire and as we look at retirements coming along,
17 we're trying to what we call double-encumber a couple of positions to facilitate
18 those interpersonal interactions where a lot of that knowledge transfer
19 happens. In a way, I don't totally disagree, it's somewhat less systematic
20 than Nuclepedia and the information gathering and the knowledge-
21 management gathering there, but I think it's also a vital and key component of
22 that.

23 MR. DORMAN: Just real quickly, the guidance documents
24 that we have, guidance to licensees through reg guides or NUREG's guidance

1 to staff through office procedures and instructions all our vehicles that capture
2 how we do things and why we do them that way. And Nuclepedia is a great
3 resource, if we do it right, to provide pointers to all those things in topical areas.
4 So, when you're engaging something, you say, well, what do I know about this
5 topic? Like when you were in school, hopefully they didn't allow you to use
6 Wikipedia as a reference on a research paper, but it's a good starting point to
7 find some great resources that you could use as a reference in the research
8 paper. And in the same way you should look at Nuclepedia, it's a good
9 starting point to dive into a topic, and hopefully, as we build those pages you'll
10 find that you've got links to the more authoritative resources that can support
11 you. And then if you see something you're trying to figure out and you can't
12 find it in Nuclepedia, when you find the person who can help you do it, suggest
13 they write a Nuclepedia page for us. Thanks.

14 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Real quickly, Brian, thank
15 you for your question and they pointed out Nuclepedia, which is where I was
16 going to go, too. But I will tell you, as you and Mary and the other onboards
17 and new people who have been here a couple of years or less, if you have an
18 idea yourself or collective talking with the people, your peers here, share it,
19 IdeaScale or go to any of the think-tanks with it because there are no bad
20 suggestions at all. So, thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: I agree with what David said.
22 I also have just one observation in terms of knowledge management. Having
23 worked in the Senate, I took a three-day class on legislative procedure, which
24 is all about knowledge management and teaching how the Senate works.

1 And then every so often I would observe how what I was watching play out in
2 reality was nothing like what I learned in class.

3 So, there's a balance to be struck between what gets
4 recorded and captured and you read in a document, and what it's like to
5 actually live it and learn by doing, hopefully at the elbow of someone who is
6 very experienced and can share a lot of their knowledge, which I, of course,
7 was very lucky to have in the Senate. But there's a balance to be struck
8 there. I guess I will have questions at a later date perhaps for Mary about the
9 nature of how we try to balance that through our mentoring and knowledge
10 management programs.

11 CHAIR HANSON: Thank you. I'd like to hand the floor
12 over to Sheryl Sanchez from NTEU. I know we're getting to you just a few
13 minutes late but, please, take the time you need.

14 MS. SANCHEZ: Thank you. Good morning, Chairman
15 Hanson, Commissioners Baran, Caputo, Crowell, and Wright, EDO Dorman,
16 Manager Staff, and most importantly NRC bargaining unit employees. I'm
17 Sheryl Sanchez, President of NTEU Chapter 208 and I'm pleased to be able
18 to provide the Union's comments this morning. NTEU Chapter 208 is the
19 exclusive representative of bargaining unit employees at the Nuclear
20 Regulatory Commission. I am joined here in the room and virtually by many
21 NTEU team members who work hard every day on behalf of employees, such
22 as stewards, labor partners, and executive Board Members. Also, Cynthia
23 Woerner, our NTEU National Field Representative, is attending to hear
24 employees' concerns. Without such a dedicated team, NTEU would not be

1 able to work together to strive to ensure that every NRC employee is treated
2 with dignity and respect.

3 NTEU is aware that 2022 has been a particularly difficult
4 year for our employees. We know this because NTEU has been here to
5 support you every step of the way. We've seen your struggles and
6 frustrations with what seemed to be a complete lack of logic and frustration
7 because you didn't know why some decisions were made or who was
8 responsible. We, too, would have liked to know who was responsible. Our
9 team has been and still is busier and more sought after than ever as we
10 sometimes stretch our limits to meet the new demand. Please thank
11 stewards and labor partners and members of our bargaining teams when you
12 see them. They've been working so hard on your behalf and they never gave
13 up, even when the situation seemed hopeless.

14 In a study of children and adults in all kinds of super
15 challenging settings, one characteristic emerged a predictor of success. It
16 wasn't intelligence, it wasn't social intelligence, it wasn't good looks, physical
17 health, and it wasn't IQ. It was grit. Grit is passion and perseverance for
18 very long-term goals. Grit is having stamina, grit is working towards your
19 goals day in and day out, not just for a week, not just for a month, but for years.
20 Rest assured, our NTEU team has it and will never give up the fight to improve
21 your working conditions for all bargaining unit. But grit doesn't mean you
22 never get discouraged or consider quitting, it just means that you don't.

23 I had a minute this past summer where I chose to cancel a
24 vacation to Germany and France with my husband, due to responsibilities here

1 that I felt I had to handle. I considered quitting but as I've said many times, I
2 believe NRC employees are the best in the Federal Government. I am sure
3 of this because I've been a shop steward since the year 2000 and I've dealt
4 with many past and current employees. Our employees put their faith in us
5 and we vow to be here to support you with any challenges you encounter.

6 I would like to share a story of a personal hero of mine who
7 had grit because it's a great story and in homage to her passing in July of
8 2022. Nichelle Nichols was an amazing woman who didn't know at the time
9 what an impact she would have on the world. Nichelle Nichols played
10 Lieutenant Uhura in the original Star Trek, which debuted in 1960. Although
11 her coworkers on this series and Gene Roddenberry, the creator, treated her
12 respectfully and as an equal, after the first season she was incredibly
13 discouraged and made the decision to resign. There was too much she felt
14 was wrong that she couldn't fix, from subtle to not so subtle racism, for
15 example, mailroom workers instructed not to deliver her fan mail to her.

16 After the last show of the season she resigned. The
17 following evening she attended an NAACP fundraising event. From her
18 autobiography, this is how she describes the event. A man approached her
19 and said, Nichelle, there is someone here who would like to meet you, he's a
20 big fan of Star Trek and Uhura. She turned to greet this fan and found herself
21 gazing into the face of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She was stunned and
22 remembers thinking whoever this fan is he'll just have to wait. Dr. King's
23 first words were, yes, I'm the fan. I wanted to tell you how important you are.

24 Nichelle replied, thank you, Dr. King, but I plan to leave Star

1 Trek. You cannot, he replied firmly, and you must not. Do you realize how
2 important your presence, your character is? You're not just a role model for
3 little black children, you're more important for people who don't look like us.
4 You've opened a door that must not be allowed to close. For the first time
5 the world sees us as we should be seen, as equals, as intelligent people, as
6 we should be. You're a role model for everyone. The rest is, as they say,
7 history, and it is noteworthy that she ended her Star Trek career as a Captain.

8 Okay, I'm such a dork.

9 Back to the NRC, I'm sad that for the first time ever our FEV
10 score of 20 out of 25 falls below the median for medium-sized agencies. I
11 would like to know why the Commission thinks our score fell from 12 last year
12 to 20 this year. I would like to know why the Commission thinks our attrition
13 doubled from 4 percent to 9 percent. And I would like to know what they're
14 going to do about it. It's heartbreaking when employees tell me they don't
15 feel valued. They feel they're just a commodity. Some have reported that
16 they think management doesn't respect their personal safety concerns. I
17 don't think this is true but how do we make employees whole who suffered
18 greatly, turned down promotions, or didn't apply for the promotions in the first
19 place due to the current telework policy? So many employees leaving the
20 Agency report this as the reason.

21 The Union believes in presence with a purpose. If an
22 employee needs or wants to be in the office, they should be. But for those
23 with portable work, if they do not need or want to be, they shouldn't be
24 arbitrarily forced to come in the office. The Union is fighting for the Agency

1 to be as effective and efficient as possible. Every employee is different and
2 we acknowledge that some employees do not want to associate work and
3 home in the same sentence. These employees should have comfortable
4 work spaces in the buildings which allow them to be happy and productive.

5 This brings us to work spaces and the current situations with
6 planned renovations. As you probably know, the sixth floor as One White
7 Flint was pitched to us as a concept floor to see what worked, what didn't work,
8 to inform and adjust future renovations. We understand this was planned and
9 envisioned pre-pandemic and maybe it seemed like a good idea at the time.
10 However, in a poll that was participated in by 700 employees, 95 percent of
11 employees preferred a more traditional work space. A survey was done to
12 support bargaining on renovating the 11th and 13th floors of One White Flint
13 North. Although we still hope to reach an agreement on these renovations,
14 our bargaining is currently with the Federal Services Impasses Panel, or FSIP,
15 and we are awaiting a day of mediation and then arbitration, if necessary, on
16 October 18th. The Union generally wants to reach an agreement and not
17 have a third party render a decision that perhaps neither party will be happy
18 with. But we are obligated to represent the interest of the employees that we
19 represent and we take this job very seriously. Having said that, each
20 employee is unique and some really like the new space. These employees
21 should be able to work there if they wish. The FSIP will actually be touring
22 this facility this afternoon as 2:00 p.m.

23 I'd like to give a special shout-out to Larry Criscione, who
24 was up here and asked a question, who has taken a lead role in the renovation

1 bargaining. Larry analyzed the poll and prepared a lengthy report in only five
2 weeks. So, if you see Larry, please thank him and maybe buy him a cup of
3 coffee or something. He's worked tirelessly, putting in hours late at night, on
4 weekends, so great job, Larry.

5 In conclusion, NTEU sees the light at the end of the tunnel.
6 The HEART report is very good, the listening sessions conducted by the
7 telework policy and implementation working group were, while heartbreaking,
8 very well done and made the employees feel heard. Although, we do not
9 need another working group to know what employees want, the Union has
10 been telling the Agency what they want for over a year and a half, we felt
11 validated by hearing the same feedback to the working group from employees
12 at the listening to sessions.

13 We were encouraged by the message from Chair Hanson
14 in advance of this all-employee meeting and hope this working group will result
15 in a new telework policy which will be more amenable to all of our employees.
16 Please help the working group by completing the poll they sent out. It is still
17 open until Friday, October 14th. For the first time in some time, we have hope
18 and for all of our bargaining unit employees, we will always be here for you.
19 Those of you that are not that involved with the Union but perhaps might like
20 to be a little more involved, please join NTEU in our efforts to make the NRC
21 a better place for everyone. Please take care of yourself and your coworkers.
22 Practice empathy, be kind to each other, and be kind of to yourselves. Thank
23 you for your attention.

24 CHAIR HANSON: Thank you, Ms. Sanchez. With that,

1 we will wrap it up today. I want to thank everyone for being here. I want to
2 thank my colleagues. I think the discussion we had today shows the benefits
3 of a fully staffed Commission. Dan, thank you for your comments. To Renu
4 and Max, you guys represented Toastmasters quite well, so hats off to you.
5 Thanks to SECY and Admin and CIO for making all of the logistics work well
6 today. And particularly, thanks to all the employees, both in the room and
7 online, who tuned in to listen and submit comments in advance and share your
8 views. Thank you for your service to our country and to the NRC.

9 I hope you'll all join us back here at 2:00 p.m. today for the
10 award ceremony, where we really get to celebrate some of the remarkable
11 achievements of the NRC staff. The five of us will be back and we hope you'll
12 join us.

13 Finally, I'd just like to recognize it is National Coming Out
14 Day and in an agency where we celebrate the freedom of people to bring their
15 whole selves to work, or not, as they see fit, I think this is a great day to
16 recognize that and to see our LGBTQ brothers and sisters. So, with that,
17 we're adjourned, thank you.

18 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record
19 at 12:07 p.m.)

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22