**Vermont Federal Executive Association**

**Quarterly Meeting**

**October 28th 2014 @ 4:00 PM**

Meeting was called to order by Lisa Rees, President, @ 4:00 PM.

**Participants (if we did not list you, please let us know):**

* Lisa Rees, President VTFEA, USCIS
* James Rapley, , USCIS
* Bill Swaney, DOS
* Mike Heston, Member-at-large, VTNG
* Sean McVey, Vice-President, USBP
* Elizabeth Carter, Member-at-large, CBP
* Carrie Selby, USCIS- VSC
* Haley Pero, Sen Sanders Office
* Patrick Knowles, USCIS
* Danielle Esposito, USCIS
* Jill Berthe – DHS-ICE Burlington Finance Center
* Linda Past – DHS-ICE-LESC
* Craig Roegner – ATF
* John Hall – US Marshalls Service
* Joe Burke, DHS-HSI
* Lori Pietropaoli – DHS-USCIS Northeast Regional Director

**Introduction:**

President Rees welcomed the attendees and shared some Halloween trivia as well as sugary snacks before starting thanking attendees (physical and call-in) and beginning the meeting.

**VTFEA in 2015 and Beyond:**

She followed with a brief recap of VTFEA activities and accomplishments in 2015 to include:

* Strong presentation and positive outlook for locality pay, with NW Vermont and White River Junction in an “on deck” position, following approval of previously recommended regions
* Successful awards ceremony and recognition of federal employees
* Positive review of annual picnic in August
* Launch of “Ambassadors” initiative to foster stronger communication and participation in VTFEA events
* Creation of Committees to more equitably share workload and involve more members and employees
* Upgrades to social media platforms, Facebook, and [www.vtfea.org](http://www.vtfea.org)
* Development of an “Ambassadors” program in which federal employees work with their management to help promote FEA activism in their office – primarily by ensuring that FEA activities are adequately communicated to employees in their office.

**Financial Update:**

**Treasurer Jim Rapley -**

* FEA is entering the fiscal year with approximately $5,500
* Main expenses were from the awards ceremony and picnic
* Award ceremony expenses were high due to high quality awards, but we got generous sponsorship from Hampton Inn and others
* The FEBs are now severely restricted since they cannot have financial operations (have an account/collect funds from any source) – FEAs have not yet been explicitly limited in this way

**Locality Pay:**

**Chairperson:** Sean McVey

The Vermont locality pay proposal was submitted August 1, in line with recommendations. A delegation of 8, including congressional support will testify on Friday June 6th in Washington DC. A decision to endorse the proposal could come as soon as December 2015 and then a Presidential determination would be made on whether to act on that recommendation would happen during 2016, with locality pay potentially being enacted and implemented in January 2017. The recent adoption and January 2016 implementation of 13 locality pay changes makes the committee optimistic that the Vermont proposals (NW and WRJ) will be adopted and implemented on this timeline. They did note that this proposal does not cover the full state, and that a new effort would need to be launched to incorporate other Vermont counties.

**Vermont Women’s Federal Network:**

**Chairperson**: Betsy Carter: The VFWN has emerged as a popular and stable entity that serves both professional development and networking/social ends. Yearly highlights included:

* 8 professional events, 10 personal events and 2 community events
* Annual training workshop with some 100 participants
* Blue Cross/Blue Shield workshop
* truED briefing
* 32% increase in membership (to 49 members)
* 3 newsletters

In 2016 the VTFWN is looking forward to hosting the annual training event in June along with other events regarding retirement, social security and leadership development.

There needs to be coordination between the VFWN and FEA to ensure that events are posted on the website as well as on Facebook.

**Marketing/Social Media:**

**Chairperson:** Bill Swaney

Intern Jake Isham – who has begun a new career in the private sector – was instrumental in upgrading the FEA website and developing a consistent Facebook presence and following. New volunteers have stepped up, and will help keep this resource vibrant.

In conjunction with the Ambassadors in each federal office, the Facebook page is the easiest and most consistent mechanism for disseminating FEA information and allowing federal executive AND employees to participate, and/or promote events. In this context President Rees mentioned her outreach at federal offices, where she greets incoming employees with a flyer describing the FEA and its relevance to them as members of the federal community

**Priorities:**

President Rees shared her view that the locality pay initiative, public service awards ceremony and picnic were priorities for the coming year. She asked executives to help find FEA “Ambassadors” and to be as supportive as possible of ALL employees seeking to benefit from and engage in activities supported by the FEA/VFWN.

There was interest in outreach type events that could be leveraged across the federal community. John Hall (USMS) specifically cited a retirement seminar as an example of an event of value to his employees, and health fairs were also mentioned. Support was also voiced for the interagency FEA presence at outreach events and career fairs. The idea of holding Open Houses was also appreciated.

**Conclusion:**

President Rees concluded with a request that members send her a short blurb outlining the broader impact of locality pay and how the difficulties it engender tie in with issues of national security, readiness, and service to the public that stretch far beyond Vermont.

**Next VTFEA Event:**

The VTFEA and VWFN will be hosting a holiday mixer at the Windjammer Upper Deck Pub on Tuesday, December 8th beginning at 4:30 p.m. All federal employees are encouraged to attend. More information soon.