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submitted on the record, after notification by the Board that the case is ready for decision.

(c) The weight to be attached to any evidence of record will rest within the sound discretion of the Board. The Board may in any case require either party, with appropriate notice to the other party, to submit additional evidence on any matter relevant to the appeal.

§ 955.15 Discovery—depositions.

(a) *General policy and protective orders.* The parties are encouraged to engage in voluntary discovery procedures. In connection with any deposition or other discovery procedure, the Board may make any order which justice requires to protect a party or person from annoyance, embarrassment, oppression, or undue burden or expense, and those orders may include limitations on the scope, method, time and place for discovery, and provisions for protecting the secrecy of confidential information or documents.

(b) *When depositions permitted.* After an appeal has been docketed and complaint filed, the parties may mutually agree to, or the Board may, upon application of either party and for good cause shown, order the taking of testimony of any person by deposition upon oral examination or written interrogatories before any officer authorized to administer oaths at the place of examination, for use as evidence or for purpose of discovery. The application for order shall specify whether the purpose of the deposition is discovery or for use as evidence.

(c) *Orders on depositions.* The time, place, and manner of taking depositions shall be as mutually agreed by the parties, or failing such agreement, governed by order of the Board.

(d) *Use as evidence.* No testimony taken by depositions shall be considered as part of the evidence in the hearing of an appeal unless and until such testimony is offered and received in evidence at such hearing. It will not ordinarily be received in evidence if the deponent is present and can testify personally at the hearing. In such instances, however, the deposition may be used to contradict or impeach the testimony of the witness given at the

hearing. In cases submitted on the record, the Board may, in its discretion, receive depositions as evidence in supplementation of that record.

(e) *Expenses.* Each party shall bear its own expenses associated with the taking of any deposition.

§ 955.16 Interrogatories to parties, admission of facts, and production and inspection of documents.

(a) *Interrogatories to parties.* After an appeal has been filed with the Board, a party may serve on the other party written interrogatories to be answered separately in writing, signed under oath and returned within 30 days. Upon timely objection by the party, the Board will determine the extent to which the interrogatories will be permitted. The scope and use of interrogatories will be controlled by § 955.15.

(b) *Admission of facts.* After an appeal has been filed with the Board, a party may serve upon the other party a request for the admission of specified facts. Within 30 days after service, the party served shall answer each requested fact or file objections thereto. The factual propositions set out in the request shall be deemed admitted upon the failure of a party to respond to the request for admission.

(c) *Production and inspection of documents.* Upon motion of any party showing good cause therefor, and upon notice, the Board may order the other party to produce and permit the inspection and copying or photographing of any designated documents or objects, not privileged, specifically identified, and their relevance and materiality to the cause or causes in issue explained, which are reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence. If the parties cannot themselves agree thereon, the Board shall specify just terms and conditions in making the inspection and taking the copies and photographs.

§ 955.17 Service of papers.

Papers shall be served personally or by mailing the same, addressed to the party upon whom service is to be made. Copies of complaints, answers and simultaneous briefs shall be filed directly with the Board. The party filing any other paper with the Board shall

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send a copy thereof to the opposing party, noting on the paper filed with the Board, or on the letter transmitting the same, that a copy has been so furnished.

HEARINGS

§ 955.18 Where and when held.

Hearings will ordinarily be held in the Arlington, VA, area, except that upon request seasonably made and upon good cause shown, the Board may set the hearing at another location. Hearings will be scheduled at the discretion of the Board with due consideration to the regular order of appeals and other pertinent factors. On request or motion by either party and upon good cause shown, the Board may, in its discretion, advance a hearing.

[41 FR 7408, Feb. 18, 1976, as amended at 60 FR 57938, Nov. 24, 1995; 63 FR 66050, Dec. 1, 1998]

§ 955.19 Notice of hearings.

The parties shall be given at least 15 days notice of the time and place set for hearings. In scheduling hearings, the Board will give due regard to the desires of the parties and to the requirement for just and inexpensive determination of appeals without unnecessary delay. Notices of hearing shall be promptly acknowledged by the parties.

§ 955.20 Unexcused absence of a party.

The unexcused absence of a party at the time and place set for hearing will not be occasion for delay. In the event of such absence, the hearing will proceed and the case will be regarded as submitted by the absent party as provided in § 955.12.

§ 955.21 Nature of hearings.

Hearings shall be as informal as may be reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances. Appellant and respondent may offer at a hearing on the merits such relevant evidence as they deem appropriate and as would be admissible under the generally accepted rules of evidence applied in the courts of the United States in nonjury trials, subject, however, to the sound discretion of the presiding officer in supervising the extent and manner of pres-

entation of such evidence. In general, admissibility will hinge on relevancy and materiality. Letters or copies thereof, affidavits, or other evidence not ordinarily admissible under the generally accepted rules of evidence, may be admitted in the discretion of the presiding officer. The weight to be attached to evidence presented in any particular form will be within the discretion of the Board, taking into consideration all the circumstances of the particular case. Stipulations of fact agreed upon by the parties may be regarded and used as evidence at the hearing. The parties may stipulate the testimony that would be given by a witness if the witness were present. The Board may in any case require evidence in addition to that offered by the parties.

§ 955.22 Examination of witnesses.

Witnesses before the Board will be examined orally under oath or affirmation, unless the facts are stipulated, or the presiding officer shall otherwise order. If the testimony of a witness is not given under oath, the Board may warn the witness that his statements may be subject to the provisions of Title 18, U.S.C., sections 287 and 1001, and any other provisions of law imposing penalties for knowingly making false representations in connection with claims against the United States or in any matter within the jurisdiction of any department or agency thereof.

§ 955.23 Copies of papers.

When books, records, papers, or documents have been received in evidence, a true copy thereof or of such part thereof as may be material or relevant may be substituted therefor, during the hearing or at the conclusion thereof.

§ 955.24 Posthearing briefs.

Posthearing briefs may be submitted upon such terms as may be agreed upon by the parties and the presiding officer at the conclusion of the hearing. Ordinarily, they will be simultaneous briefs, exchanged within 30 days after receipt of transcript.