

**Social Security Advisory Board
Minutes
Board Meeting
June 24-25, 2014**

Location: Seattle, Washington

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. (June 24)
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (June 25)

SSAB Members: Barbara Kennelly, Acting Chair
Bernadette Franks-Ongoy
Jagadeesh Gokhale
Dorcas Hardy

SSAB Staff: Claire Green, Staff Director
David Warner
Jackie Chapin
Joel Feinleib
Sarah Weaver
Sterling Laudon

Participants

Center for Disability: **Barbara Wong**, Director
Liz Permann, Deputy Director
Natalie Quist, Social Insurance Specialist
Karla Schwarz, Social Insurance Specialist
John Denney, Social Insurance Specialist
Laura White, Disability Program Administrator Idaho and Oregon
Alan Heim, Assistant Regional Commissioner Management and Operations (ARCMOS)
Jim Burkett, Deputy Assistant Regional Commissioner Management and Operations (DARCMOS)

Office of Inspector General: **Joseph Veiling**, Special Agent-in-Charge, OIG OI
Joe Rogers, Criminal Investigator, Team Leader, CDI
Kent Zwicker, Criminal Investigator, Team Leader, CDI

DCPS Steering Committee: **Duane French**, WA DDS administrator
Nancy Vasquez, ID DDS administrator

Center for Human Resources: **Kelly Wittman**, Director of the Center for Human Resources
Darla Anderson, Supervisory Team Lead for Benefits and Employee Development Team
Mark Knepper, Regional Training Officer in the Employee Development Team

Sharon Cheadle, Project Manager in the Employee Development Team

Simon Ravona, Project Manager in the Labor and Employee Relations Team

ODAR: **Cynthia Rosa**, Acting Regional Chief Administrative Law Judge
Sue Brown, Regional Management Officer
Jim Borland, Assistant Deputy Commissioner

Auburn Teleservice: **Nathan Cox**, Deputy Director ATSC
Kim Phillips, 800# Coordinator
Betty Malloy, Section Manager
Manny Hernandez, Section Manager
Al Blackman, Administrative Officer
Mike Hallum, Section Manager
Barry Ellingson, Section Manager
Brett Eckelburg, Section Manager, Office of General Counsel, Leadership Management Development Program Associate
Lisa Black, Section Manager, Workload Support Unit

Seattle Field Office Management: **Chris Kuhel**, Seattle Metro District Manager
Tracey Kincaid, Seattle Metro Assistant District Manager
Joanie Thomas, Seattle Metro Operations Supervisor
Marsha Jollenston, Seattle North District Manager
Paul Flores, Seattle North Operations Supervisor

ALJ Union: **Randy Frye**, President, ALJ Union
Cheri Filion, ALJ Union

AFGE: **Steve Kofhal**, AFGE representative for employees from the FO, TSC, ODAR, and OQP in the Seattle region

OGC, DOJ, and fraud prosecutors with US Attorney's Office: **David Morado**, Regional Chief Counsel
Vikash Chhagan, Deputy Regional Chief Counsel
Helen Cooper, Special Assistant US Attorney

Seattle Region: **Stanley Friendship**, Regional Commissioner
Gail Leon, Deputy Regional Commissioner
Liana Mezo, Executive Officer for the Office of the Regional Commissioner
Steve Hughes, Area Director for Area 2
Terry Temple, Area Director for Area 1
Barbara Wong, Director for the Center for Programs Support
Nancy Dunham, Deputy for the Center for Programs Support
Bill Shie, Region's Civil Rights and EEO Manager
Kevin Rack, Program Manager for the Center for Material Resources

Ann Mohageri, Director of the Regional Public Affairs Office
Michael Webb, Senior Public Affairs Specialist
Bill Laudon, Team Leader in the Seattle Center for Automation.
Bao Phung, Project Manager for Office of the Regional
Commissioner

In June, the Board travelled to Seattle, Washington, for a series of meetings over a two-day period. On the first day, the Board visited the Seattle Regional Office for the first day of discussions with SSA staff. The Board met with staff of the Center for Disability components—including the Disability Processing Unit, the Disability Programs and Systems team, and a Cooperative Disability Investigation team. Each component discussed their operations, accomplishments, challenges, and answered questions from the Board about ways to improve the program. The Board then met with the Office of General Counsel and SSA fraud prosecutors working with the U.S. Attorney’s office. Prosecutors discussed efforts taken to collaborate with other government offices to prevent Social Security fraud.

During a working lunch, the Board met with regional office executives and management to learn about the region and gather ideas for improving Social Security nationwide. Executives spoke about a variety of activities the region is involved in and efforts to maximize service with limited resources. The Board heard from SSA public affairs and their efforts to publicize SSA online resources and provide service in rural areas. Next, the Board held an open session with cross-component staff members who provided comments and questions directly to the Board.

The Board met with the SSA’s human resources department to discuss hiring and training challenges in the agency. Employees discussed retaining employees during a period of low morale, pay freezes, a government shutdown, and sequestration. The Board learned about new methods being used by SSA to train employees, allowing new hires to learn at a self-directed pace using software and live video feeds being broadcast from SSA studios. The Board met Office of Disability Adjudication and Review management to discuss the disability appeals process. The Board conversed about challenges facing this component, including a backlog of disability cases due to the inability to hire enough judges and a steep increase in appeals during the economic downturn.

On the second day of the trip, the Board visited a SSA field office. The Board held separate meetings with front line employees and management, and listened to the concerns of each. The Board toured the facility and observed field office employees taking claims and interacting with the public. Afterward, the Board met with representatives of the administrative law judge union who suggested reforms for the disability hearing process. During the Board’s working lunch, they spoke to a representative of the American Federation of Federal Employees, representing SSA employees from the Seattle region.

In the afternoon, the Board traveled to Auburn, Washington, to visit the co-located interactive video technology (IVT) studio and teleservice center. The Board observed the studio and learned about how the studio is used to train SSA employees live via satellite. The Board then toured the teleservice center – one of four “mega” teleservice centers in the country. SSA staff explained how the teleservice center can be directed to expand service to callers across the country.

I certify that the minutes written for the June 24 - 25, 2014 meeting of the Social Security Advisory Board are correct.



Barbara B. Kennelly

Acting Chair
Social Security Advisory Board