

Chief Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Officers Council Meeting

Meeting Minutes – October 14, 2020

The Chief FOIA Officers (CFO) Council Meeting convened virtually at 10:10 AM on October 14, 2020. A livestream video of the meeting was made available, and in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(k)(6)(B), the meeting was open to the public “permit[ting] interested persons to appear and present oral and written statements to the Council.”

All meeting materials are available on the Office of Information Policy’s (OIP) and Office of Government Information Services’ (OGIS) websites at: <https://www.justice.gov/oip/chief-foia-officers-council> and <https://www.archives.gov/ogis/about-ogis/chief-foia-officers-council>.

Speakers:

David S. Ferriero, Archivist of the United States, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

Bobby Talebian, Director, OIP, Department of Justice (DOJ), Council Co-Chair. Mr. Talebian also provided remarks on behalf of Principal Deputy Associate Attorney General of the United States, Claire McCusker Murray

Alina M. Semo, Director, OGIS, NARA, Council Co-Chair

Michael Sarich, FOIA Director, Veterans Health Administration, Council Technology Committee Co-Chair

Eric F. Stein, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Global Information Services, Bureau of Administration, Department of State, Council Technology Committee Co-Chair

Introduction

- The meeting opened at 10:10 AM. Ms. Semo welcomed everyone to the first virtual Council meeting and briefly outlined the agenda for the meeting.
- Mr. Ferriero provided brief opening remarks and recalled the history of the FOIA statute and noted Congress's desire for a balance between disclosure and protection, as set out and evidenced by the FOIA statute's legislative history. He explained that the FOIA Advisory Committee is now in its fourth term. He concluded by noting the effects of the COVID pandemic on current FOIA administration, and that collaboration and innovation will be key to meet the definition of "FOIA success."
- Mr. Talebian passed along the regards of DOJ’s Principal Deputy Associate Attorney General and Chief FOIA Officer, Claire McCusker Murray, who emphasized the

Department's support of agency FOIA programs, encouraged each agency to continue working diligently to improve FOIA processing, and thanked each agency for its efforts and innovation during the current global pandemic.

Updates from the Office of Information Policy (OIP), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)

- Mr. Talebian summarized government-wide FOIA reporting updates, including the recent issuance of OIP's Summary and Assessment of Agencies' 2020 Chief FOIA Officer (CFO) Reports. He provided upcoming Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report and 2021 Chief FOIA Office Report reporting deadlines.
- Mr. Talebian shared numerous completed FOIA.gov website enhancements aimed at streamlining user experiences and increasing the functionality of reporting tools. He also reminded agencies of the interoperability requirements with FOIA.gov. He outlined forthcoming functions aimed to gain insight into FOIA.gov user experiences, as well as an initiative to expand searchability of FOIA Libraries from FOIA.gov.
- Mr. Talebian informed attendees of numerous existing online OIP resources for agencies, including the *Department of Justice Guide to the FOIA*, FOIA Court Decision Summaries, and the FOIA Self-Assessment Toolkit, including two soon-to-be released modules on Appeals and Proactive Disclosure. He also noted the reoccurring Best Practices Workshops, focusing on various FOIA topics and geared towards determining best practices among agencies. He welcomed suggestions for future topics and made a call for submissions.

Updates from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

- Ms. Semo described the role of OGIS in FOIA administration and the range of efforts conducted to improve the FOIA process, including conducting dispute resolution, engaging in outreach, reviewing agency compliance, co-chairing the Council and leading the FOIA Federal Advisory Committee.
- Ms. Semo provided an overview of the more than twenty recommendations outlined in the 2018-2020 FOIA Advisory Committee's July 2020 report to the Archivist of the United States. Committee recommendations were made on a broad range of topics and directed to various entities, including Congress, the CFO Council, the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE), NARA/OGIS, and OIP. Ms. Semo noted that OGIS intends to add an electronic dashboard feature to its website to keep track of the status of each individual recommendation.

Solicitation of Chief FOIA Officers (CFO) Council Committee on Cross-Agency Collaboration and Innovation

- In consideration of a recommendation from the FOIA Advisory Committee, Ms. Semo and Mr. Talebian formed a new committee titled "Committee for Cross-Agency Collaboration and Innovation." Ms. Semo and Mr. Talebian made a call for volunteers to serve on the new committee. Its members will research and propose cross-agency grant programs and funding sources, create federal career paths for FOIA professionals, and promote models to align agency resources with agency transparency.

Open Agency Questions/Discussion

- Ms. Semo and Mr. Talebian opened the floor to agency discussion, and the speakers responded to various questions and comments via WebEx chat, telephone, and YouTube livestream.
- Mr. Talebian explained that he and Ms. Semo plan to have meetings more regularly with the CFO Council, and they would like to know what agencies would like to discuss during such meetings. He noted that the work of the CFO Council is important, and the success of FOIA administration across the federal government depends on each other.

Update from Chief FOIA Officers Council Technology Committee Co-Chairs, Michael Sarich and Eric F. Stein

- Mr. Stein provided an overview of the history of the Technology Committee's creation and identified its current governing structure, which includes approximately forty members participating on eight different working groups, each focused on improving FOIA processing through use of technology.
- Mr. Sarich and Mr. Stein took turns outlining the purpose and efforts of each of the eight working groups, including:
 - Collaborative Tools;
 - 508 Compliance;¹
 - FOIA Searches;
 - FOIAXpress;
 - FOIAonline²;
 - FOIA and Classified Information;
 - Artificial Intelligence; and

¹ After this meeting, the Collaborative Tools and 508 Compliance working groups combined into one group: "508 Compliance and Collaborative Tools."

² The Council or Technology Committee does not endorse any products, though recognizes through the creation of these working groups that FOIAXpress and FOIAonline are common platforms that many agencies use.

- Video Redactions

- Mr. Sarich shared five early findings from the Video Redactions working group, as shown on the slides, and noted that a full presentation will be provided in the near future. He explained that each individual working group intended to complete its initial written charter by the end of November 2020.
- Ms. Semo and Mr. Talebian opened the floor to agency discussion, and the speakers responded to various questions and comments via WebEx chat, telephone, and YouTube livestream.

Public Comments

- Ms. Semo and Mr. Talebian opened the floor to public discussion, and the speakers responded to the various questions and comments received via WebEx chat, telephone, and YouTube livestream.

Conclusion

- Mr. Talebian and Ms. Semo thanked everyone for attending.
- Ms. Semo closed the meeting at 11:56 AM.

Chief FOIA Officers Council Meeting

October 14, 2020

Registered Attendees (This list consists of individuals who registered to attend the meeting)

First Name	Last Name	Agency (if applicable)
Danielle	Adams	CFPB
Autumn	Agans	FCA
David	Ajua	USDA
Kenneth	Allen	
Candace	Ambrose	FRB
Towana	Ayres	Navy
Ray	Azarm	

Rosemary	Bajorek	CFTC
Shelley	Baker	USDA
Davonya	Barnes	NWTRB
Lisa	Barton	USITC
Nathania	Bates	SBC
Diane	Bath	
Brenda	Beck	
Meltin	Bell	
Michael	Bell	DOT
Sharon	Bellamy	USITC
Renate	Benham	State
Evonne	Bennett	IHS
Michael	Binder	
Mark	Bittner	
Adrienne	Blake	DOJ
Lisa	Blum	SSA
Michele	Bouziane	CSB
Diane	Bowers	Treasury
Mark	Brook	USDA
Robin	Brooks	HHS
Nicole	Brugato	
Virgina	Burke	Peace Corps
Cindy	Cafaro	DOI
Stephanie	Carr	DOD
Monica	Carter-Johnson	DHS
Caitlin	Cater	NEH
Judy	Cearley	USGS
Noelle	Chadwick	OSHRC
Stacy	Cheney	NTIA
Giny	Cheong	GAO

Kathleen	Christian	LBM
Joo	Chung	DOD
Monica	Chyn	SSA
Anthony	Clemons	HRSA
Samantha	Cohen	SSA
LaRima	Coleman	USDA
Beatriz	Collazo	USDA
Caelan	Conant	FTC
Rebecca	Conner	AMTRAK
Matt	Cox	USTDA
Ingrid	Cruz Diaz	FDA
Sarah	Cunanan	FDIC
Mahala	Dar	OSC
Anna	Davis	FMCS
Erin	Dawson	NSF
Ashley	Demchak	PRC
Stacey	Demps-Barrett	FMSHRC
Mark	Dorgan	DOD
Edward	Dukes	
Judith	Dupre	FDIC
Joan	Durocher	NCD
Megan	Dwyre	NARA
Stacy	Easter	FHFA
Jane	Elbert	
Timothy	Epp	EPA
Tracey	Fay	ONRR
Cecilia	Fiermonte	HHS
Desiree	Flippins	NEA
Jodi	Foor	NARA
Tiffany	Ford	OPM

Stephanie	Fox	NASA
Whitney	Frazier-Jenkins	PBGC
Gregory	Friedland	TTB
Vera	Fry	DHS
Peter	Garavuso	FRB
Gorka	Garcia-Malene	NIH
Stephanie	Garner	EEOC
Brooke	Geller	USDA
Josh	Gerstein	
Susan	Gillett	NARA
Latrice	Gilliard	HRSA
Christine	Gordon Lawson	FBI
Nikki	Gramian	NASA
Alexis	Graves	USDA
John	Gross	NMB
Helen	Guyton	LSC
Amanda	Haas	FRTIB
Darren	Hall	USGS
Patricia	Hargrave	DNFSB
Kohl	Harrington	
Torrie	Harris	GSA
Elizabeth	Harris	NCUA
Jessie	Hartman	NARA
Jory	Heckman	
Donna	Hellberg	DOJ
Dianna	Henry	
Guled	Hersi	
Angela	Hertel	DOJ
Tyler	Hillman	VA
Marthea	Hodge	USPS

Stuart	Hoff	FDIC
Thomas	Hohenthauer	MCC
Jeremy	Holmes	
Jennifer	Hu	
Jacqueline	Hudson	DOT
Crystal	Hundleyevans	EPA
John Kiem	Huynh	
LaToya	Isaac	
Lennell	Jackson	EXIM
Tracy	Jackson	
Gretchen	Jacobs	Access Board
Toya	Johnson	FERC
Doloras	Johnson	VA
Gbemende	Johnson	
Amanda	Joiner	EAC
Nate	Jones	
Janelle	Jordan	USDA
Judy	Kaleta	DOT
Homer	Keliwaiwaiole	DOD
Timi	Kenealy	AbilityOne
James	Killens	VA
Melissa	King	GAO
Justin	Klinger	
Ana	Kocur	RRB
Sarah	Kotler	FDA
Christopher	Laver	PRC
Ryan	Law	Treasury
David	Lee	FHFA
Jeanetta	Lee	DOJ
Glenn	Lewis	MCC

Travis	Lewis	GSA
Jennifer	Li	ABMC
Christopher	Lucy	
Ana Liza	Malabanan	NOAA
Carmen	Mallon	SEC
Arnetta	Mallory	DOJ
Carol	Maloney	HRSA
Nadine	Mancini	OSHRC
Natalia	Mandrus	IAF
Manjunath Ramaswamy	Manju	
Wendy	Marshall	Access Board
Heather	McClane	IHS
Shawne	McGibbon	ACUS
Ryan	McQuighan	NOAA
Regina	Metz	NCUA
Kristine	Minami	Education
Elizabeth	Mitchell	AFRH
Albert	Mokhiber	
Abioye	Mosheim	CPSC
Susan	Murphy	GAO
Michelle	Murray	SSA
Fon	Muttamara	MSPB
Sara	Nekou	OGE
David	Nelson	NRC
Amy	Nicholas	NCD
Tim	Nusraty	OMB
Chris	Oehrle	STB
Ramona	Oliver	DOL
Stephannie	Oriabure	NARA

Rebecca	Osborne	FLRA
Tim	Osumi	NIGC
Elise	Packard	EPA
Candice	Palen	BPA
Bobbie	Parsons	DOC
Peggy	Parvand	PRC
Camilla	Perry	PBGC
Robbie	Perry	USDA
Rosanna	Piccirilli`	FDIC
Phyllis	Pires	DOD
Nancy	Platt	NLRB
Samuel	Poole	PRC
Marvis	President	USDA
Angela	Purnell	HHS
Catrina	Purvis	DOC
Lisa	Pyle	Treasury
Tamara	Qureshi	CSB
Susan	Raposa	CFA
Atticus	Reaser	CIGIE
Monique	Ricker	USTR
Mae	Ridges	IMLS
Antionette	Robertson	USAID
Lawrence	Ruzow	ONHIR
Daria	Ryazhskikh	
Michelle	Sager	GAO
Dwight	Sanders	
Bridget	Sanders	DOL
Joe	Scanlon	NARA
Jeremy	Schmidt	USDA
Lynnea	Schurkamp	DHS

Loretta	Schuster	ASC
Gregg	Schwind	FHFA
Margaret	Serrano	
Greg	Sharma-Holt	
Mark	Siford	SEC
Alecia	Sillah	USAID
Nichole	Skoyles	OPIC
Sanquetta	Slater	ONDCP
Kevin	Smith	EPA
Rachel	Spector	DOL
Bill	Spencer	MSPB
Regina	Stabile	NIH
Cheryl	Stadel-Bevans	HUD
chantay	stanley	DOD
Dione	Stearns	
Gary	Stern	NARA
Tyler	Stewart	DOD
Eric	Styles	DFC
Katrina	Sutphin	FEC
Buck	Sutter	GCERC
Kristen	Swisher	
Amanda	Tanner	
Ravin	Tatman	VA
Stephanie	Tell	DHS
Amanda	Tempel	DHS
Lisa	Terry	EXIM
Michael	Toland	FDIC
Stephen	Vaden	USDA
Wendy	Valdes	
Madeline	Van Nostrand	DOT

Regina	Vann	State
Kimberly	Veach	GSA
Jane	Virga	FCA
James	Walker	
Denise	Wallace	HRSA
Agnes	Wanderer	DOI
Heidi	Wanner	BLM
Tamiko	Watkins	MCC
Shawntay	Watson	NARA
Susan	Weetman	State
Sarah	Wessel	PRC
Jeanean	West	CSOSA
Patricia	Weth	NLRB
William	White	IRS
Wanda	Williams	NARA
Betty Lou	Wingo	SSS
Jeannette	Wise	NARA
Nicholas	Wittenberg	OSTP
Nicholas	Wittenberg	EPA
Jimmy	Wolfrey	DHS
Eric	Wooden	RRB
Breona	Woods	FTC
Wadi	Yakhour	SSS
Aswathi	Zachariah	IAF
Hugo	Zia	FDIC
Mary	Zimmerman	SSA
Elvis	Zornic	