

Minutes for the March 4, 2025, FORNL Board Meeting

Call to Order and Amendments to the Agenda – Ellen Smith

Ellen Smith called the meeting, held in the AMSE Conference Room with a Zoom option, to order at 1:02 p.m. A quorum was present.

Attendees:

New Officers Present: Ellen Smith, President; Steve Overbury, Vice President, Alan Lowe, Secretary, and David Mullins, Treasurer. Outgoing Secretary Fred Peretz was also in attendance.

Board Members Present: Syd Ball, Kathy Gant, Ray Garrett, Carolyn Krause and Roger Macklin.

Adjunct members in attendance: Annette Brun, Herb Krause, James Rome, and Kent Williams.

Minutes of February Meetings – Fred Peretz

Minutes for the February 10 board meeting were circulated to the board. The minutes were approved with editorial revisions and will be posted on the FORNL website.

Minutes for the February 11 annual meeting of the membership were circulated to the board. The minutes were approved with editorial revisions and will be posted on the FORNL website.

Treasurer's and Membership Report – David Mullins

February was a break-even month financially; expenses for lunches and the new microphone were offset by CD interest. Our financial balance is net positive for the year.

There were no new memberships in February. Kent Williams will file the State of Tennessee registration once the 2025 officers are identified.

ORNL Liaison's Report – Annette Brun and Katy Brown

Annette had nothing new to report from ORNL; the effort to develop a speakers' bureau continues. Meetings with Chris Wright, the new Secretary of Energy, were very positive. Annette will be leaving ORNL as of April 4; Katy Brown will presumably cover the FORNL interface role in the interim.

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

The February 11 talk was by Robert Hettich, leader of the Bioanalytical Mass Spectrometry group in the ORNL Biosciences Division. He spoke on the human microbiome and his work in analyzing it using mass spectrometry. The new microphone/speaker worked well at the February meeting.

The March 11 talk will be from Stephen Jesse, with the ORNL Center for Nanophase Materials Sciences, "Building Materials and Devices with Atomic Precision: Perils and Promise."

The speaker for the April 8 talk is still pending. A tentative plan for a speaker on climate modeling, with a focus on flood modeling, was rescheduled for July 8 due to a scheduling conflict.

On May 13, Mark Buckner, a retired Distinguished Research Scientist at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and currently the lead Instructor of Oak Ridge High School's iSchool, will speak on a learning ecosystem aimed at creating teams of innovators who are skillful, able to think critically, and work collaboratively. (Alan Lowe)

There are several possibilities for speakers for June onward, but the key issue now is finalizing a speaker for April. Ray Garrett will check on the availability of Tom Potok, founder and leader of the Computational Data Analytics Group at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, for April 8. Jim Rushton volunteered to check on a talk on the U.S. Stable Isotope Production and Research Center (SIPRC), but no firm plan is available at this time. Alan Lowe suggested John Rather on a variety of physics topics, and Annette Brun will provide possible names for a talk on the ORNL GRID-C project.

An extended list of possible speakers was included within the meeting agenda. The current list of potential speakers is being maintained as a Google online spreadsheet that can be accessed as https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ETI6DIem5_jf_0rNfZUfHf5PycV11b2vIOpNT6KFjH0/.

Community Lectures – Kent Williams

Kent Williams offered to prepare a talk on fuel cycles for advanced reactors, placing several of the new Oak Ridge endeavors into a broader context. Ellen mentioned a proposal to establish zoning restrictions to support work with nuclear systems, excluding general heavy industrial or other unrelated activities. There was some discussion as to whether these proposals would serve better as luncheon talks or community lectures.

Annette is still interfacing with planners for the upcoming ORNL 60-year celebration of HFIR operations. So far it has not been determined whether any of these activities will be open to the public; a community lecture on the past and future work with HFIR might appeal to a broad audience.

A computational model of the universe, performed by Argonne National Laboratory using ORNL's Frontier supercomputer, might also provide an interesting topic. Pursuing this opportunity may have to be deferred until the results are formally published.

Other suggestions have been documented in previous meeting minutes.

Election of Officers – Ellen Smith

Ellen Smith reported that several conversations have been held between prospective officers. As noted earlier, David Mullins is willing to continue as Treasurer. Ellen has decided she would be willing to serve one additional year as president; following this she will rotate off the board. Steve Overbury is then willing to continue as vice president. Alan Lowe is willing to serve as secretary but will need backup support for those months in which he is out of town or otherwise unavailable for the monthly board meetings. Carolyn Krause agreed to provide backup support to the secretary; Alan would serve as secretary and Carolyn's support role would be an informal one.

The following individuals were thus nominated as officers for the 2025-2026 term, motion by Roger Macklin, seconded by Ray Garrett:

- Ellen Smith, President
- Steve Overbury, Vice President
- Alan Lowe, Secretary
- David Mullins, Treasurer

The officer slate was approved unanimously. Herb Krause will provide a list of new officers and board members and will ensure the web site is updated. Kent Williams will use this slate to complete the annual state registration form.

Outreach:

Website and Web Content – James Rome

After updates were issued by our website management company, James Rome reconfigured our modules and the website is now functioning properly again. He also moved the site to a newer server, which should be faster.

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

Annette Brun observed that the brochure inserts into retiree packets are being well-received; ORNL will likely need additional copies later this summer.

Volunteer Opportunities and Needs – Partner Organizations:

AMSE and Public Tours – Alan Lowe

Alan reported that the DOE bus tours will begin on April 7. Tour guide training will take place the prior week. The ORNL stops may rotate between the supercomputer facility and the visitor center.

The museum exhibit on Presidents and Science is nearing completion and will open soon.

AMSE will serve as national host for Nuclear Science week, opening October 20 and closing on October 24. This year's theme will be workforce development. A suggestion was made that this could be a topic for a community lecture, possibly involving Albuquerque's National Museum of Nuclear Science & History.

Manhattan Project National Historical Park – Fred Peretz

Fred reported that the park will be developing a new Junior Ranger program on chemistry, in cooperation with the American Chemical Society. Uranium chemistry at the Oak Ridge facilities will be a focus for this program; the current general Manhattan Project Junior Ranger program will continue to be offered.

STEM Education Support – Science Bowl Dinner

No one from FORNL was available for the Science Bowl dinner. It was observed that the Science Bowl is still using the old FORNL logo; we need to pass them the new logo.

Media reports:

Newspapers – Carolyn Krause

No articles submitted to The Oak Ridger have been published over the last month. Articles on recent talks by Warren Grice and Bob Hettich remain outstanding. The press release for the March talk has not yet been submitted.

Facebook – Ellen Smith

Nothing new was reported on our Facebook page.

Old Business:

There was no additional old business; the election of officers was reported earlier.

New Business

Ellen will not be available for the March lecture. Alan Lowe offered to have AMSE staff pick up lunches and bring them to the lecture; Ellen will drop off a supply of drinks, chips and cookies at the museum. Dave Mullins will ensure that lunch donations are accepted and will move the funds collected into the FORNL account.

Closing

The next board meeting will be held via Zoom at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, April 7, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Fred Peretz
Outgoing Secretary, Friends of ORNL