

FOMC Meeting Update

... as summarized by Smith Shellnut Wilson

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The Federal Reserve kept its key interest rate unchanged, as expected, today and continued to signal that policy would stay on hold for the time being as the U.S. enters a presidential election year. The central bank also made a technical adjustment to the rate it pays on banks' reserve balances and said it would extend a program aimed at smoothing volatility in money markets -- at least through April.

Attached is a side-by side comparison of the U.S. Federal Open Market Committee statements from January 29, 2020 and December 11, 2019.

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Information received since the Federal Open Market Committee met in **December** indicates that the labor market remains strong and that economic activity has been rising at a moderate rate. Job gains have been solid, on average, in recent months, and the unemployment rate has remained low. Although household spending has been rising at a **moderate** pace, business fixed investment and exports remain weak. On a 12 month basis, overall inflation and inflation for items other than food and energy are running below 2 percent. Market-based measures of inflation compensation remain low; survey-based measures of longer-term inflation expectations are little changed.

Consistent with its statutory mandate, the Committee seeks to foster maximum employment and price stability. The Committee decided to maintain the target range for the federal funds rate at 1 1/2 to 1-3/4 percent. The Committee judges that the current stance of monetary policy is appropriate to support sustained expansion of economic activity, strong labor market conditions, and inflation **returning to** the Committee's symmetric 2 percent objective. The Committee will continue to monitor the implications of incoming information for the economic outlook, including global developments and muted inflation pressures, as it assesses the appropriate path of the target range for the federal funds rate.

In determining the timing and size of future adjustments to the target range for the federal funds rate, the Committee will assess realized and expected economic conditions relative to its maximum employment objective and its symmetric 2 percent inflation objective. This assessment will take into account a wide range of information, including measures of labor market conditions, indicators of inflation pressures and inflation expectations, and readings on financial and international developments.

Voting for the monetary policy action were Jerome H. Powell, Chair; John C. Williams, Vice Chair; Michelle W. Bowman; Lael Brainard; Richard H. Clarida; **Patrick Harker; Robert S. Kaplan; Neel Kashkari; Loretta J. Mester; and Randal K. Quarles.**

Information received since the Federal Open Market Committee met in **October** indicates that the labor market remains strong and that economic activity has been rising at a moderate rate. Job gains have been solid, on average, in recent months, and the unemployment rate has remained low. Although household spending has been rising at a **strong** pace, business fixed investment and exports remain weak. On a 12-month basis, overall inflation and inflation for items other than food and energy are running below 2 percent. Market-based measures of inflation compensation remain low; survey-based measures of longer-term inflation expectations are little changed.

Consistent with its statutory mandate, the Committee seeks to foster maximum employment and price stability. The Committee decided to maintain the target range for the federal funds rate at 1-1/2 to 1-3/4 percent. The Committee judges that the current stance of monetary policy is appropriate to support sustained expansion of economic activity, strong labor market conditions, and inflation **near** the Committee's symmetric 2 percent objective. The Committee will continue to monitor the implications of incoming information for the economic outlook, including global developments and muted inflation pressures, as it assesses the appropriate path of the target range for the federal funds rate.

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