

Meeting summary for FEB Meeting (01/17/2025)

Quick recap

The meeting focused on the ongoing issues with the Association Management System (AMS) and the financial services company, Lockbox Company, which processes membership renewals. The team also discussed the declining membership trend, the need for a report on expenses for 2024, and the upcoming audit. Additionally, they discussed the organization of a conference via Zoom, the formation of a Bylaws Revision Committee, and plans for the upcoming Federation Conference and election of new officers.

Next steps

- Tim G, to send out policies and procedures document to all Executive Board members for review before the pre-conference meeting.
- Tim G to contact Joe Cinadr about chairing the nomination committee.
- Board members to inform Tim if they are not returning for re-election.
- Tim G to draft a proposal for moving the Cincinnati district chapter to the Dayton district and send it to board members.
- Sandy G to update the group with more information from Der Dutchman and Quality Inn regarding conference arrangements.
- Board members to inform Tim about their attendance and spouse attendance for the Federation Executive Board meeting on the second.
- Tim G to reserve rooms for Federation Board members at the conference hotel.
- All board members to consider ideas for restructuring the Federation.
- Michael R., Tim G, and Sandy G to resolve the login issue with the website.
- Tim to send current Federation bylaws and new template format to Joe Kluchko and Don for review.
- Joe Kluchko and Don W, to review bylaws and work on incorporating them into the new template format.
- Joe Leisz to contact Jim Store about potentially serving on the Bylaws Committee.
- Sandy to complete and submit sponsorship paperwork to headquarters by end of January.
- Tim to investigate options for notifying members about potential voting procedures.
- Lynette to transfer money from Federation checking to Conference checking account.
- Lynette to work with Audit Committee on reinvesting CD funds coming due in February.
- Al G, to prepare welcome package for new Congressman in District 2 and send copy to Tim and Sandy for review before sending to Congressman's staffer by January 31st.
- Tim to follow up with individual officer interested in being active in Chapter 382.
- Sandy to reach out to Erin Thompson from Social Security Office for updates on GPO/WEP payouts for Toledo chapter meeting.
- Tim to follow up on creating an online account with the Social Security system for retrieving funds related to the Social Security Fairness Act.
- Al G, to contact and establish relationships with CDLs and SDLs across the state to improve legislative efforts.
- Lynette to confirm if Karen Hockle wants to be the Congressional District Leader for District 9 and inform Tim.
- Tim to provide the F-10 guidelines for Congressional District Leaders to any new CDLs that are recruited.
- Mike Webb to continue monitoring the results of the gift membership promotion and report back on its success.
- Ed to send the membership chart to the Federation Board members via email.

Summary

Silent Prayer, Pledge, and President's Message

The meeting began with greetings and introductions. The main agenda item was a silent prayer followed by the pledge of allegiance, led by Tim. The meeting then proceeded to discuss the President's message, which was sent out to all participants. Sandy was tasked with sharing the agenda items as they came up. The meeting also included a moment of silence for veterans and past and present members of the organization. The re-election of Ed Konas as the region's VP was also announced.

AMS Issues and Membership Renewals

Ed discussed the ongoing issues with the Association Management System (AMS) and the financial services company, Lockbox Company, which processes membership renewals. He explained that a system update between the two companies caused a breakdown, leading to a delay in processing membership renewals for October, November, and December. Ed mentioned that the staff is working to correct the problem and hopes to have everything resolved by the end of the month. He also noted that the budget was passed without knowing the exact figures due to the ongoing issues. Ed further discussed the reduction in revenue and the loss of members. Tim and Ed experienced technical difficulties while trying to share a screen during the meeting.

Addressing Association Membership Decline

Ed presented a concerning trend in the association's membership, noting a 56% drop in new members recruited and members reinstated since the Covid years. He highlighted that the association is losing members despite a decreasing loss rate, and the gain-to-loss ratio needs to improve for the association to grow. Ed also expressed concerns about the association's appeal to younger generations, suggesting that the association needs to adapt to their preferences. Tim and Sandy discussed ideas from a recent Zoom meeting with Street Level, including an ambassador program and an open house event. However, they expressed uncertainty about the feasibility of these ideas. Joe Klucho shared his experience with another association, Upma, which is growing rapidly and spending money on member recruitment. The team agreed that the association needs to find its price to attract new members.

Chapter Closure, Email System, and Staffing

Tim discussed the closure of chapter 265 and the transfer of its members to chapter 569. He expressed dissatisfaction with the new email system, which sends emails to all members of a Congressional District, and the loss of access to the old Ohio Federation website. Tim also raised concerns about the high number of honorary members, suggesting that many may be over 100 years old and no longer active. Ed agreed with Tim's concerns and suggested that the membership records need to be cleaned up. Sandy brought up issues with the benefits department, which had recently lost some staff members. Ed suggested that the board needs to take a hard look at the organization's structure and staffing to ensure it can perform its mission.

2024 Expenses, Audit, and Budget

In the meeting, Tim discussed the need for a report on expenses for 2024, which Lynette agreed to prepare. There was also a discussion about the upcoming audit and the need for a budget for the Federation. Lynette mentioned that she would transfer money from the Federation's checking to the Conference's checking account. Joe Klucho suggested reinvesting the matured CDs, which Tim agreed to consider under new business. Michael suggested exploring money market accounts for better interest rates. Tim emphasized the need to discuss these issues under new business before making any decisions. Al was scheduled to discuss legislative issues next.

Legislative Work and Congressional Updates

Al expressed disappointment in his legislative work in 2024, particularly in the 10th Congressional District. He plans to improve his relationships with other legislative leads in 2025. Al also discussed the Social Security Fairness Act, noting that its implementation will be challenging with the new administration's focus on budget cuts. He mentioned a letter from Nicole Blackstone regarding a welcome email for a new Congressman in southern Ohio, but noted the lack of an Sdl or Cdl in the area. Tim and Michael discussed the recent removal of Congressman Mike Turner from the Intel Committee. Tim also mentioned the potential for a bulk check for the entire 2024 year for those on social security. Lastly, there was a discussion about the lack of a Congressional District leader for District 9, with Tim clarifying that Karen is the current leader for the chapter.

Gift Membership Promotion and Website

In the meeting, Mike discussed the chapter's gift membership promotion, which resulted in two renewals and potential for more members. He expressed concerns about the effectiveness of ads in the Dayton Daily News and Skywriter at Wright Patterson, suggesting a need for greater discussion and ideas. Sandy agreed with Mike's points and suggested reaching out to other groups with similar issues. Tim clarified that it takes about three months for content to be published in the magazine. Mike Ryan then discussed his progress on the new website, which he

submitted for feedback and plans to continue working on. He also provided the correct URL for the website and suggested that Tim and Sandy should be able to access it.

Chapter Status and Potential Mergers

The meeting focused on the status of various chapters and their activities. Lynette reported that three chapters were struggling and might close, while two, Lima and Toledo, were doing well. She also mentioned a potential merger with another chapter. Joe Leisz discussed the situation in Cleveland District, where six chapters were operating, with some facing challenges in officer recruitment. He also mentioned the passing of the Social Security Furnace Act and its implications. Sandy reported that her chapters were doing fine, with Columbus having few attendees but a total of 111 members, North having 275 members with over 50% on dues withholding, and Mansfield being very active in legislation. Tim emphasized the need for chapters to send out letters to their members regarding potential closures and the process of merging.

Conference Venue and Backup Plan

Sandy discussed the upcoming conference, which is tentatively scheduled for May 2nd and 3rd. The venue is still undecided, with Dutchman's Inn being the original choice but now unavailable due to extensive remodeling. A backup plan was suggested, with the possibility of holding the conference at a nearby hotel, Quality Inn, which has a large enough meeting space and can cater meals. However, the final details are not yet confirmed. Sandy also mentioned the need to partner with organizations like Blue Cross Blue Shield and the Rural Letter Carriers to promote their issues. The team agreed on the importance of having a backup plan for the conference.

Conference Planning and Bylaw Updates

The meeting revolved around the organization of a conference via Zoom, with Sandy, Ed, Tim, Joe, and others discussing the logistics and potential issues. They agreed to use Zoom as a backup plan in case other arrangements fall through. The team also discussed the need for voting on bylaw changes, with Joe emphasizing that every member must have an opportunity to vote. The conversation ended with the decision to set up a bylaw committee to review and update the current bylaws, which were last approved in 2018.

Bylaws Revision Committee Formation

Tim proposed the formation of a Bylaws Revision Committee, with Joe Klucho and Donald as members. The committee's task was to review and update the Federation's bylaws to align with the new template format required by the National Federation. The old bylaws, which were approved by the Federation in 2018, were never sent to the National Federation for approval. Tim suggested that the committee should either submit the updated bylaws in the new template format or accept the current bylaws as they are, but warned that the Federation might be asked to update their bylaws in the future. The committee agreed to review the old bylaws and the new template format to determine the best course of action.

Organizing Federation Bylaws and Procedures

In the meeting, Tim discussed the need to organize the Federation's bylaws under a new template and send them out to the Executive Board for review. He also mentioned the need to approve and document the Federation's procedures, which Don had a copy of. There was some confusion about the distinction between the Federation's operational standing rules and the standing rules for the convention. It was agreed that the Federation's operational standing rules would be sent out to the Board members for review and approval at the next meeting. Tim also mentioned that he would send out the Federation's policies and procedures for review.

Federation Conference and Officer Elections

The officers discuss plans for the upcoming Federation Conference and election of new officers. Key points are: Tim cannot run again as Federation President due to term limits, though there is some debate over whether the bylaws have been properly amended. Several current officers, including Mike Webb and Sandy, have indicated they will not return. Tim suggests restructuring the Federation, such as having district vice presidents serve as Congressional district liaisons. He also proposes combining some chapters and creating "mega chapters" to address dwindling membership and lack of leadership. The meeting concludes with logistics around the Federation Executive Board meeting prior to the Conference.