

FOMC Minutes Preview – April 2026 Meeting

By Tim Cooper
May 15, 2026

The minutes to the FOMC’s April meeting (Wed, 2pm ET) should shed further light on the Committee’s discussion about changing its rate guidance, with inter-meeting commentary emphasizing rising risks to the inflation side of the dual mandate as potentially necessitating a change of approach. MNI’s review of the April FOMC meeting [is here](#).

- MNI’s Hawk-Dove spectrum has shifted in a more hawkish direction since the April FOMC. While the meeting Statement didn’t remove the easing bias (“considering the extent and timing of additional adjustments”) in favor of a more two-sided outlook on rates, three of the four voting regional Fed presidents (Hammack, Kashkari, and Logan) dissented, noting they “did not support inclusion of an easing bias in the statement at this time”.
- The minutes of the last two FOMCs have seen a rising number of participants favor 2-sided guidance, rising in March to “some” (5 or so) from “several” (4 or so) in January; we would be unsurprised if this number rose to perhaps 6 or 7 at this meeting given Powell’s characterization in the post-meeting press conference (“we had quite a vigorous discussion about .. the guidance and is it still appropriate and that kind of thing. I would say the number of people on the Committee who either could support that language change, changing to a more neutral stance so that a hike is likely as a cut, that number has increased over the intermeeting period.”)
- That plausibly sets it up for 3-4 more members and thus a majority supporting an end to the easing bias by the next meeting in June, though it remains to be seen whether such a contingent on the 19-member FOMC would also constitute a majority on the (currently) more dovish 12-member voting group.
- A guidance shift wouldn’t rule out future rate cuts, but it would certainly indicate the Committee has gotten more agnostic on the matter, and could set up a contentious first meeting for new chair Kevin Warsh.

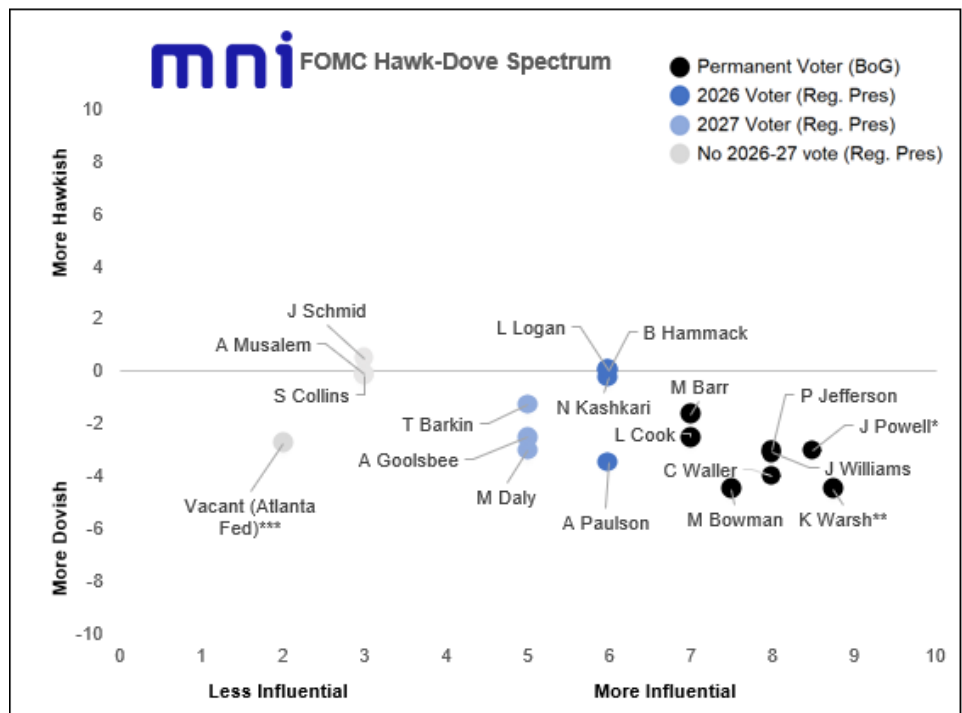
Reserve Management Policy Shift:

Elsewhere, we will be interested to see whether there was discussion over reserve management purchase strategy, in light of the May 13 announcement that there will only be \$10B in bill buys in the coming month, well below \$25B last month and \$40B from the prior 4 months that kicked off the reserve purchases, and at the low end of expectations that we’d seen which had largely been for a \$5B to \$10B reduction to \$15B - \$20B/month.

Inter-Meeting FedSpeak: Concerns Over Inflation

Growing: The dominant theme since the April FOMC meeting is a clear shift toward greater concern about inflation and less confidence that the next move is necessarily a cut.

- As noted above, the biggest theme is discomfort with statement language implying the next move would likely be a cut, with the likes of Goolsbee and Collins suggesting that they could have joined their three



Hawkish/Dovish: Scores indicate MNI’s subjective assessment of each member’s stance on monetary policy. -10 implies member believes aggressive easing warranted; +10 is most hawkish, implies member believes aggressive tightening warranted. Scores around -2 to +2 considered relatively neutral.

Influence: The x-axis runs from 0 (“least influential”) to 10 (“most influential”). Voters in the current year receive a minimum score of 6; the Chair receives a 10 and Board of Governors members receive at least 7. Those who are not voters in the current year are limited to a score of 5; among them, those due to vote next year receive higher influence scores (rising towards end of current year), and vice-versa. **Updated May 15, 2026**

* Powell’s term as Chair expires on May 15 2026 but his term on the Board expires in Jan 2028

** Upon being sworn in, new Chair Warsh to occupy S Miran’s term on the Board which expired on Jan 31 2026

*** Atlanta’s Bostic retired at the end of his term on Feb 28 2026 - his successor will vote in 2027

dissenting colleagues on that front.

- The possibility of a hike is being more openly floated. Kashkari was the most explicit on this front in the inter-meeting period, saying “the next move might need to be up in interest rates.” Collins said she could envision a scenario in which some policy tightening is needed, while Goolsbee said it was wrong to think only cuts were on the table.
- Many participants emphasized that inflation is still above target for too long and may be turning more persistent. Concern is not just about energy prices; officials increasingly highlighted problematic underlying/services inflation, as noted in various tones by Goolsbee, Collins, Kashkari, Musalem, and Schmid.
- Even officials who still think rates will eventually come down now sound like cuts have been pushed further out. Williams still sees eventual cuts but says higher inflation delays them, and he appears to have raised his estimate of the neutral rate. Goolsbee still sees cuts over time, but only with renewed inflation progress.

Warsh Enters The Spectrum: New Chair Warsh takes his spot in MNI’s Hawk-Dove matrix for the first time, replacing Gov Miran. For the moment we have placed him as among the most dovish members of the Committee, as expressed in terms of apparent preference for the rate path ahead. There’s little doubt that markets see him as a dove on short-term rates. However, his previous stint as a Fed Governor was notoriously a hawkish-leaning one. Warsh’s Senate Banking committee nomination testimony on April 21 (prior to the April FOMC meeting) didn’t provide any firm conclusions. Our compilation of highlights from the hearing: [FedWarshTestimony-Apr 2026.pdf](#)

- Since Warsh was nominated, analysts have focused on the implications of his preferences on rates and balance-sheet policy, and his ability to translate each of these into FOMC action.
- Warsh’s preference for a smaller balance sheet (which he mentioned in his nomination hearing) appears to have support across some leadership. Though as MNI’s Policy Team reported earlier this year, the balance sheet cannot be reduced much further under the current regulatory framework without risking its control over interest rates, making it difficult for Warsh to persuade the rest of the FOMC to restart QT or induce banks to demand fewer reserves ahead of regulatory reform.
- On rates, as MNI’s Policy Team noted citing ex-Fed officials who see Warsh as a seasoned central banker who knows the institution, he will need to work to persuade the FOMC on his policy ideas (Warsh’s previously-stated argument that “we can lower interest rates a lot” to help bring down mortgage rates and revive the housing market would be a minority view among policymakers) and earn the institution’s trust as a leader.
- Some analysts see him as a hawk in dove’s clothing given his historical preferences for monetary policy configurations, while others suggest that he could be persuasive in convincing the FOMC to bring rates down. Dovish market reaction to his nomination suggests his views on current monetary policy are broadly assumed to align with those of the Trump administration that nominated him, namely, that he will instantly become one of the most dovish members on the Committee in terms of seeking near-term rate cuts.
- However in his hearing, it was difficult to ascertain Warsh’s “true” preferences. Some of his comments may have been pre-prepared to ensure a smooth confirmation, and while he didn’t do much to distinguish his own views with those of the President when asked, he didn’t sound entirely dovish on the rate front either.
- Warsh responded with non sequiturs when asked whether cutting rates immediately to 1% (as President Trump has suggested) would present upside inflation risks; he also said that the economy was running at close to full employment, which doesn’t sound like a starting point for aggressive rate cuts.
- In any event he arrives at a time of a divided Committee. Our Policy Team’s latest piece on the matter ([“MNI POLICY: Warsh Faces Resistance On Inflation, Productivity”](#)) notes Warsh will need to do some heavy lifting to convince FOMC colleagues of two key pillars of the views he has expressed over the past year – that policymakers can look through supply shocks and that productivity gains will bolster the central bank’s ability to lower rates.
- Additionally, we assume that Chair Powell stays on through the coming meetings, as he has suggested he will given the investigation that continues to linger over the Fed’s renovations. While Powell’s “influence” in the Hawk-Dove spectrum has been reduced, he will still be among the most influential voices on the Committee; additionally we peg his influence as just slightly lower than that of Warsh, at least initially.

| Member | Role | Voter | | Monetary Policy Commentary Since April FOMC |
|-------------|----------------|-------|-----|---|
| | | '26 | '27 | |
| K Warsh | BOG, Chair | X | X | No commentary on current monetary policy since the last FOMC meeting |
| J Powell | BOG | X | X | No commentary on current monetary policy since the last FOMC meeting |
| J Williams | NY Fed, VChair | X | X | <p>New York Fed President John Williams said on May 14 that despite the Iran energy shock, he's comforted by anchored inflation expectations and the lack of price pressures coming from the labor market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I think we're seeing pretty stable medium- and long-term inflation expectations," he said at a Conference of Business Economists event. "The labor market is not adding to inflation pressures. We are not in a cost-push shock." He struck a sanguine tone after a spike in the April CPI to 3.8% and signs that core inflation is picking up. Williams said the job market is neither especially robust nor weak. "It's not a hot labor market at all but it's not one that's showing signs of slowing dramatically." <p>On May 4, Williams said "We will at some point need to be lowering interest rates to reflect the fact that inflation is lower. Inflation is higher this year than previously expected, so that pushes off a date of lowering interest rates, in my view, but it doesn't change that basic story."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The elevated levels of inflation, mixed signals from the labor market, and heightened uncertainty from the Middle East conflict present an unusual set of circumstances, but the current stance of monetary policy is well positioned to balance the risks... underlying inflation outside of imported goods and energy has so far remained stable, and there are still no signs of significant second-round effects from tariffs spilling over to the rest of the economy." He added that he was "very comfortable" with the FOMC statement's current language suggesting an easing bias. However, he also said that his estimate for the real neutral rate was 1%, which would appear to be a slight hawkish upward shift from his previous estimates. |
| P Jefferson | BOG, VChair | X | X | No commentary on current monetary policy since last FOMC meeting |
| M Bowman | BOG, VChair | X | X | No commentary on current monetary policy since last FOMC meeting |
| L Cook | BOG | X | X | No commentary on current monetary policy since last FOMC meeting |
| C Waller | BOG | X | X | No commentary on current monetary policy since last FOMC meeting |
| M Barr | BOG | X | X | <p>Barr on May 14 said the size of the central bank's balance sheet is the wrong measure of the Fed's footprint in financial markets, and many of the proposals being floated to address this purported problem would make monetary policy operations less efficient and effective and raise financial stability risks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I think shrinking the balance sheet is the wrong objective, and many of the proposals to meet this objective would undermine bank resilience, impede money market functioning, and, ultimately, threaten financial stability," he said in prepared remarks. "Some would actually increase the Fed's footprint in financial markets." Some of the most prominent ideas being discussed, such as reducing liquidity requirements, would undermine financial stability, Barr said. Letting banks treat some amount of assets as Treasuries or reserves just because these assets are pledged at the discount window would reduce self-insurance and decrease the resilience of the banking system, said Barr, the former Fed vice chair for supervision. |
| B Hammack | Clev. Fed | X | | <p>Hammack's May 1 explanation for her dissent (link) against the April FOMC statement's guidance is straightforward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Uncertainty around the economic outlook has increased in 2026 and makes the future path for monetary policy more uncertain, as well...I dissented from the post-meeting statement because I did not believe it was appropriate to include an easing bias around the future path for monetary policy. The current FOMC statement references language around 'additional adjustments.' This forward guidance was put into the statement to signal a pause rather than an end to the easing cycle. I see this clear easing bias as no longer appropriate given the outlook." Hammack is one of the 3 or 4 most hawkish FOMC members in our view and we're unsurprised that she is part of the contingent (perhaps 6 or 7 FOMC members on the 19-participant committee at this point, including co-guidance-dissenters Logan and Kashkari) that wants to keep open the possibility of the next move being a hike instead of a cut. Her assessment of the economy: "Activity in the US economy has been resilient thus far in 2026, and the unemployment rate has been little changed near my estimate of full employment since last summer. Inflation pressures continue to be broad based, and rising oil prices present an additional source of inflationary pressure. Uncertainty around the economic outlook is elevated, with upside risks |

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| | | | | <p>to inflation and downside risks to growth and employment."</p> <p>On May 7, Hammack said in an interview that "The statement that we put is that interest rates were on hold, but we have the signal in there that it's more likely that the next move will be a move down... I thought that was a little bit misleading, just given my view of where the economy is."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She said that her core view was that "interest rates will be on hold for quite some time." |
| N Kashkari | Minn. Fed | X | | <p>Minneapolis Fed President Kashkari reinforced his recently-hawkish view on FOMC policy in a fireside chat on May 7, reiterating that the war in the Middle East will likely worsen inflation while subduing business confidence/activity. He noted that "it may well be that the next move might need to be up in interest rates, I just don't know", in accordance with his dissent (one of three on the FOMC) against April's decision to maintain the easing bias in forward guidance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He said in his post-meeting explanation for the dissent that "the FOMC should offer a policy outlook that signals that the next rate change could be either a cut or a hike, depending on how the economy evolves." • On May 7 he reiterated concerns over higher inflation remaining entrenched: "Having now had elevated inflation for five years, I for one am very cautious about where inflation is headed...We cannot let elevated inflation be the new normal. We actually have to get it back down to our 2% target and make people realize that and experience it." <p>Kashkari said in an appearance May 13 after the CPI and PPI reports for April that "I'm not surprised by the numbers. I want to see how persistent they are and I want to see what happens in the Middle East and how persistent the closure of the Strait" is (as quoted by MNI's Policy Team).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the latest CPI data was largely in line with expectations, post-release commentary suggests it's made most of the FOMC more concerned about the inflation outlook, including Chicago Fed Pres Goolsbee commenting Tuesday about his concern re the high services component of CPI. • Kashkari - already a hawk who dissented in April against the easing bias in the FOMC statement - said "inflation is still too high" and has run above target been for the last 5 years, he noted. "The Iran shock has upended the inflation environment...before the Iran conflict started, I had some sense of confidence that inflation was heading back down to target...The labor market looks a little bit better than I thought in January, February; inflation definitely worse." • He wasn't exactly enthusiastic about the labor market's prospects, describing it as "lukewarm" but "hanging in there", though his concerns have clearly turned more decisively to inflation-fighting. <p>Kashkari's dissenting statement highlights (in full here):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I dissented against the FOMC's action because I did not think it was appropriate to continue to include the following phrase in the policy statement: "In considering the extent and timing of additional adjustments to the target range for the federal funds rate ..." • "While that phrase is not a commitment to make further cuts to the policy rate, it is widely interpreted by Fed watchers to indicate the Committee's expectation that the next adjustment to the federal funds rate would be a cut. I consider this language a form of forward guidance about the likely direction for monetary policy. Given recent economic and geopolitical developments and the high level of uncertainty about the outlook, I do not believe such forward guidance is appropriate at this time. Instead, the FOMC should offer a policy outlook that signals that the next rate change could be either a cut or a hike, depending on how the economy evolves. Forward guidance is itself an instrument of monetary policy: It can influence financial conditions today, potentially slowing or hastening the achievement of our dual mandate goals." |
| L Logan | Dall. Fed | X | | <p>Dallas Fed's Logan dissenting statement highlights (in full here):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I dissented from language in the post-meeting statement that suggests the next adjustment to the target range will most likely be a cut." • "The conflict in the Middle East raises the prospect of prolonged or repeated supply disruptions that could create further inflationary pressures. At the same time, the labor market has been stable, with low unemployment and payroll job gains keeping pace with labor force growth". • "When the FOMC gives forward guidance, it is important for that guidance to reflect the policy outlook. In light of the two-sided risks to monetary policy, I believed the FOMC should not give forward guidance implying a bias toward rate cuts at this time." |
| A Paulson | Phil Fed | X | | No commentary on current monetary policy since last FOMC meeting |
| T Barkin | Rich. Fed | | X | No commentary on current monetary policy since last FOMC meeting |
| Vacant | Atl. Fed | | X | In an essay published on the bank's website on May 12, interim Atlanta Fed President Venable - who is serving on the FOMC until a permanent replacement for her predecessor Bostic is named - called for a "wait and see" approach on rates. That's pretty close to Committee consensus. Bostic had been among the most hawkish |

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| | | '26 | '27 | |
| | | | | <p>members on the Fed before his departure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "With inflation still well above our target, and renewed price pressures brewing from a historic disruption in global oil supplies, the time is not right to loosen policy and risk stoking further inflation. Nor is it clear that now is the time to react forcefully to these new inflationary pressures, as doing so could upset the unusual balance in today's labor markets. Therefore, I think the optimal policy approach in the face of risks to both sides of the dual mandate is to wait and see." • Venable describes the labor market as continuing "to look solid, if a tad unusual"; indeed "shows signs of solidifying after employment growth slowed markedly in 2025". • On inflation, "A sharp rise in oil prices and shipping costs is intensifying cost pressures for companies that rely heavily on energy." That also presents downside risks to activity, as "If the conflict lasts many more months, prices across the economy could rise enough that consumers will rein in spending, creating an unwelcome combination of pressures on price stability and economic activity." • That said, "It is impossible to forecast with any certainty how economic circumstances will ultimately play out. So far, economic activity broadly appears to be holding up reasonably well, according to aggregate data and feedback from business contacts." |
| M Daly | S.F. Fed | | X | <p>On May 7, Daly told Bloomberg TV that "I think the phrasing of the statement is less important than the actions" of the FOMC, and that "the real signal about the meeting is that everyone agreed to the decision."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She called current policy "slightly restrictive" and that it was not yet clear whether higher energy prices were driving longer-term dynamics: "I think it's really too early to tell..." "If the conflict ends and oil prices come back down and that doesn't get passed into the broader economy, then I expect the underlying dynamics that we were facing prior to the conflict to return." In short, the Fed shouldn't over-react to short-term energy moves. |
| A Goolsbee | Chic. Fed | | X | <p>Following the April CPI report release on May 13, Goolsbee expressed concern over the recent pickup in services inflation, and has made it clear that he's no longer as worried about the labor market side of the dual mandate. He maintains his medium-term optimism that rates can come down a "fair amount", but ties that squarely into inflation progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking in a fireside chat Tuesday afternoon, he says re PCE inflation that "We've been above 2% for five years now ... that's not good. It was making progress. Then we stalled out around 3% inflation and stopped making progress. That was last year. We believed that a lot of that was from tariffs and so would not last.... Now before that went away, we've added this oil price bit from the war. And not only are we not making progress, it's going the wrong way." • "And it's going the wrong way not just in oil related things and not just in tariff related things. Now you've seen a drifting upward of services inflation. And I keep highlighting, for me, that's the part that I'm nervous about. I want to see that at least stop growing and hopefully start going back down, because that can't really be from oil prices. That's not really a big tariff component. So we need to keep an eye on that. The numbers today were mostly what was expected, but the unexpectedly disappointing part in my mind was on the services side." • He concludes: "I want us to be cognizant that the job market is basically stable, and inflation is going up. And so ... we're not at this moment in a difficult balancing act between the two sides of the mandate, one side of the mandate is going wrong and the other side is not going wrong. So in the short run, I want us to be cognizant of that. And I remain optimistic. And I was, before the inflation started going up, that rates can come down still a fair amount, but we've got to see progress on inflation. And if it were up to me, we would we would kind of adopt that mindset." <p>Speaking on CNBC after April's nonfarm payrolls report on May 8, Goolsbee described the report as looking "pretty much stable" with not a lot of evidence that the job market is falling apart. He had said two days prior that the labor market is "stable without being great," and all four key rates -- unemployment, hiring, vacancies and layoffs -- are stable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On inflation, "I don't think it's just energy. It's more than just that" [...] Inflation is elevated — it was already elevated before the war, then the war increased oil prices. Services inflation has been "higher than is comfortable" for several months and is "going the wrong way": He is trying to figure out if inflationary pressures are coming from one-time increases, and he's worried that the oil shock is coming at a time when the tariff shock hasn't yet worked through prices. "We've got to just keep an eye on this, because if everybody starts presuming that inflation rates are going back to something like what they were a few years ago, we would be in a bit of a pickle as a central bank". • He told Bloomberg that day, "I don't see how you can look at the current situation and, at least to me, view that the only thing that's on the table conceivably are rate cuts." |

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|-----------|---------------|-------|-----|---|
| | | '26 | '27 | |
| S Collins | Bos. Fed | | | <p>Collins (next votes on the FOMC in 2028) continued to sound very cautious on the inflation outlook in a speech on May 13, saying that while policy is "well positioned" the Fed can't take currently anchored inflation expectations for granted, and "I believe it will likely be important to maintain the current slightly restrictive monetary policy stance for some time". And "while it is not in my most likely outlook, I could envision a scenario in which some policy tightening is needed to ensure that inflation returns durably to 2 percent in a timely manner."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She's become one of the more hawkish FOMC members since late last year when she began cautioning about further rate cuts; prior to this speech she said in an interview that she would have preferred that the latest FOMC Statement guidance amend the outright easing bias in favor of something more two-sided (along the lines of her 3 regional president colleagues who dissented at the April meeting). • On inflation: "While way down from its 2023 peak, inflation has been above target for over five years – and has increased recently due to the jump in energy prices....I expect little to no reduction in inflation this year, with the disinflation process gaining more traction next year. But the likelihood of other scenarios – with higher and more persistent inflation, more adverse labor market outcomes, or both – has increased....I believe it is important to durably return inflation to the FOMC's 2 percent target in a reasonable amount of time." • While tariff pass-through has "stabilized recently", suggesting a waning impact ahead particularly for core goods, she takes note of elevated supercore inflation: "services inflation excluding housing prices remains above levels consistent with 2 percent inflation. I find this pattern notable because a considerable portion of the labor productivity improvements have accrued to the services sector. To me, this suggests that, with relatively solid demand, firms retain pricing power and have less incentive to fully pass efficiency gains on to consumers." • That said, she also points out that "the positive correlation between oil shocks and future consumer price inflation, while still present, has diminished since the 1990s...the "second-round" effects of an oil shock on non-energy prices are now less pronounced than in the 1970s and 1980s... [correlations] suggest the current oil shock will likely have a modest impact on the domestic economy overall, with perhaps somewhat more adverse effects on inflation than on the labor market" though she is concerned about downside scenarios for growth and upside scenarios for inflation stemming from a potentially prolonged conflict in the Middle East. • On growth and the labor market: "Despite a series of still-unfolding supply shocks – including tariffs in 2025 and the oil shock more recently – economic growth has remained resilient. And while the labor market has clearly softened from the overheated conditions of 2023 and 2024, the unemployment rate remains low by historical standards." She says that various indicators are "consistent with a labor market in balance" and "continued high inflation does not appear to be driven by labor market pressures". |
| A Musalem | St. Louis Fed | | | <p>Musalem maintained his traditionally hawkish stance at an event in Alabama on May 6. Recall that he last month openly entertained the idea of a hike if core inflation or medium- to long-term expectations move "persistently higher," while still allowing for cuts if labor risks become more apparent. Whilst not a voter, he is very likely to have agreed with the three hawkish dissenters wanting to remove the easing bias from the statement at last month's FOMC meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "My own views are that there are very plausible scenarios under which the economy would require us to keep the policy rate at its current level for some time. "I also see plausible scenarios under which the economy might require us to reduce the interest rate further. I see plausible scenarios under which the economy may require higher interest rates. So a lot of uncertainty right now." • The fed funds rate is either neutral or slightly accommodative in real terms, he said. The labor market seems to be stabilizing and inflation is running "meaningfully above our target of 2%," • "Some of that is still the effect of tariffs passing through. Some of that is the energy price shocks from the Middle East conflict, but there's also underlying inflation that we need to worry about as monetary policymakers," the St. Louis Fed chief said, expressing optimism about the economy. • "The tailwinds are larger than than the headwinds," he said. "The economy has reasonable forward momentum." • Still, Musalem said the Iran war may have impacts. "It is weighing on sentiment and may weigh on activity." |

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|----------|----------|-------|-----|--|
| | | '26 | '27 | |
| J Schmid | K.C. Fed | | | <p>Schmid, possibly the most hawkish member of the FOMC, remarked May 14 (following robust consumer and producer price data) that "I see continued inflation as the most pressing risk to the economy".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schmid has continually eyed upside inflation risks more seriously than most, dissenting against cuts last year when he was a voter. He's not a voter again until 2028, but he's probably the FOMC member who penciled in a rate hike in 2027 in the latest Dot Plot, and we assume that he supports a shift in the FOMC meeting statement's forward guidance to remove the easing bias for rates. He said in prepared remarks that "while inflation has moderated significantly from its peak, in my discussions with business leaders across the Tenth District, it is clear that it is still too high." He continues to see relatively solid economic and labor market fundamentals: "Growth is positive, with economic output expanding at a modest but steady pace so far this year... Unemployment remains relatively low by historical standards, and the labor market is functioning effectively — albeit in an unusual low-hire/low-fire environment." |