National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001

February 10, 2015

Reply to Attn of: General Law Practice Group

TO: Distribution

FROM: Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Official

SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA Employees at Federation of Galaxy Explorers' Galaxy Ball on June 5, 2015

On June 6, 2014, the Federation of Galaxy Explorers, a non-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, will host a Galaxy Ball at the Westin Arlington Gateway in Arlington, Virginia, from 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. This event is a cocktail reception followed by a seated dinner and an award ceremony. The event will also feature a silent auction and raffle.

The purpose of this event is to recognize and award Mr. Robert Cardillo, Director of The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), with the Space Leadership Award and Dr. Simon P. Worden, Director of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Ames Research Center, with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Although there are financial sponsors for the Galaxy Ball, the Federation has had sole control of the planning, invitations, and seating for the event. Approximately 250 people are expected to attend including Congressional staff, industry representatives, NASA personnel, Department of Defense civilian and military members, and the student award winner. The estimated cost of the refreshments, which includes all food and beverages, is $125.00 per person. I find that the event meets the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g).

I further determine that there is an Agency interest in having NASA personnel attend the event because it will further Agency programs or operations. In addition, attendance at the Galaxy Ball will allow NASA representatives to discuss NASA's programs and plans with the other attendees. Accordingly, NASA employees whose duties do not substantially affect the Federation or a majority of its members, including NASA employees in non-career positions who are required to sign the ethics pledge under Executive Order 13490, may accept an invitation for themselves and an invited guest from the Federation for free attendance to the event.

Moreover, NASA employees whose duties substantially affect the host, such as by way of procurement duties, should seek an individual determination pursuant to 5 C.F.R. §2635.205(g)(3)(i) regarding participation in this event from their local ethics counselor.

We understand that the Federation will also be handing out a small gift item valued at $7. Attendees are reminded of the $20 gift exception at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(a) which provides that employees may accept gifts valued at no more than $20 per occasion (and no more than $50 from one source in a calendar year).

Adam F. Greenstone