

Minutes for the October 7, 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: Herb Krause, James Rome, and Kent Williams.

Minutes of February Meetings – Fred Peretz

Minutes for the September 9 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

Expenses and income remain at the break-even point for the year. Lunch cost remains balanced, and the main expenses are community lectures and internet costs. One certificate of deposit was just renewed for 23 months at 4% interest, and another matures in December. It was suggested that the second certificate be renewed for a shorter period, allowing access to cash if needed.

There are still no requests for financial support for the Southern Appalachian Science and Engineering Fair or the Tennessee Science Bowl; requests for both are expected later this month. Last year we contributed \$1,000 to each. The events are held in the spring. We have no information on our ORNL grant request.

One annual membership was received last month. Beginning in November, annual memberships will be credited to 2025.

ORNL Liaison's Report – Annette Brun and Katy Brown

Annette Brun was unable to attend. Earlier, Annette asked Ellen Smith if she had heard from Katy Brown; she had not. As for holding a State of the Laboratory address at the Oak Ridge High School, insurance and police support remain issues. The possibility of deferring the talk until Pollard Auditorium became available was raised, but the board felt that maintaining the schedule was preferable even if the venue was not optimal. Use of the AMSE auditorium, with a capacity of 150, was again suggested. It was agreed we would confirm the acceptability of AMSE with the Laboratory Director's Office (LDO) staff, and that we will cancel the contract with the New Hope Center at Y-12, which the LDO stated is unacceptable.

The ORNL Benefits and Wellness Fair will be held on October 24. Syd Ball, Kathy Gant, and Herb Krause have already volunteered and registered. Syd will bring his monitor; Herb will bring his computer with videos of talks.

Nominating Committee

Fred Peretz, Kathy Gant, and Alan Lowe all agreed to be on the nominating committee as board members. Alan also agreed to serve as convenor, and he will call a meeting of the committee soon. Kent Williams volunteered to serve as one non-board-member; an additional FORNL member not currently a member of the board is needed.

Current board members with expiring terms were polled, and only Fred Peretz plans to drop off the board. At least one new board member must be identified; there are existing board members that might not run again if additional new candidates come forward. Ellen Smith is willing to remain on the board, but not serve again as president. Thus, recommended candidates for President and Secretary are needed (with other officers possibly needed if roles for existing board members change).

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

The September 17 lecture was given by Zili Wu of the ORNL Chemical Science Division and the Center for Nanophase Material Sciences at ORNL; he spoke on “Catalysis for Closing the Carbon Cycle and Decarbonizing Chemical Reactions.”

The October 8 talk will be delivered by Ivan Selin, who will speak on “Nuclear Regulatory Commission: Past and Present” without a slide presentation and lead a discussion about NRC and novel reactor concepts. A considerable discussion took place on logistics for such a meeting. Selin may also wish to talk with Carolyn Krause about published summaries of the discussion.

On November 11, Laetitia Delmau, recent recipient of the Glenn Seaborg Actinide Separations Award, will speak on her work in radioisotope separations and recent research into promethium and actinide chemistry. This will conclude the calendar year 2024 lecture series.

Planning for 2025 is currently underway. Ray Garrett suggested Warren Grice as a speaker on quantum communications. Ray will ask if he can speak January 14.

Other possibilities for early 2025 include stable isotopes (Jim Rushton’s suggestion), fusion (with a possible suggestion by Jim Rome), nanocellulose (investigated by Ellen Smith), and Mark Buckner on his work with students in Oak Ridge schools (Alan Lowe). Plans by ORANO for building a new uranium enrichment facility using centrifuge technology would be an interesting lecture topic, but 2025 might be too soon for a talk on this initiative because of various issues that might need to be resolved.

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/.

It was suggested that we resume giving out name tags to lunch lecture attendees.

Community Lectures – Kent Williams

The possibility of holding a State of the Lab Community Lecture by ORNL Laboratory Director Stephen Streiffer at AMSE on November 14 has been covered in the ORNL liaison section.

Outreach:

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

Fred has transferred the files for the brochure refined by ORNL Graphics to Matt Mullins at AMSE; Matt stated he should have time to make the desired changes this week. Once complete, Fred will prepare copies for use in ORNL retirees’ packets and at the October Benefits and Wellness Fair.

Member Interaction

No updates reported under member interaction.

STEM Education

As noted earlier, the Southern Appalachian Science and Engineering Fair and the Tennessee Science Bowl will need volunteers in spring. Communications soliciting volunteers are expected later in the year.

Website – James Rome

There was no news to report on the website.

Facebook – Ellen Smith

There was no update on the FORNL Facebook page.

Volunteer Opportunities and Needs – Partner Organizations:

AMSE and Public Tours – Alan Lowe

The site tours continue to proceed through the middle of November. The AMSE auditorium is now the recommended option for the State of the Laboratory talk in November, pending concurrence by ORNL.

AMSE will hold activities as part of Nuclear Science Week on Wednesday, October 23, remaining open until 7 pm. A Godzilla double-feature and costume monster bash will be held at AMSE on Saturday, October 26.

Manhattan Project National Historical Park – Fred Peretz

Additional volunteers are needed at the Manhattan Project National Historical Park to staff the desk at the Children's Museum. Even with two rangers, the desk is often not staffed. The need for volunteers at the AMSE information desk and museum floor is also acute. Fred and Alan briefly discussed roles and volunteer training at each site.

Media reports:

Newspapers – Carolyn Krause

Two articles on Lee Riedinger's talk to FORNL about his new book on the UT-ORNL partnership have been published in the Historically Speaking column of the editions of The Oak Ridger appearing on September 27 and October 4. The third and last article on this topic will appear in the October 11 edition this Friday.

A news release announcing Ivan Selin's talk to FORNL on Tuesday, October 8, about NRC regulation of nuclear power plants appeared on The Oak Ridger website on Saturday and in today's print edition (October 7) of The Oak Ridger.

The article on Tony Mezzacappa's talk to FORNL on supernovae and gravitational waves appeared on the front page of The Oak Ridger on September 9. A shorter version of the article was picked up by a Cincinnati newspaper that, like The Oak Ridger, is owned by Gannett.

Old Business:

The nominating committee was addressed earlier in these minutes.

New Business

No new business was identified.

Closing

The next board meeting will be held via Zoom at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, November 11, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Fred Peretz
Secretary, Friends of ORNL