

PENNSYLVANIA FEDERATION EXECUTIVE BOARD
FIFTH ZOOM BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 21, 2021

The fifth Zoom video meeting of PA Federation Executive Board of NARFE met on Thursday, January 21, 2021. President Richard Zuck called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m., opening with a moment of silence, asking Board Members to remember people surviving Covid-19 and those trying to avoid it. All joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL BY SECRETARY. All Board Members were present with the exception of Thomas Geronikos, John Shutack, and William McGinley.

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING. The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on October 29, 2020, were approved by the Board Members with no objections. Minutes were accepted by a show of hands.

WELCOME AND OPENING COMMENTS. President Rich Zuck welcomed Dr. Gary Roundtree, the new Region II VP. Dr. Roundtree said the officeholders have to be sure they only put in a certain number of hours. If they have too many hours, it may go beyond the number allowed, then they go to independent contractors. We had this with Evelyn and Kathy.

Rich Z. wondered if anyone had signed up for the webinar meeting tomorrow. A few indicated they are interested in doing that. Rich is going to try to keep to the topic during our Board Meeting and avoid small talk that can eat up so much time.

STATE OF THE FEDERATION – PRESIDENT RICH ZUCK

Covid-19 has had such an impact on what we have to do. We can't get out there to recruit or support Chapters. Rich Z can't do it. COVID still has most of us sheltering in place, so DVPs have had minimal contact with their Chapters and may not have much to report. We will touch on what we can do a little later.

Going into the At-Risk Chapters, Pittsburgh Metro #0114 has closed its account and checks are going to Chapters to which members have joined and a balance to National. Gary asked if we knew where most of the members went. Rich told him we know where most of them are going, to various Chapters. It had about 290 members and is down to 279. The President of Mon-Yough #1855 died in July and they don't know what is going to happen with the Chapter. Jerry Funderwhite is a member of the Pittsburgh Chapter and moved to Mon-Yough. Gary asked if he knew the average age of its members. Jerry thought about 70 years old, something like that. Gary said National does not list ages of members. It would help us to place a torch to other younger members. He believes we need to put members in categories and use younger members. Our members are getting older and are not able to take over. Travel is another problem as for distance. He is planning to set up a committee so we can plan to take care of these problems. George Shal said their ID numbers can help give an indication of their ages, or

at least their longevity with NARFE. Gary has been rather successful in finding leadership. He is looking to put a lot of miles on his vehicle in scheduling meetings.

Rich Z talked of the possibility of setting up Zoom meetings for Chapter Presidents/Officers to join in and share their problems and ideas. He is planning to go ahead in the near future. He also wants to visit Mon-Yough when our world opens up to see if we can get someone in as President. Jerry would like to attend that meeting, if he is free.

Marion Pugh thought a problem with getting younger members may be due to the way the membership application is set up. Rich Z stated our members would like to see National move the Chapter information right up front. Some people do not realize that and are joining National Only. Larry Palecek believes the renewal letter has been changed or will be changed. Gary said they did change it. It gets to be changed again because that came up at the Bylaws Meeting. Rick Z said we don't have tools that we used to have to help us take care of our Chapters.

We get messages from different new leaders telling us what is going on. Some members who wanted to renew memberships ahead of time were successful and others ran into a number of problems, depending on who they were able to contact at National.

We need to get somebody out there to sit down with Chapters at risk. Keep in mind that you might have some travel expenses. Let Rich Z know if there are Chapters in your District that need help. He is not asking people to go out to Chapters in February, maybe in March or April. Bill Krouse agreed that National cannot handle simple questions about renewal.

Bill Staarman stated that two vaccines are needed per individual; people need to get two. A lot of Chapters have lost their meeting places. Reading #0103 just changed locations when the pandemic hit. There are a lot of things we can help them with. Rich Z said DVP's should have access to the use of AMS. We need to clarify Chapters have the necessary officers and the AMS can help. Chapters need to step up and let us know if they get officers. There is one Chapter in Bill Krouse's district where the President has a bad address on paper. The Secretary doesn't have an e-mail address. He asked Gary if there is any chance he can help get officers. He responded that he could; if we give this to the VP's, they will be able to go in there and update officers. A lot of Presidents have not taken any training. With more training, the better we get. Rich Z told the Board Members when they get a chance to look at some of the Chapters, to be sure they have officers in place. They can't operate without a President and Treasurer.

We have a new US President in place and he is starting to work on changes where he can. Check your NARFE Magazine for NARFE Legislative priorities.

Rich Z reminded everyone when we speak as an officer for NARFE, we must be non-partisan. We don't want to show support for a particular candidate. We can't afford to have NARFE's impartiality questioned.

SECRETARY VIRGINIA GIORDANO

No report. However, she is having trouble getting in touch with National for her Chapter information. Rich Z will help her with this.

TREASURER RICHARD KARAKANTAS

Rich K pointed out two amendments to his Treasury Report. Within his list of Disbursements, PA Federation Conference – 2021 should be changed to PA Federation General Membership Meeting – 2021. Within the Checking Recap, the amount of Funds Available should be \$40,587.19. Larry made a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report as amended, seconded by Bill S. Motion carried unanimously. A copy of the Treasurer’s Report is attached to these Minutes as Attachment 1. The Chapters are reminded that they should file Form 990-N with the IRS to maintain their tax exempt status. Marion Pugh recruited a new member and will receive \$10.00 as a recruitment fee. Dixie asked if the audit forms need to be sent to Rich K. The answer is yes, but he said he doesn’t get them all. Rich Z said we want these audit reports from each Chapter.

Bill S recalled that Pittsburgh closed with 290 members. That must be a lot of money. Rich Z said it is not. The money will be pro-rated to all Chapters gaining any of these members. The pro-rated share for those who elect National Only Membership will go to the Federation. There are a lot of Chapters mentioned. Larry remembers in 1996 it had 1400 members, then dropped to 290. Chambersburg can’t find officers and may have to close. Jerry reminded them that offers come from members attending the meetings. They tried everything they could. They were not using the e-mail system. Marion said people don’t want to go to meetings anymore. Gary said that Pittsburgh with 270 members, you have to wonder what the problem is. We must get to the root of the problem and then determine what will solve the problem. Jerry said maybe they can try that with Mon-Yough. Why don’t they attend meetings? How old are they? That might prevent the Chapter from closing. If we were pro-active and go after them beginning in time, we maybe could help. Gary said in MD they do surveys on everything and get to the root for the cause of the problem. Why do they attend meetings? You need that kind of information. Rich said he didn’t get more than 15% of responses from Pittsburgh Chapter. Gary believes too many e-mails go out on the same subject. Joanne Dine did a comparison type survey as to those with e-mail. Lancaster has gone to all e-mail. If you don’t have a computer, you need to go to the library. Marion believes members now think “what’s in it for me?” They are interested when we have a speaker about insurance and a few other subjects. When Larry was the Federation President, he sent something out to 3,000, only about 1800 did open the e-mail. Gary said if you don’t receive any responses, go with the ones you do receive. Rich Z said that you will at least get a fair sampling of that. Bill K said 90 people responded to the election.

WILLIAM STAARMAN, 2ND VICE PRESIDENT/LEGISLATION

It is hard to believe that it is almost a year since the pandemic struck and Bill S wonders if things will ever return to normal as we knew it. In 2020, our country was experiencing the greatest recession since the Depression of 1929. Twelve years later, we are facing another financial crisis. He can recall only four major pieces of legislation making its way through the Senate: The Affordable Care Act, and the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, the CARES Act stimulus bill, and the COVID Relief and Government Funding Bill passed in December 2020. At one time, more than 400 bills went to the Senate to die.

We have a new US President, so let's hope a new administration can persuade both parties to compromise. Legislation from the House is going to the Senate only to die without a vote. Jerry pointed out that all across the country there will be redistricting. Bill S said that one of the ideas being floated would be to form a panel of citizens to come up with a plan for redistricting the state. He mentioned that Fair Districts provide speakers who would talk to Chapters. He recalled that the Norristown Chapter had a speaker from Fair Districts to talk to them on the subject. Currently, the party in charge usually decides how the Congressional Districts are to be drawn. He thinks this will finally end up on the ballot. According to Ted Hall, Pennsylvania expects to lose one delegate. Bill S suggests we will not know which district until the census is complete.

WILLIAM KROUSE, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT/MEMBERSHIP. Our membership continues to be a serious problem. Bill had some stats that show around the 7th of the month, give or take a day or so, there is generally a big drop in membership. The interesting part of this, though, is the drop is much greater in the National Only Members. Two points stick out. Membership Chairs are doing something right by following up on members who let their membership lapse. The second point is we have to make our Chapter relevant to our members and keep them in our Chapters. Are newsletters provided to members? What else can Chapters provide? Members need to be encouraged to enroll in Dues Withholding. There is a Dues Withholding form in every issue of the NARFE Magazine.

A Membership Report is attached to these Minutes as Attachment 2 showing how each Chapter has done in the past six months in retaining members. Rich Z said none of us are having any luck bringing in new members. Jerry thinks we need to find out why members don't respond. Gary says they first focused on younger new members. What's in the Magazine that addresses our members? We have to change the plans we have to target younger retirees. You have to plan to attract younger members. A lot of National members will expire in 2021. We need to push automatic renewals. Rich Z believes we must find out why we are losing so many members. We assumed it was because of the death rate. It is a surprise to him.

Gary doesn't believe the Editor of the NARFE Magazine has any experience in membership for the Magazine. How many are we expected to lose because of the raise in dues? Larry said we were told the Magazine would be changed but it hasn't changed one bit. We didn't survey people. Rick K started to read an article in the last Magazine and could not find where it

mentioned one accomplishment NARFE had achieved in the last 100 years. Gary said we have to do better at Headquarters. We have to change the way we are thinking. Members have to know what was accomplished by NARFE. So Rich K asked Gary, “so you agree with me?” He answered yes. Bill K repeated that in every month around the 7th, there is a drop in membership.

Larry pointed out with reference to what Rich Z said, there is a book available titled “What NARFE Has Done Over the Past 90 Years”. It can be purchased for about \$10.00. Marion said one section could be taken out of that book and used each month.

DR. GARY ROUNDTREE, SR., REGION II VICE PRESIDENT. Gary is making a decision with George Washington University to come give a demonstration on solving problems, i.e., cause and solution to the problems. He checked with the National President to see if they will be coming here or using email to see if it will be in person or virtual. I will have that discussion with the President this month – Friday, the 22nd, 1:00 p.m. Board Meeting. Rich Z said he will not be operative until that second shot is given. If I can get a date in July, that might be a vacation month. The only other action is to do it by virtual. Larry wondered why we don’t go ahead with a yearly Membership Meeting. Why push the Training Meeting into the next year?

LARRY PALECEK, IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT. We have had discussions on most of my report already today. Some Chapter officers with computer skills are only working with finance reports but are not using all the tools in the AMS. Larry noted on the M-112 that Johnstown Chapter #1130 has two new prospective members. This surprised him as he thought OPM bowed out of providing prospective members. He will contact these prospects but if asked how he got their names, what does he tell them? With this category in the M-112, it will become more important for Chapter officers to use the AMS as a recruitment tool. Gary stated the perspective members come from those who expressed an interest in NARFE.

The new NARFE.org website is online now. On January 28th, there is a NARFE Webinar on the new administration and the 117th Congress and what we can expect in terms of our benefits.

Larry would like to emphasize that the NARFE webinars and AMS training have really improved over the last couple of months. He is picking up things to do within the AMS that hadn’t existed before. We should strive as officers and DVP’s to encourage Chapter officers to start using their online NARFE accounts and access the AMS. We are getting more action in the AMS.

Gary said the OMA system is going to be taken out very soon. It has been updated for removal in the last six months. Larry told the Board that NARFE has masks for sale. Cost was \$5.75 and with taxes, shipping an additional \$8.00+ dollars were added so buy two and you will get more bang for the buck.

BRIAN FINN, PAC COORDINATOR. NARFE-PAC raised and disbursed funds to many PA candidates during 2020 to help with the National Election on Tuesday, November 3, 2020. Nine

representatives did receive PAC money from Headquarters. The candidates include: Brian Fitzpatrick, Madeleine Dean, Connor Lamb, Susan Wild, Brendan Boyle, Chrissy Houlahan, Matt Cartwright, Glenn Thompson, and Michael Doyle. All were running for reelection and will be serving another term. They received disbursements after it was determined that they agree with NARFE positions on key legislative issues. Edward DePasquale received funds also. However, he was unsuccessful in his bid. He lost a close race to Republican Scott Perry. Overall, 2020 was a very good year for NARFE candidates in PA.

WILLIAM KROUSE, WEBMASTER. (Newsletter Article)

The biggest webmaster news isn't on the PA Federation website. NARFE has redesigned its website. It has a different look; it appears a lot cleaner. It has much of the same information. The changes are ongoing. Some features are now working when they weren't the first time he logged on. In his opinion, it still could be improved. And the related AMS database still has its problems.

One other web-related reminder is for Presidents, 1st Vice Presidents, Membership Chairs, and Secretaries (i.e. those who have the authority to update officers). Each Chapter is required to update its officer list each year. It is not difficult to do online on the NARFE HQ database through the officer portal. But two cautionary hints: First, if you are changing officers, be sure to add the new officer before deleting the current officer. Once you delete yourself, you would not have the authority to add any new officers. The second hint is after you click on the blue oval "Add Chapter Officer" only enter a name **OR** ID (not both) in the search feature in Step 1. If you enter both, the system does nothing. If you click one or the other, it will let you proceed. Also, once you update the list, please send the list of officers to both your District VP and the Federation Secretary, Ginny Giordano.

Bill is still looking for a replacement as webmaster. All nominations and volunteers gratefully received. It is not difficult work. You do not need any special computer applications; all software is included when you log into the National NARFE website.

He is continuing to accept Chapter newsletters to post on the website (he posted the latest copy). He will also post any other material that you think would help the members statewide.

The latest initiative as webmaster is to coordinate the use of the paid PA NARFE Zoom account. The Federation Board uses the account to hold its Board Meetings virtually, and we have opened up the use to Chapters to hold Executive Meetings and/or Chapter Meetings. It is a way to keep your members connected. Contact Bill if your Chapter is interested. (billkrouse38@gmail.com or 717-774-4031)

JOANNE DINE, EDITOR. Joanne has received no responses from prospective members. She has encouraged them to come to meetings.

DIXIE GASPER, ALZHEIMER'S COORDINATOR. Alzheimer's year is from July 1 through June 30. Dixie's team did hit the \$10,000.00 mark for the last campaign and so far, for the current campaign, they have collected \$4,379.00. The group who places what is sold is the Lebanon Valley Chapter #0458, together with many groups who sell all year long. The Jonestown American Legion and Post Master's Organization do it jointly on laying day. Lebanon sold \$315 this year and earned \$1,575.00. They also helped to lay the wreathes. All graves had to be shoveled out because of ten inches of snow. Betty Robinson, President of Philadelphia Center Square #0664, went out and got eight people to make a personal donation. It all adds up. Say what you can do for us. Dixie calls people and they seem to appreciate that,

It's been one long year without having Chapter meetings and all we can hope is this ugly virus starts to give us some relief. Most Chapters put meetings on hold or tried to do them visual on the computer. They have not tried that way since most of the members who come to meetings don't have the means to do it this way. Dixie will gladly work with you. E-mail Dixie the name, phone number, and e-mail address of your Alzheimer's chairperson. All chapters should have someone in this position. All money collected goes strictly to finding a cure. NARFE nationally has already donated over \$13M and hoping to hit the \$14M mark this year. Dixie recently printed the NARFE Alzheimer's Chapter Coordinator's Manual (05/20). Go to the NARFE website and pull it up. It's a great help. You might also try to call the National Office and maybe they will mail one to you.

DISTRICT VICE PRESIDENTS

THOMAS CLINE, DVP1. Bob Deschon has resigned as President of Lower Bucks Chapter #1287 for multiple personal reasons and 1st Vice President Barb Schumaker is now the Acting President. Bill K has assisted the Chapter with setting up and conducting Zoom meetings. The Chapter e-newsletter for Chapter #1287 (Jan/Feb) has been issued. As soon as possible, the Chapter will resume meetings. Doylestown Chapter #0740 has not resumed meetings, and probably will not meet until restaurant restrictions are lifted.

TED HALL, DVP2 (Acting). Oxford Circle #1301 officers offered positive comments about the AMS training. For example, Nancy and Janet took the AMS training. They liked it a lot and thought it was well presented.

TED HALL, DVP3. Philadelphia Center Square #0664 is holding both Executive Board and Membership Meetings via Zoom. Betty Robinson has had floating Board Meetings. She thinks the new NARFE website is an improvement. She agrees the AMS Training webinars have greatly improved and are better coordinated despite the fact that the staff is working remotely like everyone else is during the pandemic. Chapter members were alerted to take advantage of renewing their memberships prior to the increase, and many did, prior to December 31st, 2020.

MARION PUGH, DVP4. Marion prepared an e-mail and requested the Vice President of the IRS

25-Year Club to distribute it. Employees and retirees could join NARFE, renew membership, or membership in metropolitan Philadelphia. New Pennsylvania State Representatives were sworn in on Tuesday, January 5, 2020. She collaborated with the Montgomery County Chapter Webmaster to post contact information for the new representatives serving our members in Montgomery and Bucks Counties. She has also collaborated with the Montgomery County Chapter Webmaster to post the COVID-19 Pre-Registration links to County Health Offices in Montgomery and Bucks Counties. Adults age 65 and older are now assigned a higher priority to receive vaccinations. After pre-registration, the county resident will receive an e-mail to schedule the appointment. She anticipates it may be 30+ days to receive the county's e-mail response. Norristown Chapter #0372 scheduled its first Chapter Zoom Meeting for Wednesday, February 3, 2021.

THOMAS GERONIKOS, DVP5. Absent; no report.

WILLIAM STAARMAN, DVP6. The last meeting of Chester County was February, almost a year ago. Bill S was in touch with his Chapter several times and has released two newsletters since the Chapters stopped meeting. Chester County Chapter #0377 had expressed interest in conducting a Zoom meeting. He asked if it was possible to send out the link invitation through NES. Bill K responded yes. Reading Chapter #0103 and has not been holding meetings because of COVID-19. Bill's last visit to Reading Chapter #0103 was January 13, 2020 when Rep. Houlahan sent two of her staff to the meeting. Chester County #0377 held its last meeting on February 18, 2020 when Black History Month was celebrated.

RUTH CLINE, DVP7. Easton Chapter #1102 nominated and elected officers. Its regular meeting place was closed in January. They may need to look for a new meeting place. The Christmas Party was cancelled by PA directive to close indoor dining. Lehigh Valley Chapter #1371 has not been meeting in-person. Officers were elected and sworn in. The officers of the Chapter have been working on membership and finding a new meeting location. Newsletter will go out next month. It is interested in setting up Zoom and will help set that up.

JOHN SHUTACK, DVP8. Absent; no report. Everything is okay up there.

DVP9 – VACANT.

WILLIAM KROUSE, DVP10. Three of the four Chapters in DVP10 at least had Executive Meetings in the past couple of months, and West Shore #1465 and Mechanicsburg #1816 are using the PA NARFE Zoom account to hold its regular Chapter meetings with speakers. Bill will cover them when he can travel and get shots. He had to go out and get Zoom speakers, and they all will come. He knows his Chapter had to reach out to different speakers because some of the regular speakers do not do Zoom. There are speakers who will do Zoom though, and now his Chapter has speakers scheduled monthly through May.

DVP11 – VACANT

WILLIAM MCGINLEY, DVP12. Absent; no report.

RAYMOND HAIN, DVP13. No activity; no report.

DVP14 -- VACANT

LARRY PALECEK, DVP15.

Larry asked if Ann Peters is still President of the Chambersburg Chapter; she is. The only active Chapter is Johnstown Chapter #1130. The Christmas meeting was cancelled by PA directive to close indoor dining. It's a shame as Larry always looks forward to white elephant gifts. On January 20th, a face-to-face Board Meeting was held. The five elected officers and two appointed officers were present. The elected officers were sworn in as the December meeting was cancelled. The major discussion was the schedule for the rest of the year, and if all goes well with the pandemic, making the meetings interesting to draw members back in. They will continue with newsletters and sending out meeting Minutes. Larry has not heard from Indiana Chapter #2124 or McKean County-Bradford #1782 recently.

RICHARD ZUCK, DVP16 (Acting). Presque Isle #0143 hopes to do another active Board Meeting in March. New Castle Area #0657 has good people in charge.

NO DVP17 – VACANT

JEROME FUNERWHITE, DVP18. Things are shut down and decided to stay closed. There's really no place to meet.

WREATHES ACROSS AMERICA. Every single grave had a wreath on it, for 56 people. Dixie said they earned \$1,675.00.

OLD BUSINESS

Rich Z thinks there is a possibility the Training symposium could go on, or could have a postponement of membership meetings. Marion would prefer not to have it because we are not getting minimum requirements of vaccinations. Rich K agrees with Marion. Bill S said from what he heard, it will be into February before shots are available. He agrees with Marion also. Just cancel and start next year as a new year. Bill K would not have one. Larry is concerned even when members' meetings convene. Larry made a motion to cancel the even year Federation Conference/GMM instead of continually postponing it and replace with the odd year Federation GMM in late summer or fall. Bill K seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Rich Z thanked Gary for attending this Board Meeting and Gary thanked him for asking him.

A short discussion was held as to who has access to what at the AMS.

The meeting was adjourned by the President at 4:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia L. Giordano
Secretary

Attchs: as

