

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY
AND HEALTH

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ADVISORY BOARD ON RADIATION WORKER HEALTH

+ + + + +

BLOCKSON WORK GROUP

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FRIDAY,
JANUARY 23, 2009

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The work group convened via teleconference at 12:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Wanda Munn, Chair, presiding.

WORK GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT:

WANDA I. MUNN, Chair
BRADLEY P. CLAWSON
JIM M. MELIUS
GENEVIEVE S. ROESSLER

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IDENTIFIED PARTICIPANTS PRESENT:

TED KATZ, Acting Designated Federal
Official

LARRY ELLIOTT, OCAS

JIM NETON, OCAS

TOM TOMES, OCAS

JOHN MAURO, SC&A

BOB ANIGSTEIN, SC&A

HANS BEHLING, SC&A

STEVE OSTROW, SC&A

CHICK PHILLIPS, SC&A

LIZ HOMOKI-TITUS, HHS

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 MR. KATZ: Okay. Then so let me
3 kick this off with -- starting with roll call.

4 Again, this is Ted Katz, and I am the acting
5 designated federal official for the Advisory
6 Board and for this work group call.

7 If we could take roll call then
8 beginning with the Board members. Wanda, if
9 you would self-identify and please, of course,
10 address conflict of interest, as well, with
11 respect to Blockson Chemical Company.

12 CHAIR MUNN: This is Wanda Munn.
13 I'm Chair of the Blockson Work Group. I have
14 no conflict.

15 MEMBER ROESSLER: This is Gen
16 Roessler. I'm a member of the Blockson Work
17 Group. I have no conflicts.

18 MEMBER MELIUS: Jim Melius, member.
19 No conflicts.

20 MR. KATZ: Okay, and Brad is still
21 not with us. Okay. Now OCAS/ORAU team
22 please.

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1 MR. ELLIOTT: This is Larry
2 Elliott. I'm the Director of NIOSH's Office
3 of Compensation Analysis and Support. I have
4 no conflicts regarding Blockson Chemical.

5 MR. NETON: This is Jim Neton,
6 NIOSH OCAS. I have no conflict at Blockson
7 Chemical.

8 MR. TOMES: This is Tom Tomes,
9 NIOSH OCAS. I have no conflict.

10 MR. KATZ: Okay, then SC&A please.

11 MR. MAURO: This is John Mauro,
12 SC&A. No conflict.

13 MR. ANIGSTEIN: Bob Anigstein,
14 SC&A. No conflict.

15 MR. BEHLING: Hans Behling, SC&A.
16 No conflict.

17 MR. OSTROW: Steve Ostrow, SC&A.
18 No conflict.

19 MR. PHILLIPS: Chick Phillips,
20 SC&A. No conflict.

21 MR. KATZ: Okay. Other federal
22 employees or federal contractors? Liz? Liz

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1 Homoki-Titus, are you with us still?

2 MS. HOMOKI-TITUS: I'm sorry. Yes.

3 Liz Homoki-Titus. I didn't realize you
4 called for federal employees, with Health and
5 Human Services.

6 MR. KATZ: Any others? Okay. Then
7 how about petitioners from Blockson? Okay.
8 How about Congressional representatives or
9 members -- representatives of congressional
10 offices?

11 Okay, and then how about -- any
12 other members of the public on the phone who
13 want to self-identify? Okay then. Then I
14 just would remind everyone on the call when
15 you're not speaking to please mute your phone
16 and use *6 if you don't have actually a mute
17 button so that sound from your phone won't
18 interrupt the call.

19 Wanda, it's all yours.

20 CHAIR MUNN: Thank you, Ted, and
21 thank you, all, for joining us this morning.
22 Did I just hear someone come online?

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1 MR. MAURO: No. That was me just
2 putting on the mute button.

3 CHAIR MUNN: All right. Fine.
4 Thanks, John. I hope that all of you have
5 received my extremely last moment list of
6 items, which I have listed as outstanding.
7 Has anyone not received that that needs it?

8 It's a brief list. I think we've
9 worked most of the issues to their conclusion.

10 There are only one or two outstanding that I
11 want to make sure that everyone feels
12 comfortable that we have covered.

13 If you all have that list and don't
14 have any addition to it, then we'll proceed
15 from the top. Any additions? All right.

16 Let's start with my asking for
17 assurance from all the Work Group members that
18 you've now had time to adequately review all
19 of the documents that we have generated during
20 our several months of activity regarding the
21 Blockson site.

22 Is everyone content with having

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1 those documents reviewed now? I'm especially
2 concerned that the white papers having been
3 generated without specific anticipation that
4 they were going to become a part of a
5 permanent record.

6 I should say perhaps not properly
7 identified as going to be a part of the
8 permanent record as all at one time or another
9 been reviewed by the folks involved. I have
10 one question, too.

11 I have no feel not having checked
12 myself for whether those white papers that we
13 generated were appropriately added to the O:
14 drive as data for the Blockson site. Have
15 they been? Do we know, Jim?

16 MR. NETON: Wanda, I think all the
17 ones we're aware of are out there. I don't
18 know with the possible exception of this
19 latest email, the December 23 email, I think
20 they've all been loaded out on the O: drive.

21 CHAIR MUNN: Good.

22 MR. NETON: I'll certainly check

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1 and verify and make sure that everything is
2 there.

3 CHAIR MUNN: I would appreciate it
4 if you would, and that's one of the things I
5 will ask you about before the Albuquerque
6 meeting.

7 Then has everyone also had an
8 opportunity to see the email to which
9 Dr. Neton just referred? His December 23, 21,
10 whichever it was, email with respect to the
11 radon information from Mallinckrodt?

12 Hearing no concerns about that one
13 way or the other, then I wanted to very
14 quickly go over some of the things that we
15 have, I believe, followed up on at one time or
16 another during our discussions.

17 We have in the first place
18 addressed all of the seven original findings
19 that our contractor had brought to use on
20 their review of the site profile.

21 As you recall, the site profile was
22 redone because of some shortcomings with the

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1 original document. We looked at both of them
2 focusing, of course, on the final document.

3 The findings that came back to us
4 from SCA as a result of that included concerns
5 about the default upper bound of uranium
6 intake inhalation had to do with the thorium-
7 232 enrichment ratio and the process strain.

8 Another thorium-230 concern about
9 not being included in exposure matrix. We
10 spent a significant amount of time addressing
11 concerns relative to the thorium raffinate
12 stream. Put that to bed.

13 The request for additional data
14 needed to support the radon values that were
15 used and I believe the tail end of some of
16 those concerns is the only thing outstanding
17 for us to discuss today.

18 We talked about exposure from the
19 tailings. There was a concern about that,
20 which was discussed and agreed to. Then there
21 were trace levels of radium-226 and progeny
22 effects that we addressed.

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1 Is my characterization of those
2 items and their current status accurate to the
3 memory of all of the Work Group members?

4 MR. MAURO: This is John. Yes,
5 that's my understanding also.

6 CHAIR MUNN: All right. That's
7 good. If I don't hear back from somebody with
8 respect to that characterization, that will be
9 the characterization I will make before the
10 full Board in Albuquerque.

11 Now, the most recent and only
12 outstanding concerns that I have on my list
13 have to do with concerns that were expressed
14 specifically by Mike Gibson and by Dr. Melius.

15 Mike Gibson indicated that he was
16 not comfortable with the method that was being
17 used in approaching the dose reconstructions.

18 We discussed that at some considerable length
19 at our last teleconference.

20 I'm sorry Mike isn't here because I
21 would like to pose the question to him as to
22 whether the discussions regarding that method

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1 have made him more comfortable with where we
2 are and whether he agrees that these methods
3 are acceptable.

4 His absence makes it impossible to
5 ask those questions, so perhaps I can do that
6 by email after this is over. The other -- the
7 validity of the model process also included --

8 MEMBER CLAWSON: Excuse me. Wanda?

9 CHAIR MUNN: Yes.

10 MEMBER CLAWSON: This is Brad
11 calling in. I hate to interrupt, but I'm
12 right in the middle of moving fuel and they've
13 given me about two minutes.

14 I've called Ted and left a message.

15 I got forced and we've got to get a shipment
16 out of the INL here, and I apologize, but I
17 will not be able to meet this meeting.

18 CHAIR MUNN: All right. I'm sorry.

19 We'll miss you, Brad, but --

20 MEMBER CLAWSON: It's no problem.
21 I left a message on Ted's answering machine at
22 4:30 this morning, but I just wanted to make

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1 sure that --

2 CHAIR MUNN: Well, I'm glad you
3 called us. Thank you very much. Go do what
4 you have to do and stay safe.

5 MEMBER CLAWSON: Okay. Thank you.
6 Bye bye.

7 CHAIR MUNN: Thank you. So, the
8 issue revolving around the validity of the
9 model process and Monte Carlo methods were a
10 major topic of discussion. You have the -- I
11 hope all of you have the minutes from our last
12 discussion and have reviewed them again.

13 I'll ask the people who are on the
14 call here today, has that discussion and your
15 review of that discussion resulted in your
16 acceptance of the validity of the model
17 process and the Monte Carlo methods?

18 Are those going to be acceptable to
19 you? Gen?

20 MEMBER ROESSLER: Okay. I just got
21 off of mute. Restate what you just said.

22 CHAIR MUNN: I was asking about our

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1 concerns that were discussed at our last
2 teleconference regarding the validity of the
3 model process and the Monte Carlo methods that
4 were used in it.

5 I was asking whether the result of
6 those discussions was an increased comfort and
7 acceptance of what we have used to this point.

8 Do you find the model process valid and the
9 Monte Carlo methods used it in valid?

10 MEMBER ROESSLER: Absolutely. In
11 fact, I think I brought that up at our Work
12 Group call, and I think during the call the
13 comments that were made by Jim Neton reminding
14 us of some of the things that are in the
15 record confirmed that we are using the very
16 best scientific process.

17 So, I'm completely comfortable with
18 that as it applies to Blockson and as it
19 applies to any of the work groups or any of
20 the facilities we work with.

21 CHAIR MUNN: Dr. Melius?

22 MEMBER MELIUS: I still have

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1 concerns about the model.

2 CHAIR MUNN: Do you have concerns
3 about the model that we can address?

4 MEMBER MELIUS: Well, I have some -
5 - before we get updated, other than the one
6 communication on Mallinckrodt, has there been
7 any other technical update from either SC&A or
8 NIOSH?

9 MR. MAURO: Jim, this is John. I
10 don't believe there's anything new from SC&A.

11 Everything that we have prepared has been
12 delivered. I believe Jim's material regarding
13 Mallinckrodt was the last piece of technical
14 information that was delivered on the subject.

15 MR. NETON: Yes, this is Jim.
16 That's correct from NIOSH's side.

17 MEMBER MELIUS: Thanks. Was there
18 any discussion or issues raised at the Board
19 meeting after I left? I believe that this was
20 presented then. I can't recall the exact
21 sequence.

22 CHAIR MUNN: At the Board meeting

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1 or at the teleconference?

2 MEMBER MELIUS: Board meeting also.

3 MEMBER ROESSLER: Jim, we haven't
4 had a Board meeting since then --

5 MEMBER MELIUS: No.

6 MEMBER ROESSLER: -- have we?

7 MEMBER MELIUS: Before that.

8 MEMBER ROESSLER: I don't
9 understand your question, Jim.

10 CHAIR MUNN: There would have been
11 -- I don't recall any additional concerns
12 being raised at the Board meeting. Frankly, I
13 did not go back and review the Redondo Beach
14 minutes.

15 It would, of course, be included in
16 the Redondo Beach minutes, but I have not done
17 that. So, that's one of the -- I guess we
18 would have to ask whether you had an
19 opportunity to do that because I, frankly,
20 have not reviewed the Redondo Beach minutes.

21 MR. KATZ: Wanda? I'm sorry.

22 CHAIR MUNN: Has anyone else

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1 addressed Jim's question?

2 MR. KATZ: I guess I need
3 clarification. Wanda, you're saying Redondo
4 Beach. Are you meaning Augusta?

5 CHAIR MUNN: I'm sorry. Augusta.
6 I still have Redondo Beach on the brain.

7 MR. KATZ: You know, I haven't
8 reviewed the transcript from Augusta, but as I
9 recall, there wasn't really the substantive
10 discussion about Blockson there. It was just
11 an update of where things stand and that there
12 would be another Work Group meeting.

13 But, so there was no moving forward
14 on any issues with the weather, but there was
15 really no discussion, substantive discussion
16 as I recall it.

17 CHAIR MUNN: I don't recall any
18 either, and I, frankly, don't recall any
19 discussion that would center on this topic
20 outside of the Blockson arena.

21 So, I guess the answer to your
22 question, Dr. Melius, is so far as I know, no,

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1 there has not been.

2 MEMBER MELIUS: Okay. No, I'll
3 take your word for it. I just wanted to
4 double check.

5 CHAIR MUNN: I don't believe there
6 has been. The other item that was -- excuse
7 me. Let me start over again. The other item
8 regarding the model was simply whether -- as I
9 recall, the concern was whether one should
10 even be used. I think we've put that to bed.

11 The other is whether the model is
12 an adequate model. I believe, if I understand
13 Dr. Melius correctly, you're saying it's not
14 an adequate model in your view.

15 MEMBER MELIUS: Correct.

16 CHAIR MUNN: All right. Is there
17 anything we can do to make it adequate?

18 MEMBER MELIUS: If there's no new
19 information, I'll just have to continue to
20 review what has already been generated.

21 CHAIR MUNN: All right. If you
22 could do that --

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1 MEMBER MELIUS: I do have one
2 question for NIOSH. Is it NIOSH's plan moving
3 -- how is NIOSH going to deal with radon?
4 Sort of similar radon exposure situations at
5 other sites? Are you going to use the old
6 procedure or are you going to use this model?

7 MR. NETON: Well, I think -- this
8 is Jim. That would depend on the site, what
9 type of information were available. But, I
10 guess I can't speculate too much, but if we
11 had a similar situation where we knew the
12 source term and the production rates as well
13 as we did here and had no monitoring data, we
14 would approach it, I assume, similarly.

15 But, some sites we do have radon
16 monitoring data we'd use preferentially over
17 first term.

18 MEMBER MELIUS: Yes. So, you
19 wouldn't use the, sort of I call it, the
20 Florida data procedure?

21 MR. NETON: No. No. We believe
22 that this model addresses the full level of

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1 uncertainty that exists in a facility such as
2 this. It works -- it eliminates the issues
3 related to -- the Florida issues related to
4 the building being more open and that sort of
5 thing and the time frame issues, as well,
6 which were problematic with the Florida data
7 if you recall.

8 MEMBER MELIUS: Okay. Yes. No.
9 Okay, that's helpful.

10 CHAIR MUNN: So, is there any kind
11 of an exchange that could take place between
12 now and our meeting in Albuquerque that would
13 bring you more comfort with respect to this or
14 any closer to accepting it as being adequate,
15 Dr. Melius?

16 MEMBER MELIUS: I'll talk to some
17 other Board members and see.

18 CHAIR MUNN: If you would, I'd
19 appreciate it. I would also appreciate it
20 very much if you could relay that information
21 to me when you have it. I'd like to
22 incorporate it into my report when we begin

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1 our discussion at the full Board.

2 So, if you'll relay that kind of
3 information to me, it would be very helpful.
4 Can that be done?

5 MEMBER MELIUS: Yes, I suppose so.
6 Yes.

7 CHAIR MUNN: Yes, good. I'd
8 appreciate it. That pretty much takes care of
9 my next bullet there. Do members now accept
10 as appropriate? The answer is not fully yet.

11 The final bullet that I had was the
12 one which we discussed earlier and did not
13 come to any conclusion with respect to
14 Dr. Melius' concern on the quality of the
15 data.

16 I'm sure whether there's anything
17 that can be said additionally that would be
18 assuring in that regard, but if there is, now
19 is probably the time to say it.

20 Dr. Melius, if you have any
21 specific points with respect to quality that
22 you would like to bring to us that we could

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1 address or that might be addressed between now
2 and our next meeting so that we can wrap this
3 up, it would be most helpful. Do you have any
4 --

5 MEMBER MELIUS: I have nothing
6 further to say.

7 CHAIR MUNN: No specification with
8 respect to how we could improve your concern
9 about the adequate quality of the data? Okay.

10 Then we have come to the end of the points
11 that I wanted to cover.

12 I want to review for us what we did
13 the last time we addressed this before the
14 Board. At that time, we had asked the Work
15 Group three questions.

16 We had said that SC&A had
17 identified those seven findings and we had
18 considerable discussion and follow up on
19 those. They have all now been resolved. Did
20 you -- would you accept that report? We got
21 four unanimous votes, a yes, that it was
22 accepted.

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1 Then we indicated that NIOSH had
2 sought information in depth for all of the
3 activities on that site, and they have --
4 believe they have adequate data to reconstruct
5 and bound the radiation dose. Do you accept
6 that report? We had two yes votes and two no
7 votes.

8 Then the third question that was
9 asked was -- I guess we didn't -- the site
10 profile has been rewritten and reviewed and
11 revised. Do you accept the current site
12 profile? We had two yes votes and two no
13 votes.

14 It appears to me that that question
15 still remains a valid one. Don't know whether
16 that has changed since -- in the three months
17 intervening or not.

18 We don't have our fourth member
19 here to respond to that question, but we can
20 reach him by email and pose the question again
21 if that seems to be feasible.

22 I would like to be able to identify

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1 whether there is any change in the position of
2 the answer to that question as to whether the
3 current site profile is acceptable.

4 So, I guess I still believe it's
5 acceptable. Dr. Melius, do you feel that that
6 site profile is acceptable with the exception
7 of the concerns that you've expressed already
8 or do you still not feel that the current site
9 profile is adequate?

10 MEMBER MELIUS: To tell you the
11 truth, I don't recall all the issues with the
12 site profile. I'd have to go back and look at
13 it. I've been focusing on the SEC issues.

14 CHAIR MUNN: Would it be fair to
15 ask if I might send that question to you and
16 to Mike and ask that you give it some
17 consideration and get back to me prior to the
18 time I prepare my presentation for the Board
19 in Albuquerque? Is that a fair request? Will
20 that do?

21 MEMBER MELIUS: Yes.

22 CHAIR MUNN: Good. All right.

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1 Then that's what I will do. I'll send that
2 request and ask at this juncture -- until I
3 get responses from those, I won't be able to
4 say much more than what we've covered before -
5 - when I make my report to the Board if I am
6 understanding what I believe our discussion
7 here has led us to, then we are essentially,
8 at this moment, still at the same point where
9 we were when we began these most recent
10 discussions.

11 That is, we have two of the Work
12 Group members who support the NIOSH
13 recommendation. We have two members of the
14 Working Group who do not support it for the
15 two reasons given in our earlier discussion
16 here.

17 Is there anyone who finds any
18 incorrect inference in those statements?

19 MEMBER ROESSLER: Wanda, I don't,
20 but I would like to make a comment.

21 CHAIR MUNN: Please do.

22 MEMBER ROESSLER: In looking at

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1 where we are on this situation, just looking
2 at what our responsibility is as a Work Group,
3 we were charged with evaluating the site
4 profile and the appropriateness of the SEC
5 petition.

6 It's our responsibility to bring
7 this to the full Board so that the full Board
8 can participate in a decision. I think it's
9 very important at this point for the Work
10 Group and especially you as the chair to get a
11 concise and specific summary from Dr. Melius
12 and from Mike and/or Brad on what their
13 concerns are so that we come into this
14 discussion, and in fairness to the Board, be
15 able to present what the Work Group's
16 evaluation is.

17 CHAIR MUNN: It would, I know, be
18 very helpful to be able to provide such data.

19 It's very difficult for the rest of the Board
20 to have a feel for how much information has
21 been exchanged and how thorough this
22 particular Work Group has been.

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1 If we can request such a thing, it
2 would be very helpful. I will take it as an
3 action item to very promptly place such a
4 request on email and hopefully have the kinds
5 of responses that I can present myself or that
6 I can have the dissenting members present
7 themselves at the upcoming meeting.

8 Which of those would be the most
9 effective is a question that we can resolve
10 between now and then, I think, probably
11 amongst ourselves and unofficially, but we do
12 want to have as much information available, as
13 many specifics available, for the other
14 individual advisory board groups as we
15 possibly can.

16 Is Gen's suggestion amenable?

17 MEMBER MELIUS: Is it your intent
18 to do a written report to the Board ahead of
19 time?

20 CHAIR MUNN: Not really, unless one
21 feels that that's necessary.

22 MEMBER MELIUS: I don't. That

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1 would be my preference. I think I'm capable
2 of presenting my own opinions to the Board.

3 CHAIR MUNN: I'm sure. That's not
4 the question. The question is whether or not
5 we need to do that in a written format or in a
6 format before the Board at the time of the
7 presentation. That's the question in my mind.

8 Would you prefer written or would
9 you prefer a personal presentation?

10 MEMBER MELIUS: I thought you just
11 told you weren't going to do a written report
12 to the Board ahead of time?

13 CHAIR MUNN: I had not intended to.

14 MEMBER MELIUS: Okay.

15 MEMBER ROESSLER: I guess -- this
16 is Gen. My point is that in fairness to
17 Wanda, as she presents the Work Group report,
18 it would be -- she really should have
19 something either verbal or written from you so
20 that she can adequately present the
21 information in her report.

22 It seems rather awkward for her to

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1 make the report and then have you follow with
2 your own opinion.

3 CHAIR MUNN: If we can include it
4 in one report it would be helpful.

5 MEMBER MELIUS: I'll try to
6 understand that. I -- because I don't think
7 Gen's -- Gen, I don't think you're trying to
8 tell me I can't have an opinion.

9 MEMBER ROESSLER: No, but I think
10 it catches -- as a chair of a work group, I
11 think it's kind of unfair to Wanda to catch
12 her by surprise or to totally assimilate what
13 you're trying to say perhaps after she's made
14 her presentation.

15 Certainly, you're have your opinion
16 before that, and I just think a summary of it
17 would be a responsible way to make this
18 report.

19 MEMBER MELIUS: I think I
20 understand it better. Let me think about it.

21 CHAIR MUNN: If I could include it
22 in a slide presentation even, it would be

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1 helpful. We'll have an exchange of emails
2 with regard to how to work this out best.

3 I don't think we'll be able to do
4 it here, and I do think, perhaps, we need to
5 verify some of the material that's on the O:
6 drive before I put together my final report.

7 So, if we have any other item to
8 discuss, this is the right time to bring it
9 up. Otherwise, I will issue an email to all
10 of the parties who are involved here with my
11 understanding of the actions we are going to
12 attempt to complete prior to Albuquerque so
13 that the Board report to the Albuquerque
14 meeting will be complete and fair.

15 If that meets the needs of all the
16 people involved, then we can adjourn this
17 meeting. If not, please tell me now. Thank
18 you all. I appreciate your patience as we try
19 to work through these and get it right.

20 I will try to have my email out to
21 you early next week. Thank you all. Have a
22 good weekend.

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1 MEMBER MELIUS: Thank you, Wanda,
2 and everybody.

3 MR. KATZ: Okay. Good bye.

4 CHAIR MUNN: We are adjourned.
5 Bye-bye.

6 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter was
7 concluded at 1:18 p.m.)

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