

Minutes for the September 9, 2024, FORNL Board Meeting

Call to Order and Amendments to the Agenda – Ellen Smith

Ellen Smith called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. A quorum was present.

Attendees:

Officers present: Ellen Smith, President; Steve Overbury, Vice President; Fred Peretz, Secretary; and David Mullins, Treasurer.

Board Members Present: Syd Ball, David Fields, Kathy Gant, Ray Garrett, Carolyn Krause, and Alan Lowe.

Adjunct members in attendance: Annette Brun, Herb Krause, James Rome, and Jim Rushton.

Minutes of August Meeting – Fred Peretz

Minutes for the August 12 board meeting were circulated to the board. The minutes were approved and will be posted on the FORNL website.

Treasurer's and Membership Report – David Mullins

With a positive balance on last month's lunch, the overall annual balance is nearly even.

A certificate of deposit is coming due soon. A discussion of renewing for 5 months at 5% interest vs. 23 months at 4% ensued. It was observed that the dollar amount of the interest in question was marginal; the real issue was when the funds might be needed. Based on our checking account balance, and having another CD coming due in December, it was agreed to renew for a 23-month term.

Two memberships came in, but they appeared to be from the same person. The board suggested the member be credited for two years. This leaves us with a net increase of one member.

ORNL Liaison's Report – Annette Brun and Katy Brown

Ellen Smith reported that she spoke with Stephen Streiffer, and the ORNL Laboratory Director said with a statement on the different organizations ORNL and Y-12, the use of the Y-12 New Hope Center could be acceptable for the State of the Laboratory address on November 14. Annette Brun will confirm this through the Laboratory Director's staff. There will have to be a "responsible person" on site; neither Ellen nor Alan Lowe will be in town that day. David Mullins, treasurer, volunteered to serve in that role. Costs for the New Hope Center should be under \$500 (after refund of a damage deposit), covering payment of an audio-visual technician.

Should the New Hope Center option not work out, the AMSE auditorium could serve as a backup. Capacity, however, is limited to 150 people. Complications with using the Oak Ridge High School auditorium, including insurance and providing an on-site police presence, make that alternative unattractive. Annette Brun will check if combining conference rooms at the Manufacturing Development Facility in Hardin Valley might also be an option.

Volunteers are being solicited to support the ORNL Travelling Science Fair on October 3 at Downtown Island Home airport, and again with the Travelling Science Fair at the Oak Ridge High School on October 22 (as part of nuclear science week). A volunteer form will be developed to sign up for either of these. Volunteers may also be invited for an ORNL Community Day for nonprofit organizations on October 15.

The ORNL Benefits and Wellness fair will be held on October 24; FORNL has staffed an information table at past events and will likely do so again this year.

Monthly Lectures – Ellen Smith, Carolyn Krause, other board members

The August 13 lecture was by Lee Riedinger, on the release of his new book “Critical Connections – The University of Tennessee and Oak Ridge from the Dawn of the Atomic Age to the Present.”

Talks scheduled for upcoming meetings include:

- September 17 – Zili Wu, ORNL Chemical Science Division and the Center for Nanophase Material Sciences at ORNL, “Catalysis for Closing the Carbon Cycle and Decarbonizing Chemical Reactions.” (A week late, due to speaker availability)
- October 8 – Ivan Selin, speaking on “Nuclear Regulatory Commission: Past and Present.”
- November 11 talk by Laetitia Delmau, recent recipient of the Glenn Seaborg Actinide Separations award; she might talk on promethium chemistry or several actinide topics.

Topics mentioned earlier include electron microscopy, new climatological modeling including physics-based models to evaluate flooding risk, electrochemical cooling and solid-state coolants, modeling tools for building energy use and potential savings, issues with the electric power grid, programs with AMSE and the Oak Ridge city school system, and either a lunch lecture or community lecture by Congressman Chuck Fleischmann.

A talk on the proposed construction of a uranium enrichment plant by ORANO was suggested, based on their recent site selection announcement. As with many such announcements, technical details are sparse at this time. A cooperative effort between Australia-based Quantum Brilliance and ORNL on the integration of quantum systems and high-performance computing to tackle scientific concerns was also mentioned; Ray Garrett will investigate. Jim Rushton will investigate a talk on clinical trials involving the use of Xe-129, along with supporting production efforts. A talk on Type One Energy’s plans for the Bull Run site was mentioned (although again sufficient public details may not be forthcoming) as well as new opportunities under a new Fusion Energy Division director. A tour of the Manufacturing Development Facility would be an interesting alternative to the usual lunch lecture, but noise issues may limit attendance to small groups.

The current list of potential speakers is being maintained as a Google online spreadsheet used for recruiting and scheduling prospective speakers. The worksheet can be viewed and edited by anyone, accessed via the link https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ETI6DIem5_jf_0rNfZUfHf5PycV11b2vIOpNT6KFjH0/.

Community Lectures – Kent Williams

Potential progress on using the New Hope Center for the State of the Lab Community Lecture by ORNL Laboratory Director Stephen Streiffer on November 14 have been covered in the ORNL liaison report

Other suggestions include geospatial science and modeling, possibly including flood modeling. Carolyn Krause will pursue this option. If sufficient detail would be provided, talks by Type One Energy Group, ORANO, or Kairos Power might also be of broad community interest.

Outreach:

Brochure, Poster, and Promotional Materials – Fred Peretz and Syd Ball

Alan Lowe concurred with asking his staff to make minor changes to the example brochure prepared by ORNL graphics; Fred Peretz will circulate the necessary files and pursue printing through delivery to ORNL.

Member Interaction

No updates reported under member interaction.

STEM Education

Plans for the ORNL Travelling Science Fair, including volunteer needs, have been discussed under the ORNL liaison report.

Volunteer Opportunities and Needs – Partner Organizations:

AMSE and Public Tours – Alan Lowe

The site tours continue to proceed through the middle of November. AMSE remains a fallback option for the State of the Laboratory talk in November.

Manhattan Project National Historical Park – Fred Peretz

Fred Peretz mentioned that he visited the Milwaukee-area Allis-Chalmers Manhattan Project Building – the site where the calutrons were built during World War II.

Media reports:

Newspapers – Carolyn Krause

An article on Marcia McNutt’s Wigner Lecture appeared on the front page of the August 27 edition of The Oak Ridger, and on its website, under the headline: “National Academy of Sciences Director: US Science Losing its Lead in World.”

An article on Mark Champion’s lunch lecture on the Proton Power Upgrade for the SNS appeared on the front page of the August 29 edition of The Oak Ridger, and on its website, under the headline: “Energy Upgrade: Planned Doubling of SNS Power Expected to Spur Scientific Discoveries.”

An article promoting the FORNL lunch lecture by Zili Wu on Sept. 17 has been submitted to The Oak Ridger for publication, probably in next Monday’s edition. It will be submitted to Bill Cabage at ORNL and other media soon.

Three articles on Lee Riedinger’s talk on his book and the UT-ORNL partnership have been accepted by Ray Smith for future publication in the “Historically Speaking” column in The Oak Ridger.

Website – James Rome

The board agreed that we should pay to maintain control of the FORNL.info domain.

Facebook – Ellen Smith

There was no update on the FORNL Facebook page.

Old Business:

There was no old business.

New Business

Ellen noted that it is time to identify a nominating committee for 2025 officers. According to our by-laws, “Before October 1 of each year the Board will elect a Nominating Committee of five members, no more than three of whom will be members of the Board. The Board will designate one of the committee members to serve as convener. The convener will call the first meeting of the committee. The committee will then organize itself.

The committee will provide at least one nominee to replace each director whose term has expired and at least one nominee to fill any empty second-year director seat. The committee will state its recommendations for officers on the Board. The nominating committee will not nominate any of its own members. The Committee will start its work by October 1.”

According to past practices, board members that might be reelected along with current or potential officers should not serve. Current officers with expiring terms that are eligible to serve another term are not eligible to serve on the committee. Presuming there are three board members on the committee, they will identify two FORNL members not currently on the board to complete the nominating committee.

Fred Peretz stated that he will drop off the board when his term expires; Ellen suggested that might make him eligible to serve on the committee. David Mullins said he would be willing to serve again as Treasurer. Ellen stated that she might serve again on the board, but not as President. Carolyn Krause said she would continue to serve on the board, but as she served as convener of the nominating committee last year would not serve on the committee again. Steve Overbury will complete his first term in February; Syd Ball and David Fields will complete their second term. Board members are allowed three terms before they are required to rotate off the board.

Thus far, there is one identified opening on the board for next year (although all current board members with expiring terms have not been polled). Roger Macklin was suggested as a potential candidate. No formal action was taken on forming the nominating committee; this topic needs to be revisited at the next board meeting.

Closing

The next board meeting will be held via Zoom at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, October 7, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Fred Peretz
Secretary, Friends of ORNL