



# COALITION OF FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN

## MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting Date/Time:** June 8, 2016, 1:30pm – 3:00pm

**Location:** Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 1275 First Street NE Washington, DC 20002

### **Agenda:**

1. Guest Presenter, Cinnie Noble
2. Open Discussion

### **Highlights:**

a. Guest Presenter, Cinnie Noble:

Gossip is undoubtedly a universal activity and one that has been historically considered an aid to social bonding. It's often through gossip that we learn about each other, possibly leading to the realization that we share common backgrounds, values, beliefs and interests that may provide a sense of belonging and friendship.

Gossip in organizations may also inform employees what sort of behavior is acceptable and unacceptable, and learning news from the office 'grapevine' often avoids being blindsided. That is, gossip may help prepare staff to constructively engage in discussions regarding upcoming announcements that have an impact on them.

Having considered several positive outcomes of gossip, it is necessary to also consider how this practice is frequently destructive and leads to conflict. That is, gossip is commonly an exaggeration or fabrication about a person and situation. Those who engage in gossip might, for instance, paint a picture of others that taints their personal and professional lives. It can tarnish careers, personal relationships and reputations. It can embarrass, cause shame and demean people who have no way of defending themselves.

The motivation of those who initiate gossip of this nature is not always evident. Is it to be part of the group? Is it to feel better by putting others down? Is it due to mean-spiritedness? Is it due to jealousy? Only the gossiper knows the reason – and not always consciously. However, even when we participate in the discussion that others initiate, we are complicit and essentially, condone the 'bad-mouthing'. When conflict emerges, as a consequence, we can be seen as part of the problem.

If you tend to be a gossiper, or regularly engage in gossip that undermines others (whether or not you initiate it), please consider the following questions. It helps to start by bringing to mind a situation in which you initiated a story about a co-worker (or boss, or friend, or family member), or you were told about a situation and participated in a discussion about it.

**b. Open Discussion:**

- USOA Conference – reminder about participation and presentation by COFO
- USMS recently hired their first Ombudsman and they are “getting their feet wet” with their operations.
- Suggestion about having a meeting on conflict and applicability of the ADR Act.
- FOIA – SES opening. More info to come.

Meeting adjourned.

**Attendees in person:**

Barrar, Riley	Department of State
Dean, Karen	US Patent and Trademark Office
Deyo, Scott	Department of Defense
Doty, Brenda	Federal Maritime Commission
Doyle, William	Department of Homeland Security
Gordon, Laurel	Department of Justice
Janson, Michael	Federal Communication Commission
Kappor, Vikram	Department of Homeland Security
Liebman, Melissa	Department of Justice
Mills, Anna	Federal Deposit Insurance Cooperation
Mills, Laurel	Department of Justice
Mitchell, Kristen	Office of Government Information Services
Osborn, Hollee	Federal Deposit Insurance Cooperation
Sotoudeh, Paul	Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Valdez, Roberta	Federal Deposit Insurance Cooperation
Vanyur , John	John Vanyur Consulting

**Attendees by phone:**

Berg, Mollie	Department of Defense
Bookstein, Monique	Department of Justice
Day-Lewis, Kimberly	Department of Homeland Security
Epps, Ayanna	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Janes, Clint	Department of Commerce
Kamenshine, Wendy	Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Larkins, Marcia	Department of Health and Human Services
McGuire, Carrie	Office of Government Information Services
Maurer , William	Department of Energy
Merrix, Celeste	Department of Homeland Security
Noble, Cinnie	Cinergy Coaching
Pontillo, Pamela	Department of Energy
Roberts, Sara	Department of Homeland Security
Weber, Guy	Department of Defense