

**U.S. AbilityOne Commission  
Minutes – Quarterly Public Meeting**

**Wednesday, January 28, 2026  
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. ET**

**I. Call to Order**

U.S. AbilityOne Commission Interim Chairperson Chris Brandt called the meeting to order at 2 p.m. and greeted the over 200 participants attending via Zoom.

**II. Guest Speaker**

Mathew Blum, Deputy Administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) within the Office of Management and Budget, gave an update on the [Revolutionary FAR Overhaul](#). He conveyed regards from OFPP Administrator Dr. Kevin Rhodes.

Commission Member Jeffrey Koses, the General Services Administration’s Senior Procurement Executive and the Commission’s immediate past Chairperson, underscored some of Blum’s points. The FAR overhaul’s focus on speed, cost, and competition, and the Administration’s focus on Made in America, are issues that affect AbilityOne and that AbilityOne must concentrate on, Koses said.

**III. Administrative and New Member Remarks, and Introductions**

Commission Executive Officer Angela Phifer gave administrative remarks. She noted that two American Sign Language interpreters would interpret and that the meeting was being live captioned.

Brandt observed that she was serving as Interim Chairperson following the retirement from Federal service of the previous Chairperson, Robert Hogue from the Navy, at the end of 2025. Brandt, who served as Vice Chair during Hogue’s tenure, said the Commission’s process for selecting a new Chair was underway.

Commission members introduced themselves.

Brandt asked Jeff Mittman, the newest Commission member, to say a few words. Mittman, the president and CEO of Bosma Enterprises, an AbilityOne-participating nonprofit agency, [had been appointed](#) by President Trump to be a private-citizen Commission member in August 2025, but had not subsequently addressed a quarterly public meeting, due to the lapse in appropriations in fall 2025.

Mittman talked about his appreciation for AbilityOne. He was severely injured while deployed to Iraq with the Army. As he recovered, he learned that many of the items used to save his life and treat him had been produced by AbilityOne. He is excited to be on the Commission now. AbilityOne needs to focus on issues including speed, using new tools, and meeting the demands of the customer, he said.

Executive Director Kim Zeich and Laretta Joseph, Assistant Inspector General for Audit and Evaluation, introduced themselves and certain staff members.

#### **IV. Consideration of Minutes**

Minutes from the last quarterly public meeting – July 24, 2025 – were approved. (The October 2025 quarterly public meeting was not held due to a lapse in appropriations.)

#### **V. Interim Chairperson Remarks**

Brandt delivered remarks, starting with a high-level overview of the previous year and a look ahead to the coming one.

The most significant event in 2025 was the arrival of the new Administration, which resulted in the Commission responding to numerous Administration requests for information about the agency and Program.

In 2025, the number of Commission staff FTEs was reduced by approximately 25% through voluntary attrition and hiring freezes. The agency is prioritizing work within the new limits on its bandwidth.

On the subject of how the Commission is responding to Administration priorities, Brandt referred attendees to the Commission’s [Report to the President](#) issued in December 2025.

Looking ahead, Brandt said the Commission will continue to implement the Administration’s priorities and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders, including those in the Executive Branch and Congress.

#### **VI. Executive Director Report**

Executive Director Kim Zeich gave a [report](#).

#### **VII. Office of Inspector General Presentation**

Laretta Joseph, Assistant Inspector General for Audit and Evaluation, gave an [update](#). Acting Inspector General Carla Smith was unable to attend the meeting.

#### **VIII. Public Engagement Session**

The Commission [had announced](#) that the public engagement session would discuss nontraditional and emerging AbilityOne service capabilities.

Brandt introduced the session. She said that, for the purposes of the session, “emerging service capabilities” included (1) a new or significantly improved ability to deliver a service, and/or (2) a nascent capability that is currently being tested or employed in the AbilityOne Program.

Speakers were also invited to answer the question, “How can the AbilityOne Program identify and prepare for the service jobs of the future?”

Deputy Executive Director Amy Jensen moderated the session.

Jensen began by noting that AbilityOne’s traditional lines of business and core capabilities remain essential to the Program’s mission and success, but that non-traditional and emerging services may be critical to the Program’s future. The public engagement topic also aligned with the Administration's priorities for innovation and efficiency in procurement.

#### Maria Bauer, Director and SeaPort Program Manager, Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA)

Bauer gave an [overview](#) of SeaPort, which is the Department of the Navy’s contract vehicle for the procurement of engineering and professional support services. She also spoke about how to do business with SeaPort.

Following Bauer’s remarks, the speakers comprised representatives from three AbilityOne Federal contractors: PRIDE Industries, Tessera, and Melwood.

#### PRIDE Industries

David Daniel, PRIDE’s Director of Federal Facilities Operations; Brian Mann, Reliability Centered Maintenance Manager at Los Angeles Space Force Base (LASFB); and Zach Zoet, GIS Program Manager at LASFB, [discussed](#) the engineering and environmental services PRIDE provides for LASFB.

#### Tessera

Jeff Dolven, President and CEO of Tessera, discussed the opportunities facilities management can create for people with disabilities. Facilities management on a large military installation requires many specialists, such as plumbers, carpenters, and electricians, as well as workers to support them. There is a great opportunity to train young people with disabilities for these jobs, which can be entry points to good careers.

Michelle Reeve, Tessera’s Technical Trades Workforce Development Manager, discussed certain Tessera training initiatives.

Hunter Hoerer, Technical Trades Teacher Aide, graduated from one of those Tessera training initiatives, an introduction to facilities maintenance course, for which he is now a teacher’s aide. He discussed what he learned and how that influenced his goals for his future.

#### Melwood

Larysa Kautz, Melwood’s President and CEO, said that over the last decade, Melwood has evolved its training and employment model from traditional roles to a more skills-based, market-driven approach that aligns the strengths and interests of people with disabilities with customer needs. Melwood prioritizes developing training and employment programs in emerging career fields in IT tech and the skilled trades, she said.

Kautz discussed how Melwood [partnered with the company Enabled Intelligence](#) to create a geospatial data labeling boot camp to train people with disabilities. She said there was untapped talent among people with disabilities, especially some neurodivergent people who love working with data, even as the IT and tech sectors experience talent shortages. Melwood's partnership with Enabled Intelligence bridged that gap.

Nathaniel Gumowskyj, an Enabled Intelligence employee who graduated from Melwood's [abilIT Program](#) as well as from the bootcamp Kautz described, discussed his experience in those training programs and his work at Enabled Intelligence. He has become part of the company's quality-control team. Neurodivergent people can spot patterns that other people may not be able to see, he said.

Koses thanked all the speakers and said there is value in the Commission sharing stories of innovation in the services space. He asked attendees to share any comparable stories they might have about innovation in American-made products and American manufacturing.

Zeich thanked all the speakers and read a question from the chat: How can a nonprofit agency develop past performance in emerging or non-traditional services? Zeich said subcontracting offered one way to build a track record. Kautz talked about the value of partnering with small businesses, about SourceAmerica's [Mentor-Protégé Program](#), and about the importance of the AbilityOne community investing in emerging and nontraditional services.

PRIDE's David Daniel talked about the trust PRIDE built up at Fort Bliss, resulting in a contract to maintain an aircraft arresting system. Leveraging the knowledge of a group can also be helpful in highlighting opportunities, he said.

## **IX. Concluding Remarks**

Brandt thanked the speakers. She said the discussion had covered important topics, and conversations would continue into the future. The meeting adjourned.

### **Meeting Attendees**

Over 200 people attended, including:

#### **Commission Members**

Chris Brandt, Interim Chairperson	Private Citizen
Tara Jamison	Department of Justice
Jeffrey Koses	General Services Administration
Jeffrey Mittman	Private Citizen
Jennifer Sheehy	Department of Labor
Virna Winters	Department of Commerce

#### **Scheduled Speakers**

Maria Bauer	Naval Sea Systems Command
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David Daniel

Jeff Dolven

Nathaniel Gumowskyj

Hunter Hoerer

Larysa Kautz

Brian Mann

Michelle Reeve

Zach Zoet

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