

**Minutes**  
**17th Meeting of the Ocean Exploration Advisory Board**  
**October 1-2, 2020, Virtual**

**Notification and Availability of Meeting Materials**

The 17th meeting of the Ocean Exploration Advisory Board (OEAB) was announced to the public through the *Federal Register* and on the [OEAB website](#). Background materials and presentations prepared for this meeting are posted on the OEAB website.

**Ocean Exploration Advisory Board Members in Attendance**

Ambassador Cameron Hume, Consultant (Interim Chair)  
Amanda Demopoulos, U.S. Geological Survey  
Vicki Ferrini, Columbia University  
Christopher R. German, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution  
Eric King, Schmidt Ocean Institute  
Justin Manley, Just Innovation Inc.  
David Millar, Fugro USA  
Dominique Rissolo, University of California at San Diego  
Clara Smart, Johns Hopkins University

**Designated Federal Officer for the OEAB**

David McKinnie, NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research

**Office of Ocean Exploration and Research Staff in Attendance**

Alan Leonardi, Director  
Gene Fisher, Deputy Director  
Frank Cantelas, Science and Technology Division Lead  
Rachel Medley, Expeditions and Exploration Division Lead  
Christa Rabenold  
Jamie Austin  
Chris Beaverson  
Adrienne Copeland  
Joanne Flanders  
Ashton Flinders  
Matt King  
Jennifer Le  
Amanda Netburn  
Alexandra Puritz

**Invited Speakers**

Deerin Babb-Brott, Principal Assistant Director for Oceans and Environment, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy  
Ko Barrett, NOAA Deputy Assistant Administrator for Programs and Administration for Oceanic and Atmospheric Research  
RDML Tim Gallaudet, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Deputy NOAA Administrator  
Dana Jacob, Senior Attorney, Department of Commerce Ethics Law and Programs Division  
John R. Kreider, Chair, OEAB Blue Economy Subcommittee  
Craig McLean, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Oceanic and Atmospheric Research

## Observers

A number of individuals from NOAA and other organizations observed the meeting at various points.<sup>1</sup>

- 1. Meeting Opening.** Designated Federal Officer (DFO) David McKinnie opened the meeting on October 1, 2020. This meeting was held virtually given the COVID-19 pandemic. He welcomed new members Vicki Ferrini, Ph.D. (Columbia University Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory), Eric King (Schmidt Ocean Institute), Justin Manley, (Just Innovation Inc.), David Millar (Fugro USA), and Clara Smart, Ph.D. (Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory).
- 2. Chair Opening Remarks.** Acting Chair Ambassador Cameron Hume welcomed the new members and reviewed the meeting [agenda](#). In his remarks, he expressed his belief that the board has been helpful to NOAA, noting that the board has had marginal but productive impact. He also applauded the work of the Blue Economy Subcommittee and commented on the importance of a “reach out effort” for organizing and planning future missions that involves engaging with partners across varying sectors, domestically and internationally, in addition to the broader public.
- 3. Approval of Minutes.** Chris German made a motion to approve the [minutes from the 16th OEAB meeting](#), held virtually. Amanda Demopoulos seconded, and the board approved the minutes.
- 4. Annual Ethics Review.** Dana Jacobs of the Ethics and Program Law Division of the Department of Commerce provided the annual ethics briefing for the OEAB. OEAB members are “special government employees” (SGEs) and are subject to many, but not all, of the ethics rules applicable to regular government employees. SGEs are also required to file annual financial disclosure forms. Board members are encouraged to reach out to Ms. Jacobs or her colleagues with ethics questions: [ethicsdivision@doc.gov](mailto:ethicsdivision@doc.gov).
- 5. National Strategy for Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the United States Exclusive Economic Zone.** Deerin Babb-Brott from the White House’s Office of Science and Technology Policy updated the board on the administration’s ocean policy work since he last met with the board in July 2019, emphasizing the administration’s continued commitment to ocean exploration. Specifically, he discussed the new strategies and recommendations released in June in response to the 2019 presidential memorandum. A new National Ocean Mapping, Exploration, and Characterization Council has been appointed to implement the [National Strategy for Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the United States Exclusive Economic Zone](#) with support from two working groups. The implementation plan is due in December 2020.
- 6. Pacific Priorities Virtual Workshop.** OER’s Jamie Austin updated the board on the [Workshop to Identify National Ocean Exploration Priorities in the Pacific](#) conducted in partnership with the Consortium for Ocean Leadership (COL) over the summer. The workshop helped set the stage for work OER (and others, both in partnership and independently) might conduct or support in the Pacific. It will also inform the broader effort to implement the new national strategy (see above). The work will take the full community and multiple decades. A key takeaway was the power of the diversity, equity, and inclusion panel that featured Indigenous leaders from Alaska, American Samoa, and Hawaii. The panel noted that ocean exploration in the Pacific cannot be carried out effectively without relationships with Indigenous peoples. The OEAB requested the video of the diversity, equity, and inclusion panel discussion, which COL agreed to share. A final report is due the end of October 2020. OER and COL would like OEAB to endorse the report. [\[Presentation\]](#)
- 7. OER Program Review.** Ko Barrett from the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) informed the board that the OER program review report is still pending. Although laboratory reviews are standard practice, this was the first time OAR reviewed a program. The report required reformatting into a more standard format and to remove attribution. Appendices were added at the request of the reviewers to include feedback with attribution. The report should be finalized soon.

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<sup>1</sup> Given the nature of the virtual meeting, it was difficult to tell who was participating and when. Thus, this list may not be complete.

- 8. OER Updates.** OER Director Alan Leonardi provided an update on OER and NOAA-related activities since the last meeting. He highlighted the office's work on the national strategy (workshops, listening sessions, etc. to come), the status of expeditions, potential future plans for NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer*, grants and partnerships, NOAA strategies and plans, and engagement activities. [\[Presentation\]](#)
- 9. Public Comment Period.** The DFO read a public comment from "Jean Public" for the record. The commenter expressed concern that NOAA does not provide adequate time for public comment during OEAB meetings and is doing work that threatens sea life. Separately, Kristen Yarincik from the Consortium of Ocean Leadership thanked the board for their work.
- 10. Blue Economy Subcommittee.** OEAB Blue Economy Subcommittee Chair John Kreider presented an update on the work of the Blue Economy Subcommittee. He reminded the board that Phase I was completed in June with submission of the interim report to NOAA. Since then, they suggested narrowing the scope of Phase II work to 5 potential tasks, of which NOAA expressed initial interest in three: assist NOAA to promote, manage, and leverage partnerships with private sector; perform deep dive in selected high value sector of Blue Economy; and identify and promote potential sources for blue finance. NOAA also formed the NOAA Blue Economy Executive Council based on a recommendation in the interim report. Next steps are pending input from the new council and a potential extension of the subcommittee's end date. Mr. Kreider also spoke about his vision of ocean exploration as an essential catalyst for the Blue Economy and a healthy ocean [\[Presentation\]](#)
- 11. U.N. Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development Update.** Craig McLean from the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (and the head of U.S. Delegation to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission) spoke about the decade, which begins in 2021. Decade goals are a clean, healthy and resilient, productive, predicted, safe, accessible, and inspiring and engaging ocean. Mr. McLean demonstrated how these goals align with U.S. decadal goals and priorities in the ocean space. He also emphasized that meaningful engagement and partnerships across sectors and around the world will be critical to the decade's success. [\[Presentation\]](#)
- 12. NOAA Perspective.** Deputy NOAA Administrator RDML Tim Gallaudet praised the board for its contributions to ocean policy development and welcomed the five new members. He then shared his thoughts on the Blue Economy, noting the creation of the new NOAA Blue Economy Executive Council (NBEEC) and stressing the importance of the Blue Economy Subcommittee's work as we look to get out of the economic downturn. NBEEC meetings have been held, and a five-year strategic plan with goals, objectives, and action items is in development focusing on NOAA's five pillars of the Blue Economy: seafood production, marine transportation, coastal resilience, tourism and recreation, and ocean exploration. The OEAB Blue Economy Subcommittee will be asked to review the plan, which is expected late October/early November. RDML Gallaudet expressed his support for extending the term of the subcommittee so it can advise and support the NBEEC.
- 13. OEAB Discussion: 2021 Ocean Exploration Opportunities.** Following the presentations, the chair led a discussion to identify areas of opportunity for NOAA to accelerate our understanding of the deep ocean and develop the U.S. Blue Economy. These areas include partnerships, data access, innovation, stakeholder and public engagement, international partnerships, and ocean exploration campaigns. The board will share their recommendations with NOAA in a letter to Acting Administrator Neal Jacobs. The letter will include a request for a response to the recommendations from NOAA at the next OEAB meeting.
- 14. Next Meeting.** The board agreed the next meeting would be virtual in December 2020.
- 15. Meeting Close.** The DFO closed the meeting at approximately 4:55 p.m. EDT on October 2, 2020.