



*Many Voices Working for the Community*

# Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

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## *Annual Planning Meeting of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board*

### **Approved November 8, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) held its full board monthly meeting virtually via Zoom and in person at 1 Science.gov Way on Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 6 p.m. Copies of referenced meeting materials are attached to these minutes. A video of the meeting was made and is available on the board's YouTube site at [www.youtube.com/user/ORSSAB/videos](http://www.youtube.com/user/ORSSAB/videos).

#### **Members Present**

Atilio Anzellotti  
Kris Bartholomew  
Mary Butler  
Harold Conner, Jr.

Paul Dill  
Rosario Gonzalez  
Amy Jones  
Noah Keebler

Harriett McCurdy  
Christine Michaels  
Michael Sharpe  
Tom Tuck

#### **Members Absent**

Mike Mark

Thomas McCormick

<sup>1</sup>Third consecutive absence

#### **Liaisons, Deputy Designated Federal Officer, and Alternates Present**

Jay Mullis, OREM General Manager  
Melyssa Noe, ORSSAB Deputy Designated Federal Officer (DDFO), OREM  
Roger Petrie, ORSSAB Alternate DDFO, OREM  
Morgan Carden, OREM  
Michael Vestal, OREM  
Kristof Czartoryski, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC)  
Samantha Urquhart-Foster, EPA

#### **Others Present**

Leah Alexander, OREM  
Brian Begley, EPA  
Emily Day, UCOR  
Jana Dawson, EPA  
Sierra Generette, UCOR  
Brian Henry, OREM

Shelley Kimel, ORSSAB Staff  
Sara McManamy-Johnson, ORSSAB Staff  
Abby Newberry, OREM  
Angel Perkey, TDEC  
Erin Sutton, OREM

Ten members of the public were present.

### **Liaison Comments**

**Mr. Mullis** – Mr. Mullis gave members an overview of recent OREM activities and accomplishments. He said OREM finished work on its second reactor at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and started working on a third reactor. He said the work on the second reactor was being tracked by the Deputy Secretary as one of the major projects within EM, and the contractor, UCOR, was able to deliver it ahead of schedule.

Next, Mr. Mullis told members that DOE recently held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new lithium processing facility at Y-12. The facility will be located on land that formerly contained the Biology Complex, which OREM finished removing last year. Lastly, Mr. Mullis told members about an upcoming poster session at the Scarboro Community Center. He said the session would highlight recent accomplishments within OREM.

**Mr. Czartoryski** – No comments.

**Ms. Urquhart-Foster** – Ms. Urquhart-Foster told members that EPA's recent memorandum of agreement (MOA) with DOE has allowed EPA to hire two new staff members. She introduced Brian Begley, who will be working on groundwater remedies, and John Sayer, who will be working on the Environmental Management Disposal Facility (EMDF) project. She said EPA's main goals for this year are to complete three records of decision (RODs), including the ETTP Main Plant Area Interim ROD, the K-31/K-33 ROD, and the Zone 1 Final ROD.

### **Presentation**

Ms. Harriett McCurdy introduced OREM's Morgan Carden and Michael Vestal to present on OREM's Excess Facilities.

Ms. Carden began the presentation by giving members an overview of the current state of facilities at Y-12 National Security Complex (Y-12) and OREM's goals for the site. She said the complex has many high-risk facilities that pose various risks and challenges. OREM's goal is to reduce those risks and pave the way for modernization.

Next, Ms. Carden discussed the facilities that have already been demolished, such as the former Biology Complex and Building 9213, or are in preparations for demolition, such as Alpha-2 and Beta-1.

The Biology Complex was originally constructed to perform uranium recovery, and in about 1947 the mission changed to study the biological effects of radiation. She said the cleanup for this facility related to asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), uranium, and organic material. Pre-demolition activities for the Biology Complex began in May 2016 and lasted almost five years. Demolition began in February 2021 and ended in 2022. The land on which the Biology Complex was located will be the site of a lithium processing facility for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). A groundbreaking ceremony for the facility was held in October 2023.

Building 9213 and its inside facilities were constructed in 1949 and included the Criticality Experimental Laboratory. Pre-demolition activities began in 2020 and took about two years for completion. Demolition began in summer 2022 and was completed in December 2022. She said the

footprint area is now used as a yard for crews to stage material.

Alpha-2, which was originally constructed for uranium enrichment, is currently in preparation for demolition. Pre-demolition activities include asbestos and beryllium abatement, sampling collection, radiological screening, and removal of loose and hazardous wastes. She said the next activities will be entering the basement of the facility to complete pre-demolition activities and then backfilling it with a flowable fill material that can be dug out later. She said there are plans to go back into the area later to remove some of the basement ceilings. Crews currently cannot do so safely, so the plan is to remove the building and then go back in to remove those basement areas.

Beta-1, which was also originally constructed for uranium enrichment, is also currently in preparation for demolition. She said the pre-demolition activities are similar to those of Alpha-2, however, the Beta-1 basement was filled with water for several years, so crews have been working for many months to pump the water out of the basement. She said that as of this week, crews have pumped for than 1.6 million gallons of water from this basement. Water pumped from the basement goes through a water treatment system in order to meet regulatory limits and is sampled regularly before being discharged into a creek.

Mr. Vestal continued the presentation by giving members an overview of the current state of facilities at ORNL and OREM's goals for the site. He said OREM's goal is to eliminate high-risk facilities, reduce environmental risks, and provide space in support of future research missions.

He said most of the buildings at ORNL that are currently on track for deactivation and demolition are in the central campus, which contributes challenges relating to an active site such as security. He said OREM is responsible for addressing former reactor facilities in the Melton Valley area at ORNL. He continued to outline some of the challenges related to achieving the mission at ORNL, including that weather conditions and personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements may limit daily working hours, ensuring worker safety in radiological areas involves higher technical difficulty and planning, and outdated drawings and lack of information creates unknowns.

Mr. Vestal then gave members an overview of achievements and progress at the site, including demolition of the Tritium Target Facility and the Building 3026 West Cell Bank in 2021, the Bulk Shielding Reactor in 2022, and the Low Intensity Test Reactor in 2023. Major deactivations currently underway include Graphite Reactor support facilities, Isotope Row facilities, the Oak Ridge Research Reactor, and hot cells.

Board members asked the following questions:

- Mr. Tuck asked of the total amount of work needed, what percentage of that work has been completed.
  - Mr. Mullis said it would be fair to say less than 50 percent. He then offered a perspective of the length of time required for cleanup work, describing the timeline for the work completed at the East Tennessee Technology Park (ETTP) and noting that was the timeline on a site controlled by EM. He said it becomes complicated when working on a site that is not operated by EM, where EM must work around their needs. It requires more

coordination just to get the workforce on and off the site.

Mr. Mullis said that about 70 to 80 percent of the hazards are in pre-demolition work and about 70 to 80 percent of the money spent is on pre-demolition work, depending on the facility.

- Ms. McCurdy asked where the water source was in the Beta-1 basement.
  - Ms. Carden said the water source is groundwater infiltration.
- Mr. Anzellotti asked if there is the possibility of leakage from the water in the Beta-1 basement into groundwater.
  - Mr. Mullis said yes.
- Ms. Michaels asked for additional information on the basket used in the cleanup at the Oak Ridge Research Reactor pool.
  - Mr. Vestal said it's a metal basket that is approximately six to eight feet in diameter that has holes in it. The basket is put into the pool, where "hot" items from inside the pool are then put into it to be lifted out. The water drains from the basket and a crane is then used to lift the items from the basket and transfer them to prepare for transport.
- Ms. Jones asked if any of the land being cleared at ORNL would ever be transferred to the public.
  - Mr. Mullis said that would ultimately be up to the Office of Science to decide since it's that office's site.
- Mr. Bartholomew asked how long the pumps have not been working in the basements of the Alpha and Beta buildings.
  - Mr. Petrie said all those buildings did have or still do have active sump pumps, and depending on the building some of them are still active and some have been turned off over time.
- Mr. Conner asked if there was any mercury in the water in the basement of Beta-1.
  - Mr. Petrie said just background.
- Ms. McCurdy asked if UCOR trains their own employees or bring in pre-trained people.
- Mr. Mullis said UCOR has a number of programs, including an apprenticeship program they do in coordination with unions. In addition, there are crews already experienced in DOE are brought in, and people brought in through educational partnerships, such as those at Roane State Community College and Tennessee Technology University.

**Public Comment**

- Public Comment #1 – Mr. Luther Gibson shared comments on the process surrounding study of Excess Facilities Risk Reduction at Y-12 and ORNL as well as concerns about the operation and engagement of the Board. (See attached)

**Board Business/Motions**

- Ms. Jones asked for a motion to approve the agenda.
  - 11.8.23.1 Motion made by Ms. Michaels and seconded by Ms. Butler. Motion passed.
- Ms. Noe introduced the current slate of officer candidates and asked for any additional nominations. The candidate for Chair was Amy Jones; the candidate for Vice Chair was Kris Bartholomew; the candidate for Secretary was Harriett McCurdy.
 

Ms. Noe asked for a motion to approve the slate of candidates.

  - 11.8.23.2 Motion made by Ms. Michaels and seconded by Mr. Keebler. Motion passed.
- Ms. Jones asked for a motion to approve meeting minutes.
  - 11.8.23.3 Motion to approve the August 9, 2023, meeting minutes.
 

Motion made by Ms. McCurdy and seconded by Mr. Dill. Motion passed.

**Responses to Recommendations & Alternate DDFO Report**

Ms. Noe told members there are no open recommendations. She referred members to the draft work plan and said it had not been approved yet pending the election of a board chair.

**Committee Reports**

Executive – None.

EM & Stewardship – Mr. Sharpe said the committee produced a recommendation on the groundwater remedy at ETTP and said the November committee meeting would include elections for officer co-chairs.

**Additions to the Agenda & Open Discussion**

Ms. Jones encouraged members to become active in issue groups.

Ms. Jones and Ms. McCurdy discussed their recent participation in a two-day meeting for UCOR's five-year plan.

**Action Items**

None

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

I certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the November 8, 2023 meeting of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board.



Amy Jones, Chair



Harriett McCurdy, Secretary

February 14, 2024

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

AJ/sbm

Public Comment to Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board  
Luther Gibson  
November 8, 2023

My name is Luther Gibson. I was a member of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board from 1999-2005 and Board Chair 2001-2002. I retired in 2017 after more than 40 years of service at Paducah, Y-12, ETPP, and Y-12 a second time.

I have comments on the process surrounding study of the issue of Excess Facilities Risk Reduction at Y-12 and ORNL as well as the same concerns I have previously expressed about the operation and engagement of the Board.

With exceptions, topics amenable to recommendations have documents and other readily available material that can be studied to learn more about the issue beyond the simplified presentation during a meeting. The CERCLA process and its public involvement are somewhat of a model as a proposed plan is backed up by a feasibility study and other documentation and data in an Administrative Record. Lack of justifying information to evaluate the proposed remedy versus alternatives has to be addressed if raised as an issue. Recommendations on budget priority are informed by past and current budget justification and execution. A budget priority recommendation would, however, be better informed if more information from the Life Cycle Baseline or the Life Cycle Baseline itself was shared. We can revisit that during discussion on future budget priorities.

A true evaluation of risk reduction in facilities would start with identification of all facilities and hazardous materials under purview of the Oak Ridge Environmental Management Program.

What information is available as resource and background for this issue? Well, the Oak Ridge Reservation Cleanup Contract with United Cleanup Oak Ridge, LLC (UCOR) lists everything with a facility number for which the contractor has cleanup, closure, surveillance and maintenance, or monitoring responsibilities. The contract with Isotek has similar information. In addition, these contracts cover legacy wastes with difficult disposition that should be expedited nonetheless to reduce risks. An All-Hazards Survey required by DOE Order 151.1D (Comprehensive Emergency Management System) should address everything assigned a facility number along with its potential to cause health, safety, and environmental incidents. This document also screens hazardous and radiological materials and need for further analysis in an Emergency Planning Hazards Assessment (EPHA). The analysis presented in an EPHA can be used to evaluate the reduction of potential event consequences if actions are taken such as reducing the hazardous materials present. As much information as can be shared from the Emergency Management technical planning basis documents would better inform understanding of this issue.

My concerns about the operation and engagement of the Board continue to broadly be frequency of meetings and limitations on the topics addressed.

Thank you for your attention.