



## COALITION OF FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN

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### MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting Date and Time:** February 10, 2020, 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm (EDT)

**Location:** Teleconference

**Agenda:**

1. Mentoring Committee Update
2. Social Media Committee (SMC)
3. Next OSO Meeting – 02/24/2021
4. Announcements – Training opportunities, job postings, or really any office and ombudsman happenings you’d like to tell the world about
5. General Questions - Space for newer ombuds and programs (and people looking to set up programs) to ask questions and get feedback. No issue is too big or small so ask away!
6. Discussion Topics:
  - a. Use of home/personal devices during the pandemic – There are many different platforms for virtual communication, and some are compatible with our “work” devices and some are not. What rules does your agency information technology department have in place? Do they permit you to use your “personal” device in this situation? If not, what are the ethical implications of using your “personal” device on “work” time? Would this make your device subject to a government search? (This does not include if you log on to your “work” VPN through your “personal” device.)
  - b. Dealing with persistent inquirers raising issues where the ombudsman’s office can no longer assist and where the inquirer is also adversely affecting the operations of the ombuds resource
  - c. Security of electronic records, methods by which ombuds are protecting their electronic records

**Highlights:**

1. **Mentoring Committee Update**
  - a. Guest speaker for next OSO meeting will be Erin Gaudreault.
2. **Social Media Committee (SMC) Update**
  - a. SMC just had second meeting and still not too late for any others who want to join

- b. Discuss and developed a listing of pros and cons of different social media platforms and if they met the stated goals of COFO
- c. It appears LinkedIn may be the best fit and SMC will continue to seek information to determine next best steps

**3. Next OSO Meeting – 02/24/21**

- a. No set agenda for the call and any reflections, whether personal or professional, are welcomed
- b. Next Ombuds Supporting Ombuds (OSO) call on Wednesday, February 24, 2022, from 2 – 3 pm EDT.

**4. Announcements**

- a. No announcements

**5. General Questions**

- a. How to approach senior leadership about the tone of emails?
- b. Emails do not have a tone by itself and are usually determined by the reader based on past experiences with the sender
- c. When tone is in question then this is a good opportunity to ask about past experiences between the sender/reader
- d. Typically, when there is missing information in an email the reader fills gaps with emotions
- e. It would be good to have the visitor read the email in different tones.

**6. Discussion Topics**

- a. **Use of home/personal devices during the pandemic**
  - i. Topic of discussion is the use of home devices during the pandemic
  - ii. Zoom is the typical example of a platform that is of common use for virtual meetings
  - iii. Zoom is not allowed in some agencies/departments in the government
  - iv. Has anyone used their personal device to communicate virtually during the pandemic and why?
  - v. Yes, some have used their personal devices due to COVID-19, especially cell phones
  - vi. Cell phones were used due to the haste in which the government went to virtual without appropriate equipment for virtual communications
  - vii. Some agencies do not have laptops, cellphones, or other portal equipment for communications
  - viii. For off the record conversations, some ombuds have used personal cell phone
  - ix. Personal email is problematic and has risks due to FOIA and other applicable laws for disclosure when creating government records

- x. Ombuds discussed that the Zoom platform could be considered the same as a telephone conversation if the transcript feature is not used or the meeting is not recorded
- xi. Personal cell phone calls may not be as problematic as personal text which could be considered as creating a government record
- xii. Some ombuds do not use personal equipment at all to separate work from personal completely
- xiii. Connecting personal devices to government networks could also be a big problem due to security issues
- xiv. For professional organization meetings like IOA some ombuds use personal devices to connect to those meetings
- xv. Some agencies use WebEx exclusively for external meetings and to use other platforms a request is made to IT to ensure security measures are in place
- xvi. One ombuds stated Zoom does not create a record and that it was specifically designed not to create one if not selected by the user
- xvii. Zoom for Gov is rolling out at several agencies
- xviii. The differences of Zoom and Zoom Gov would be an interesting discussion when roll out is complete
- xix. How are ombuds handling callers who incessantly call or call at off-duty hours on personal devices
- xx. Ombuds state they have blocked calls, screen calls, or have not had any specific difficulties
- xxi. One ombuds stated Zoom Gov is the same application as Zoom and acceptance to meetings does not appear to be different
- xxii. One ombuds stated they think use of personal devices for any government business opens the individual to a FOIA search
- xxiii. Another concern with use of a personal device is if your agency has stated not to use a platform like Zoom and you use it on your personal device then it appears you in conflict (doing something you been told not to do) with an agency directive
- xxiv. One difference noted was the use of personal computers with VPN
- xxv. VPN is entering the agency network and you have the protection of government controls
- xxvi. Using your personal device without the protection of government controls is the issue being discussed and not the use of VPN
- xxvii. The search for potential is also a concern as when a request is made a search is conducted for records and you may open yourself to search even without creating a record

**Attendance 02/10/2020**

<b>Last</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Call-In</b>
Adams	Joanne	USDA	1
Arbid	Michelle	FEMA	1
Balick	Howard	FDA	1
Behr	Virginia	FDA	1
Bloch	Brian	DOI	1
Bookstein	Monique	FBI	1
Brown	Andrea	United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)	1
Cameron	Bob	CFPB	1
Carmouche	Colette	TSA	1
Chavez Rudolph	Mary	DOI	1
Davenport Dayes	Nathelia (Nicky)	FEMA	1
Deyo	Scott	DOE	1
Doyle	Bill	US Secret Service	1
Ekwuabu	Ogochukwu	VA	1
Epps	Ayanna	FDIC	1
Feliciano	Ramon	DOD / DIA	1
Footman	Aaron	USPTO	1
Fox	Angela	FDA	1
Garmon	Felisa	CFPB	1
Gnatt	Sheldon	NSA	1
Gordon	Laurel	DOJ / U. S. Marshals Service (USMS)	1
Green	Veronica	State OIG	1
Harris	Robert D.	FDIC	1
Hartman	Jessie	NARA/ Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)	1
Heffernan	Claire	TSA	1
Hobson	Shirley	VA	1
Hopkins	Emilee	NGA	1
Jarrett	Syreeta	DIA	1
Kamenshine	Wendy	CFPB	1
Katherine	Erica	FDA	1

## UNCLASSIFIED

<b>Last</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Call-In</b>
Kinnavy	Noreen	Broadcasting Board of Governors	<b>1</b>
Lenkel	Laurie	FDA	<b>1</b>
Leone	Joe	NSA	<b>1</b>
Lloyd	Brenda	FLETC	<b>1</b>
Levine	Lisa	DOJ / Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR)	<b>1</b>
Lewis	Mark D.	FDA	<b>1</b>
MacKinnon	Kathryn	DOD / Defense Office of Hearings and Appeals (DOHA)	<b>1</b>
Malone	Marcus	DOJ / USMS	<b>1</b>
Manderson	Katie	VA	<b>1</b>
Maurer	Bill	Census	<b>1</b>
McNeil	Tracey	SEC	<b>1</b>
Michael	David	NIH	<b>1</b>
Miller	Carla	DOJ / ATF	<b>1</b>
Milner	Heather	CFPB	<b>1</b>
Moore	Sandi	NRO	<b>1</b>
Morey	Chauncenette	FBI	<b>1</b>
Patno	Arielle	FDA / Center for Tobacco Products	<b>1</b>
Piziali	Jamie	EPA	<b>1</b>
Porch	Susanne	Commerce / National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)	<b>1</b>
Reed	Janay	DOD / DIA	<b>1</b>
Reilly	Kevin	NASA	<b>1</b>
Richards	Amber		<b>1</b>
Robinson	Belinda	FBI	<b>1</b>
Rojas	Nick	DOD / DIA	<b>1</b>
Rowe	Mary	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	<b>1</b>
Skodacek	Ken	FDA	<b>1</b>
Sotoudeh	Paul	USPTO	<b>1</b>
Stergio	Marcus	Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs / DOL	<b>1</b>
Stevenson	Christina	Navy / Marine Corps Systems Command	<b>1</b>
Taylor	Lelar	VA	<b>1</b>
Trujillo	Sarah	USDA	<b>1</b>
Varner	Tahirih	NPS	<b>1</b>
Vermillion	Chris	TSA	<b>1</b>

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<b>Last</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Call-In</b>
Voloshin	Victor	NIH	<b>1</b>
Yuille Banford	Deanna	DOD / Defense Human Resources Activity	<b>1</b>
Weber	Guy	DOD / NGA	<b>1</b>
Wolfe	Lexi	DOE	<b>1</b>
Wright	Donald	USDA	<b>1</b>
		<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>