

NUCLEAR ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Gressette Building, Room # 209

July 13, 2017

1:00 – 4:00

Representative Davis: Call to Order – Approval of Minutes & Update of NAC Activities

Attendees: Claude Cross, Sylleste Davis, Carolyn Hudson, James Little, Vincent Van Brunt

Dr. Vincent Van Brunt moved; Captain Claude Cross seconded; the minutes for the April 13, 2017 meeting to be approved and they were accepted.

Representative Davis: Karen Patterson has resigned from the Council on May 7, 2017. She is accepting a position as Vice Chair for Randolph College Board of Trustees where she has been serving as a member of that Board. She is very excited about her new opportunity. Karen became a member of the Governor's Nuclear Advisory Council on June 12, 2008 and later became the Chair on December 8, 2011. She was the Chair for several years and we are certainly going to miss her, her expertise and her leadership. She takes with her a wealth of knowledge. She had retired as Project Manager and Environmental Services Group Manager for Tetra Tech, Inc, an environmental consulting and engineering firm. She had been a contractor for the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory's Environmental Sciences Group and for the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory on the Savannah River Site.

She takes with her expertise in the areas of the effects of nuclear facilities on the environment and the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and associated regulation.

We as a group appreciated Karen's leadership and her expertise and we will miss her. I have agreed to step in for today's meeting as a facilitator. We are awaiting the Governor's appointment of Karen's replacement and the appointment of a Chair.

We want to bring everyone up to date on a meeting we had recently with a group from Germany. The German Delegation came in to meet with us, not the council, but a working group consisting of (Representative Sylleste Davis, Steve Byrne and James Little). We did have someone from the Governor's Office there so we could meet all parties involved in potential arrangement between the United States and Germany. I will turn it over to Mr. James Little to speak a little more about our discussion.

James Little: The purpose of the meeting was to bring the working group up to date on their plans that the German Government is requesting that the US Government process the highly enriched uranium that was a result of a reactor test program they had in place for some while in Germany. The reason they want to engage the US Government and in particular the Savannah River Site is that is the only processing facility in the world that could accommodate processing this highly enriched uranium.

This meeting was to update us on what the German Government's desire is and their plan to work with the US Government to process their material in the future. The German Government's plan is to fully pay to process their material and they are not expecting the US Government to pick up the cost for processing.

What was interesting in the meeting was noting that the US Government originally provided the highly enriched uranium to the German Government; so, there is a partnership implied that you helped us get into this mess maybe now you can help us get out of this mess we have to deal with. Maintaining an inventory of highly enriched uranium is certainly a hazard that has to be managed, not to mention the security threat as well.

It was an informal meeting just to introduce us to the background of what was going on with this program and their plans that they have in place to move this material. It would take a number of years to process the material. Some of the benefits that Savannah River might receive is it keeps H Canyon up and running with a steady throughput of materials, maintaining the knowledge and capability of processing because we are down to only one canyon facility in the United States and that is H Canyon for these types of materials.

The meeting lasted a couple of hours to take us through the background and history along with what their plans are. A lot of integration work still has to be done if this is going to be a possibility of getting the Department of Energy to commit to doing this and allow the contractor which in this case is SRNS to undertake the program. There will be some test programs that will have to be undertaken on a larger scale. These would be conducted at Savannah River to demonstrate efficacies of the processes involved to treat and dilute these materials.

SRNS Update, Stuart MacVean, SRNS, President and CEO
(Slides available here <http://admin.sc.gov/node/1543>)

Question from Council:

Representative Davis: Thank you so much for your cost savings efforts, your efforts to hire locally, to hire veterans, and trying to address your retirement cliff. The utility industry in

general has a similar retirement cliff as well as some other industries I believe; so, your efforts there are very much appreciated and could probably be used to train other industries on some things they could do.

Of the nuclear material that you are handling, in the various ways you handle this material, how many different sources are there of that material? Are you bringing in material from 10 different sources, 20 different sources, what is the range of where that material is coming from?

Mr. MacVean: Currently we have a domestic research reactor return program that includes a couple different universities within the United States. Then there is forward research reactor fuel and there are probably right at the moment active by about a half a dozen different reactors, we just took a delivery from Peru of material from there. There are about a half a dozen that are active. We are receiving two different materials from Canada, one fuel and one liquid. They go to different facilities for different disposition paths. We are being asked on a regular consistent basis “can you deal with”, there is an endless supply of materials that need disposition. I am told there are probably a quarter of a million different parts and pieces in the United States alone of material types that need disposition.

Representative Davis: Of the material coming into the United States, did that material originate in the United States?

Mr. MacVean: Yes, that is actually the basis for the foreign reactor fuel program is it’s all US origin. That’s why the agreement is we bring that material back to this country.

Representative Davis: And that agreement is between the United States and those individual countries.

Mr. MacVean: Yes.

Representative Davis: Thank you very much.

Dr. Van Brunt: You mentioned for the first time in five years you had consistent performance. Have you identified why you have gotten such consistent performance this year – what are the elements that go into having such strong performance this year and what prevented that from happening before?

Mr. MacVean: The background is the facilities REC was shut down back in early 2010 and 2011 time frame and they were not asked to restart until about two years ago. They have ramped up over the last couple of years to get to the point where they are at today. What I can tell you is there was a safety pause from the issue that occurred in HB line about two years ago. The work that went in to understanding what had occurred, how was it possible for the folks to get themselves into the position they were in that they made the decision they had made as well as a general view of performance across the board. I think it was an excellent learning platform for the organization, they put a lot of learning in place, and they out-brief the facilities much different today than they did two years ago. There are a lot of different players involved, there is a very different standard of approach. It is much more aligned today with commercial nuclear approaches. The Institute of Nuclear Power Operations (INPO) has been in and done a review about a year ago of the program and the plan that was going to be put into place and what we are now seeing is the out turn of that and how successful if you do it right here is what you get for results.

Dr. Van Brunt: Has it been applied beyond?

Mr. MacVean: It has been applied beyond and across the full fleet of plants I am responsible for. We also share that learning across a wider front with the contractors as well.

Dr. Van Brunt: Thank you.

Representative Davis: Thank you very much, we appreciate that.

SRS Update, Thomas Johnson, DOE-EM, SR Associate Deputy Manager
(Slides available here <http://admin.sc.gov/node/1543>)

Mr. Little: I guess this budget keeps liquid waste running at its current capacity level?

Mr. Johnson: It keeps liquid waste funded but there is a bigger issue with what you are seeing here. There numbers look relatively the same but a big portion of what is coming in as liquid waste is coming into the Saltstone Disposal Units. We were actually looking for and wanting more money in the operations side itself but that was not what was done in the 2017 omnibus and for my initial look I saw on the House marks it looks relatively similar to what I saw for 2017.

Mr. Little: Are these 2018 Congressional Budget Office pass backs?

Mr. Johnson: This is the official Presidential Budget request.

Mr. Little: Thank you.

Captain Cross: Stuart told us about the success of the average employee age changing from 54 to 49 which I think is remarkable. That has been a plague in the nuclear community and commercial industries ever since I have been around it. I hope they are as successful in the power plants as you have been here at the site. That is a real success story. Stuart talked about 5,500 personnel plus the National Lab having about 6,500 personnel and you said there are about 11,000 on site. What about the rest of them, are you as successful with the rest of the people?

Mr. Johnson: We have the same challenge with the other contractor not so much on the Parsons side that is specific for the construction and the one year's operations. But for SRR, for the staff with CENTERRA and even the staff for DOE we all have similar kinds of issues where the average age is between 52 and 54. I will start on the DOE side – we have not been as successful as Stuart has been in getting the average age lower. We have spent most of this year with a hiring freeze. So, if you are having a hiring freeze and you are not bringing new folks on site guess what happens to your number – it continues to grow a bit. On the Federal side we have an authorized head count of about 275, normal attrition for the site is about 10% due to retirements and transfers to other locations. As of last week we were down to about 250 and so the attrition is continuing but we have not been able to hire. We did get approval in the last week or so to hire a total of seven positions so that will bring us up to about 257. We are still fighting attritions and transfers. Part of the concerns we have is when we are trying to fill a staff level position at the site and if it is an outside hire it requires an approval all the way up to the Secretary of Energy. This is for a staff person and not a senior executive. For the other contractors they have similar type of challenges but they are able to do some hiring. We have a team of folks we share from the HR perspective; we share data, strategy on how we go through the hiring process across the companies and with DOE. So a good idea only has to be thought of once because if it's a good idea all of us can utilize it. I will look for other good ideas but if it has worked for one contractor we can go through and break it down and determine why it's working. There is not a reason for us not to try to duplicate it to work with others.

Mr. Little: Why was there a hiring freeze on SRR?

Mr. Johnson: The hiring freeze that went into effect earlier this year wasn't so much of a hiring freeze on the contractor side of the house. It had to do more with the budget, the funds we actually have available. The hiring freeze was specifically on the federal level.

Mr. Little: It was an executive order then.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, but it is controlled on the contractor's side by what you do with the budget.

Mr. Little: It was more of a budget constraint that it was with a head count.

Mr. Johnson: Correct.

Mr. Little: Thank you.

Representative Davis: Having had twenty years of experience in IT, anytime I see an IT budget item broken out I am always curious about what is going into that number. Is there anything specific going on in association with cyber security or is that just a matter of you pulling it out of another part of the budget and creating a new line item for it.

Mr. Johnson: It is a combination of a couple of things. Mostly it is just pulling it out of another line item and giving it a specific identification. We also have a few things I won't actually discuss what they are but we have a few things that's contributing to this number but it's not a significant increase from where we have been on the security side. As an example we had to implement something called multifactor authentication where we are signing onto the computer to access things on the site. When you start doing things like this it costs you additional monies.

Representative Davis: I assume the site was not affected by the most recent ransomware.

Mr. Johnson: No significant impacts but like everywhere else you can see where attempts were being made. We go through that at the sight on a daily basis.

Representative Davis: Thank you very much. We appreciate that.

Representative Davis: Are there any public comments? There were no public comments.

The next meeting of the Nuclear Advisory Council will be held on Thursday, October 12, 2017.

Meeting adjourned