

Record of Meeting at the National Science Foundation  
February 28, 1958

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Present: National Science Foundation:

E. A. Eckhardt  
Geoffrey Keller  
A. J. Leigh  
J. B. Luton  
J. A. Mitchell  
F. C. Sheppard

Mr. Burchill: Copy sent to  
Mr. Mitchell  
3-5-58 for  
approval.

Associated Universities, Inc.:

L. R. Burchill  
R. M. Emberson  
C. F. Dunbar

1. Possible Purchase of Steel

Emberson explained the urgent need of E. W. Bliss Company to proceed with purchase of the 6" steel plate needed for the polar shaft. Unless Bliss can order this steel (or a purchase be otherwise arranged) by March 1 or soon thereafter, it contends that the chance of completing the 140' telescope in 14 months will vanish. If erection cannot be completed well before the end of the year 1958, it may be necessary, for economical use of field labor, to postpone start of erection until the spring of 1959. The result would be to delay completion until early in 1960.

The objections to proceeding before a supplemental appropriation has been obtained were considered. It might well be regarded as a violation of the Congressional mandate that no project should be started unless funds for completion are available. Even if it were not, the Appropriations Committee might construe an action of this kind as an attempt to force Congress's hand. Finally, the business prudence of AUI's making such a purchase is decidedly questionable.

Emberson said about 350 tons of steel were involved. The cost is \$60-70,000. Luton commented that 6" plate was one item on which the market has held up well.

Various possibilities were discussed. It was concluded that NSF would explore as quickly as possible the chance of acquiring the necessary steel through some other Government agency, e. g. Army, Navy, or GSA. For AUI's protection, any such arrangement would include an agreement for re-sale, if funds for the Bliss contract were not forthcoming. Ruttenberg and Dunbar agreed that this plan would not violate any statute or Congressional policy. Mitchell and Luton will explore the matter in advance with the staff of the Appropriations Committee. After this meeting, Emberson ascertained that the specifications call for "Grade AIS - C - 1018 or equivalent." Steel must be in flat sheets and be capable of fabrication by welding.

Leigh agreed to undertake the interagency exploration task.

2. March 13, 1958 Meeting

Luton said that the special committee of the National Science Board is going to meet on March 13 at 4:00 P. M. at the National Science Foundation. Originally, the NSF staff considered it had full authority to present to the Bureau of the Budget a request for a supplemental appropriation and that the work of the staff would be reviewed by the committee. However, it has been suggested recently that the committee wishes to review the supplemental request before it is submitted to the Bureau. Mitchell will resolve this issue and advise Emberson on March 3, if possible. Emberson said AUI would be prepared to discuss plans for a very large antenna at the March 13 meeting, if this is what the committee wants. However, any discussion of space stations should be postponed until Mr. Berkner can be present.

Mitchell said he would get all available information about the topics to be discussed and advise AUI as soon as possible. In his judgment, it would be undesirable to devote much time to long range plans and ideas. The most urgent need is to familiarize the committee with the present status and the plans for the immediate future.

3. Supplemental Appropriations

Sheppard said he expected to have completed by March 3 or 4 a draft of a request for a supplemental appropriation in the amount of about \$4,862,000. The request should be ready to be submitted to the Bureau of the Budget before the end of the week of March 3. Whether or not the request will be submitted before the March 13 meeting remains to be decided.

Sheppard expressed the fear that, if there were delay until after the 13th, it might be too late to have the request included in the second supplemental appropriation bill now being considered by the Congress.

4. Housing

Luton said the site plan submitted to NSF shows five or six new single houses. He asked the purpose, and when AUI would expect money for them. Emberson explained that plans for these houses were tentative. In no event will funds be requested for them until AUI has had substantial experience to draw on in estimating its needs. One of the houses might be used by the Director, if he wished. The others would be for use by Observatory staff members who will either want, or be expected, to live on the site, in order that at least one responsible member of the staff will be on site at all times.

Bowman is preparing a new plan from which all cancelled construction items have been eliminated.

Luton emphasized the importance of not following the request for "temporary" housing with an immediate further request for "permanent" houses. An interval of three years or more will be in no way embarrassing.

5. Subsequent Staff Meetings

It was agreed that meetings would be held in Washington on March 28 and April 25 and at Green Bank on May 26.

Accepted on behalf of  
NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Prepared and submitted on behalf of  
ASSOCIATED UNIVERSITIES, INC.

S/ J. E. LUTON

S/ Charles F. Dunbar  
Charles F. Dunbar, Secretary

Date: 5-23-58

Date: March 5, 1958.