

**Minutes of the regular meeting of the
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SMALL BUSINESS AND AGRICULTURE**

10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 16, 2016
Federal Reserve Bank of New York
33 Liberty Street, New York, NY

Present:

Michael Arnoff, President, Arnoff Moving and Storage
Adenah Bayoh, Co-Founder, Kapwood, LLC
Eric Caslow, President, Acme Smoked Fish Corporation
Kevin Ellis, Chief Executive Officer, Cayuga Milk Industries
Charles Feit, President and Founder, OnForce Solar
Gabriel Hernández, Co-Founder and Head of Tax Division, BDO Puerto Rico
Patrick Marotta, President and CEO, Marotta Controls
Waleska Rivera, President, Danosa Caribbean, Inc.

Federal Reserve Bank of New York attendees:

Jason Bram
Marisa Casellas-Barnes
William Dudley
Linda Goldberg
Jack Gutt
Kausar Hamdani
Matthew Higgins
Claire Kramer Mills
Richard Peach
Edison Reyes
Michael Strine
Angela Sun
Luis Uranga

Mr. Gutt called the meeting to order at approximately 10:30 a.m.

1. Advisory Council on Small Business and Agriculture Charter

Ms. Kramer Mills presented the Advisory Council on Small Business and Agriculture Charter to the members in attendance for adoption. The Charter was adopted by consensus of the members in attendance.

2. The National Economy

Mr. Peach gave a high-level overview of the current state of the U.S. economy.

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3. International Update

Mr. Higgins spoke about recent international economic developments in Europe and China.

4. Regional Update

Mr. Bram discussed recent economic trends in the Second Federal Reserve District.

5. Luncheon Discussion

Mr. Dudley and Mr. Strine joined the group for the luncheon discussion. Members were asked to comment on changes in sales volume during the first half of 2016, projected hiring and investment in plant and equipment, pricing expectations, and access to financing.

Members reported varying rates of growth and access to financing for the first half of 2016. Multiple members reported significant growth in revenue during the first half of the year and expectations that revenue growth would level off in the second half of the year. Many members reported that access to financing was not a significant barrier to business growth.

Most members reported plans for modest increases in employment, with the remaining members planning to keep employment levels stable. Several members reported difficulties in filling specialized positions in their companies and concerns about an aging workforce. A number of members reported undertaking various strategies to attract and retain employees, such as working with local organizations to find potential employees and providing in-house training opportunities to grow skillsets.

Members with businesses in Puerto Rico discussed the current economic climate, the increasing number of people leaving the island for the mainland, and the effects of the economic crisis on business—including a growing interest in supplying goods and services to the mainland United States.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00pm.