

PENNSYLVANIA FEDERATION EXECUTIVE BOARD
FOURTH ZOOM BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 29, 2020

The fourth Zoom video meeting of PA Federation Executive Board of NARFE met on Thursday, October 29, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 2:12 p.m. and opened with a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL OF ATTENDEES. John Shutak, District 8 Vice President, had surgery recently and is convalescing at home, unable to attend this Board Meeting. Joanne Dine, Editor, was absent also. All other Board Members were present.

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING. The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on June 29, 2020, were approved by the Board on a motion of Richard Karakantas, Treasurer, seconded by Tom Geronikas, DVP 5. Motion carried.

OPENING COMMENTS BY PRESIDENT RICHARD ZUCK. Rich summarized the Annual NARFE Membership Meeting from HQ, hosted by Staff Vice President, Marketing, Communications and Membership Helen Mosher with presentations from, NARFE President Ken Thomas, National Secretary/Treasurer Kathryn Hensley, and Harry Johns, CEO and President of the Alzheimer's Association

Ken spoke of NARFE's recent accomplishments related to the proposed merger involving OPM, Grassroots Advocacy Month this past August, a new Website coming online soon, how so any agencies and organizations look to NARFE as the authority for federal benefits from our Federal Benefits Institute. He spoke briefly of NARFE's Centennial next year and closed on member recruiting issues.

Kathryn spoke about her first two years with Bylaws being updated in 2019 and then again in 2020 with 11 Bylaws and Standing Rules approved. She spoke about the increase in Dues, Chapter/Federation Bylaws updated to conform to the National Bylaws and Forms Online being updated and announced in Newsline articles as they are implemented (If you are not getting Newsline, let Rich Z. know and he will forward the emails to you). She also touched on Chapter Closings (57 in 2019 and another 44 so far this year), leaving us with 881 active NARFE Chapters nationwide, as well as NARFE-PAC finances and accomplishments. The NARFE Budget Audit is in the July NARFE Magazine.

The final speaker was Mr. Harry Johns, CEO and President of the Alzheimer's Association, who spoke on the current state of his organization and the disease. Dixie Gasper will talk on this later.

The entire meeting video is posted on the NARFE Website for those interested.

This is election season. We wrapped up the NARFE Election with important issues related to National Officers and Bylaws. The general election has been held and candidate decisions that were made will have a very big impact on our country for years to come. We also have FEHB

Open Season just around the corner and Medicare already opened on October 15. (These are both elections, in a way.) As a result of our NARFE Officer and Bylaws ballot this past summer, our members nationwide elected Kathryn Hensley to another term as our National Secretary/Treasurer. She has been a friend of the PA Federation since the beginning of her first term and her reelection bodes well for our organization.

The Bylaws change that will have the biggest impact on our membership was the approval of a change in annual national dues, upward from \$40.00 to \$48.00 per year which passed by a 2:1 margin. This increase will take place on January 1, 2021. An \$8.00 annual increase can sound very alarming to seniors on a fixed income, no doubt. However, members who have enrolled in Dues Withholding (which currently lowers their annual dues by 15% to \$34.00) will only see their monthly deduction rise by \$0.67 or less per month, which for most of us is a lot easier to swallow.

Election results for all of the NARFE ballot, issues, and Bylaws, are on the NARFE website (www.narfe.com). Keep in mind that although some of the NARFE results might be objectionable to you, less than 6% of our NARFE members statewide voted. Basically, those who did vote, spoke for all of us.

With both Medicare and FEHB seasons now open, we all need to be informed. You must be knowledgeable about your Medicare options and your FEHB plans. Things can change from one year to the next, so it is definitely advisable to compare plans every year to get the coverage and protection that best suits your needs.

In speaking about NARFE funds, Kathy Adams, Regional II VP, said National took a chunk out of our investments for a payroll. We should not dive into investments again. She will check the numbers and get back to us. She also commented on the dues increase. We will see what impact this will have on this. Members can renew before January 1 at the lower rate.

Kathy said we are not cutting funding to the Federations--the proposed bylaws change cutting Federation funding from 10% to 5% was defeated. Dues monies will continue to flow back to the Federation. There was some discussion about a change in how HQ distributes funds made available as a Chapter closes. Kathy Adams verified with Kathryn Hensley after our meeting that there was, in fact, no change to that policy. This means that those funds will remain with the gaining Chapters and Federation(s).

A lot of discussion resulted from the mentioning of Executive Order on 10-21-2020 changing some Civil Service positions to a new Schedule F, removing protections for career "employees in confidential, policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-advocating positions,"--in effect, turning them into politically appointed positions. Kathy Adams, Dr. Gary Roundtree, and Bill Staarman helped provide insight into the potential impact of this new Schedule F and how Congress is reacting to it. Dr. Roundtree also noted a change in policy related to funds from closed chapters and how those monies will now be channeled directly to HQ instead of the Federation to distribute to gaining Chapters. Ken Thomas asked the Administration to hold off so that they can investigate what is going on. Protection for Civil Service activities will go down

the drain. Gary said OPM is not waiting. Changes already started. Congress has a bill already. This is a good time to get out there and voice your concerns to members of Congress.

Pittsburgh Metro #0114 is closing. We are using OMOV and e-mail to call to see whether or not it wants to close. If we used the newsletter, we should get more of a response. We'd get a response of 25%-30% if we send a letter to each member. In the last five years, we closed three or four chapters. Larry says when we do send this out, we only get a small response. Pittsburgh now has 300 and some members; they had over 1,000. George said Pittsburgh was a big strong chapter. It could revert to one annual meeting; that would meet the documented requirement. We have a lot of members out there and they help us to use the political sway. It's a tough one. We can't compel officers to stay. It gets screwed up with AMS. Now people disappear. You can't find them.

Marion asked if someone is close to Pittsburgh and is not familiar with Pittsburgh, couldn't they join in a surrounding chapter? Rich said we are looking at all western chapters not doing well. He has a thought in his mind of a PA Chapter for Western PA. Marion suggested if you could come up with a buddy system, it may work out. Rich said when he asks for volunteers, no hands go up. Gary said if we decide that we will have chapter closures, there will be no NARFE. We need to ask what they want from their chapter. Some don't indicate what they want from a chapter meeting. Members need information to make changes. What do they require? You have to know what the customers want. The customer is the key. Rich believes we need a new prospective. We need to use some sort of schedule and process to look at what they actually need. There is room for improvement. Some like not having to go to a chapter meeting. Some change their Chapter affiliation and some go to National Only. We can't have chapter meetings because of COVID. What are they looking for and what can we provide for them?

Ted Hall believes the timing is bad for issues for the magazine and members need to receive the issues in a timely manner. Rich asked, "What do you do when you're talking to prospective members? What's NARFE? There is a place to call to get answers." There are a lot of good ways to promote joining NARFE. Be ready to speak to people when they ask about NARFE.

Rich is surveying Chapters and asking for an assessment on how healthy a Chapter is. He asked Ray if we are secure with officers. Ray told him Carlisle will be able to supply two officers. You can send e-mail to our chapter. Keep Chambersburg on a Shaky status. Bill Staarman thinks it's depressing when you see the age of the attendees. Members are past their prime. We will have to find a way to join the National and Chapter members. They don't want to step up. Only 44 chapters put out a newsletter. They need to put one out. Rich believes people want to see more chapter news and not National. Marion said when they get something of interest, they will come out. The cost seems to be a big problem. People want to stay close to home for the meetings. That's not unusual at all. Some speakers will bring people in.

DVP13 ELECTED

On a motion by Larry, seconded by Ruth, Ray Hain was elected the District 13 Vice President. Motion carried.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS, AND DVP’S

KATHY ADAMS, REGION II VP, distributed 29,500 ballots of which 1,978 or 6.71% were returned. With the increase from \$40.00 to \$48.00, the last dues increase resulted in membership lost of 5% over the ensuing year. It is crucial because of the continued 10% funding to federations. All members must think of new, real retention strategies in combination with any new recruitment plans. This all takes effect in 2021. Alzheimer’s goals for Region II have not been met due to the fact that Chapters have not been meeting. Therefore, the deadlines have been extended for six months.

It has been a real pleasure working and meeting so many wonderful members. I hope our paths will continue to cross frequently. Stay healthy and safe!

VIRGINIA GIORDANO, SECRETARY – No report.

RICHARD KARAKANTAS, Treasurer, received money from closed chapters. He also sent out \$10.00 recruiter checks and we are on schedule. Form 990-N is due to be filed by IRS and that’s done, from July 1st and June 30TH. With travel, meetings and events curtailed because of the virus, activity in the Federation bank account was limited.

Beginning Balance 6/30/2020	\$29,562.83
Income	<u>11,381.69</u>
Funds Available	40,944.52
Expenses	<u>(2,387.44)</u>
Ending Balance	38,557.08
 Reserve Account Balance	 \$58,968.39

RUTH CLINE, DVP 7, is sending a detailed report for Rich’s files. Larry thanked Ruth for a clear report.

Bill Staarman asked if we are healthy. Rich K. told him we’re in good shape. We held up where we should be. We could have been down. Bill K. noted we have been having Zoom meetings and we don’t spend the money like before. He made a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report, seconded by Tom. Motion carried.

BILL KROUSE, 1ST VP/MEMBERSHIP/DVP10, reached out to the major congressional candidates requesting a COVID-19 appropriate meeting to introduce himself and learn of the candidate’s views on NARFE issues. Only Eugene DePasquale responded. As background material on NARFE issues, they set up a quick Zoom Meeting among DePasquale, one of his aides, and himself. He supports the NARFE position on all major issues. Following their meeting, DePasquale completed

the NARFE-PAC questionnaire. NARFE-PAC subsequently contributed \$5,000 to DePasquale's campaign.

Three of the four chapters in CD10 are at least having Executive Meetings in the past couple of months and West Shore and Mechanicsburg are using the PA NARFE Zoom Account to hold their Health Fair presentations this fall. Both chapters are having drive-by/pickups to hand out health fair materials. Both New Castle Area #0657 and (Presque Isle) Erie #0143, the only two chapters in the 16th Congressional District, remain strong and viable without actually having physical Membership Meetings. Erie almost pulled off their first Membership Meeting since February this month, but then the host restaurant said that they weren't able to staff the dining area during the appointed time. The annual Christmas get-together looks like the first chance to meet again.

BILL STAARMAN, 2nd VP/LEGISLATION, said nothing is happening legislatively. Articles about how to vote in Congress are in the (month) NARFE Magazine. FY2020 will perhaps go down as one of the most crucial elections in recent history. Citizens of many states are already voting, and if one can believe the predictions, more people will vote during this general election than ever before. The Pandemic 2020 has already had a significant impact on the lives of people around the world. Workers are finding that those who still have a job can carry on with activities while working at home and, when the virus has run its course, some may never return to the office. Your representative and their staffs are maintaining social distancing by working at home and traveling to Capital Hill only to vote on key legislation. Campaigns are being run virtually in many cases or limiting attendance by holding events outdoor. Meanwhile COVID-19 seems to be on the rise and your legislators are in full campaign mode. That means, for the moment, they will not be concentrating on Federal workers. NARFE published an outstanding magazine this October.

NARFE published an outstanding magazine this October, containing a report card for every US Senator and House member. It also lists critical legislation and how each member voted. Therefore, it should not be difficult to see who supports NARFE. It also contains an interview with Joe Biden. President Trump's staff decided not to participate in an interview this year. The NARFE's October issue published a scorecard of the 116th Congress for 2019-2020 and it is sparse. General budget bills aside, the Senate passed the Cares Act (HR 748) and little else except judicial appointments. In your conversation and/or letters to your Senator, you should ask them why they have failed to act on over 400 bills referred by the House. Senator Pat Toomey has a 30% lifetime record on supporting NARFE. Senator Casey on the other hand has a lifetime record of voting for NARFE issues 97% of the time. He needs to be thanked for his support. We cannot overlook those who recognize the work and dedication of federal workers. Senator Toomey has announced that he will not run again for the Senate nor will he run for Governor as had been anticipated. Your House Members are running for reelection now and they are totally focused on their campaigns. Money is always in play and they never seem to stop asking for it. It is not their fault. It is the system within which we are forced to live, at least for the time being. If you are approached by a candidate wanting PAC money, you should refer them to our PAC Coordinator, Brian Finn. His phone number is 215-830-0276, or better yet, e-mail him at bfinn61213@gmail.com.

For PA 6th Congressional District, the incumbent is working very hard to get reelected. Her opponent is a businessman and chemical engineer, announced his intentions for the Chester and Berks County seat. In a release about his candidacy, he said the upcoming election is “a fight for the soul of our country” and is running as a conservative leader and is not a politician.

Other organizations are starting to hold meetings using Zoom technology. Guest speakers are patched into the Zoom call and leave when finished. Our Federation already meets regularly by Zoom. Good progress was made in PA 6th. Bill met with Rep. Houlahan’s staff at her office in Washington during NARFE’s Legislative Training Conference and lobbied in favor of USPS Fairness Act and USPS Fairness Act which would remove the formula reducing the SSA benefits of those who receive benefits for work performed in the private sector. Later in the year, he made a personal visit to West Chester PA District Office and met with the office manager and provided her with copies of HR 141 and HR 2382 along with NARFE’s position papers. Bill attended Rep. Houlahan’s State of the District” presentation in Phoenixville, PA and gave the same documents to her Berks County staffer and followed up with a phone call. Bill was invited and attended a meeting in Reading with Chapter #0103 where the speakers were two staffers from Houlahan’s Reading/Berks office. He later learned that Rep Houlahan has signed as co-sponsor to both bills. He called to thank her and was told that the meeting helped in the decision to sign as co-sponsor of the SSA Fairness Act.

BRIAN FINN, NARFE-PAC COORDINATOR, is our new coordinator for the State of Pennsylvania. He is a member of Chapter #0372 out of Norristown, PA. For the past two years, he has been the Legislative Coordinator for his local chapter. He has met with their local House member – Medeleine Dean many times. He looks forward to this new position and the challenges it presents. He received the sum of \$1,000 and \$1500 for PAC. Bill S. said to look at the National Report at the donation of Brian Fitzgerald. Ray asked about a \$5,000 donation from a State Employee. Tom said, to go on the record, nothing was given to her. Brian does not know when it was given.

BILL KROUSE, WEBMASTER, is looking for a replacement for webmaster since he is holding other positions.

DIXIE GASPER, ALZHEIMER’S COORDINATOR, has received \$1,405. She tried to get in about \$10,000 and tried to get the chapters to put something in their newsletter. She also placed letter in the newspaper. The PA Federation did reach our 2019-2020 goal by going over \$10,000. This year we are having a slow start without chapters having their meetings and the worry what’s happening to our economic system. Most of us have been staying home with limited outside activities and seem to be holding onto our money for the “just in case” situation. When DVP’s visit your chapter, tell them what you are doing as a fund raiser for this cause. You cannot use the money your chapter gets from National Headquarters for any fund raiser. Dixie is asking each chapter to write an article for their newsletter and encourage members to help find a cure for this terrible disease. Six members have donated a personal check and mailed it through their Alzheimer’s chairperson to Dixie for submission to Alzheimer’s Association. Doing it in this order,

your chapter and the PA Federation all get credit. Dixie submitted these words: “My wife’s father, a man I was so fortunate to meet in 1993 when he still had full control of his faculties. He was a loving father, husband, grandfather, great grandfather, uncle, brother, and so much more. His legacy will live on in his children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. We all mourn his loss to the scourge of Alzheimer’s and hopes that this donation can help ease the pain of so many others.”

If you need help, give Dixie a call or e-mail her. Our goal again for this campaign is OVER \$10,000. You or I may be helped someday and glad we donated to find a cure. All checks should be made payable to “NARFE Alzheimer’s Research”; phone – 717-866-9237’ e-mail: dgasper38@comcast.net.

TOM CLINE, DVP1, had a report from Bob and they are on solid ground. Doylestown was hoping to try Zoom, but people don’t want to do Zoom.

MARION PUGH, DVP 4, reported they are having virtual meeting, and as soon as allowed, they will have regular meetings.

TOM GERONIKOS, DVP 5. Meetings are being attended and the Bylaws have been approved. Bill S. told the Board to try to hear more about Zoom Meetings and try to support the chapters. We were prepared to go in March and the virus struck and we didn’t do it. Bill K. will help people with Zoom if they contact him. Bill S. asked if he coordinated people or do the chapters do it? He was told he would coordinate and then talk with them. Ted said Betty is having Zoom Meetings, doing it from her home, and they are doing well.

RUTH CLINE, DVP 7. They are scheduling things at Olive Garden. Some people are afraid of getting out to go to a restaurant. She is looking into Zoom. We had more members than if it were just meetings.

RAY HAIN, DVP 13. Chambersburg has already been discussed, and he hasn’t contacted Adams-Hanover or York.

JOANNE DINE, EDITOR, was absent but submitted a written report, as follows. Joanne’s husband, Jim, is President of the NARFE York Chapter #0331. She and Jim joined NARFE about ten years ago following Jim’s retirement from the US Geological Survey. She also was employed with the Survey for about six years. She is program chairperson and newsletter editor for the of York Chapter. In 1979, they made a move from Illinois to Glen Rock, PA, a small town in southern York County. Through the years, Joanne served various terms on the Borough’s Water and Sewer Board, Planning Commission, and has been an election official for over thirty years.

LARRY PALECEK, IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT. Let Larry know if you want his article that was missing in the newsletter. Johnstown has been meeting at Hoss’s. They gave them masks to be used at the salad bar. Indiana and McKean seems to be doing well and Indiana is having meetings. Larry talked to Mike Grove and they want to get started up.

OLD BUSINESS

Aetna has contacted us and also Blue Shield. Rich K. said nothing much has changed.

The president of the Mon-Yough Chapter, Larry Curran, died about three or four weeks ago

Rich Z. doesn't know where we're going. We have not received our refund on the payment to the hotel for our meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Larry thanked Kathy Adams for relaying business to the Federation – glad to see her looking well.

Kathy believes Gary will be good for us. Larry will forward pictures to Gary. Rich Z. also thanked Kathy and is looking forward to working with Dr. Gary Roundtree.

ADJOURNMENT

Tom made a motion for the meeting to adjourn, seconded by Bill S. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia L. Giordano
Secretary