



NARFE NEWSLETTER

GREATER BOWIE-CROFTON AREA CHAPTER 1747
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Volume 39 No. 9

Web: narfe.org/chapter1747
Facebook: NARFE Chapter 1747

May 2021

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS are held at the Bowie Senior Center, 14900 Health Center Drive Bowie, 20716 in Room 4. Meeting dates are the third Thursday of the month at 10:00 AM except in July and August. There is never a charge to attend and all meetings are open to the public. Please check your current newsletter or our website for any changes.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS are held the first Thursday of the month at 10:00 AM in Conference Room 125, Bowie Senior Center. All chapter members are welcome.

POSTAL ADDRESS: NARFE Chapter 1747, P.O. Box 504, Bowie, MD 20718

NOTE: Chapter meetings are cancelled when Prince George's County schools are closed due to inclement weather. Otherwise, meetings are held as scheduled.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Virtual Meetings Using Zoom

- May 6** Executive Board Meeting, 10am
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- May 6** Navigating the Retirement Process, 2pm
Federal Benefits Institute Webinar
- May 13** Election Committee Meeting, 10am
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- May 20** Legislative Wrap-Up, 10am – MD legislators will discuss legislation passed by the General Assembly. Chapter members will vote for officers for the next two years.
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- June 3** Executive Board Meeting, 10am
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- June 17** Annual Social Event
Will be held at a restaurant TBD if circumstances permit.
New chapter officers will be sworn in.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Frank Lee

Economists predict that the U.S. may be heading into a period of major economic growth if it can bring coronavirus under control. The International Monetary Fund predicts that the U.S. economy "will surpass its pre-pandemic size as growth reaches 6.4% this year...up 1.3 percentage points from the group's forecast in January, CNN reported. The IMF predicts the \$1.9 trillion rescue plan will "deliver a strong boost to growth in the U.S in 2021 and provide sizable positive spillovers to trading partners", and, as a result, the "recession is likely to leave smaller scars than the 2008 global financial crisis."

JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon said that "I have little doubt that with excess savings, new stimulus savings, huge deficit spending, more QE, a new potential infrastructure bill, a successful vaccine and euphoria around the end of the pandemic, the U.S. economy will likely boom." "This boom could easily run into 2023 because all the spending could extend well into 2023."

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome H. Powell described an economy that was at "an inflection point" showing signs of acceleration but still facing numerous risks. By many measures, the economy is rebounding strongly, with the hopes that increased vaccinations and recent stimulus packages will chart a year of strong growth. The Dow Jones industrial average is at record levels and more than 900,000 jobs were added last month.

Yet at the same time, coronavirus cases are rising. And with at least 8.5 million Americans still out of the workforce, the scars of long-term unemployment, especially for workers of color and women remain.

"There really are risks out there" Powell said. "And the principal one just is that we will reopen too quickly, people will too quickly return to their old practices, and we'll see another spike in cases."

Then there is the challenge of whether many jobs that vanished in 2020 will return at all. Powell said the "economy that we're going back to is going to be different from the one that we had" making it harder for people to regain a foothold in the labor force.

"We've got to remember there's in the range of 10 million people who were working in February of 2020 and lost their jobs because of covid-19" Powell said. "And they're still not working. So, for them, it's not over. And we're going to keep those people in mind"



Even with March's big increase in employment, the labor market remains 8.4 million jobs short of where it was in February 2020, and even further short of where the level of employment would be now if the pandemic never occurred.

The bounce back has also been uneven. The unemployment rate is 6% nationally, but is 9.6% for Blacks and 7.9% for Hispanics versus 5.4% for whites and 8.2 % for those without a high school diploma versus 3.7% for those with college degrees. Speaker Nancy Pelosi said that "if we're going to grow the economy with confidence, we've got to crush the virus. They are definitely related".

Coronavirus Update

More than 569,000 people have died in the U.S. from coronavirus and more than 31,885,000 cases have been reported as of April 22, 2021. New infections continued to trend upwards in a majority of states due to the spread of new variants of the virus.

Coronavirus cases in MD

MD cases:	439,992	deaths:	8,429
PG cases:	81,864	deaths:	1,400
AA cases:	41,743	deaths:	575

At least 135.8 million people have received at least one dose of the vaccine in the U.S. and more than 89.2 million people have been fully vaccinated. 282.2 million doses have been distributed. Maryland has administered at least 2,703,216 first doses covering 55.6% of the 16 and older eligible population, and 44.7% of the state's population. At least 1,805,523 people have been fully vaccinated.

COVID – 19 Vaccinations in MD

	1st Dose by County of Vaccination	%Pop	2nd Dose Vaccination	%Pop
MD	2,415,745	39.96	1,548,388	25.61
AA	223,846	38.64	144,527	24.95
PG	228,940	31.77	169,898	18.68

American Jobs Plan

President Joe Biden introduced a sweeping \$2 trillion infrastructure and jobs package that looks to reshape the American economy and make the most significant domestic U.S. investments in generations. The American Jobs Plan is divided into four main areas.

1. Transportation infrastructure: The \$621 billion plan would make a massive investment in America's roadways, railways and bridges with a focus on clean energy. It would spend \$174 billion, or about 28% of the transportation portion, on electric vehicles. That includes a network of 500,000 electric vehicle stations, using electric vehicles in bus fleets, and replacing the federal government's fleet of diesel transit vehicles with electric vehicles. It would also offer tax incentives and rebates for electric cars.

About \$115 billion would pay for fixing roads and bridges, chosen by those in most need of repair. That includes 20,000 miles of highways and roads, the 10 most "economically significant" bridges in the U.S. as well as 10,000 smaller bridges.

Another \$85 billion is set aside for modernizing transit systems and \$80 billion for a growing backlog of Amtrak repairs as well as improvements and route expansion. Airports, ports and waterways would also receive improvements.

2. Quality of life at home: \$650 billion – The largest part of the plan focuses on American homes, school buildings, underground water infrastructure and broadband expansion. The plan would spend \$213 billion to build, preserve and

retrofit more than 2 million affordable homes and commercial buildings. This includes the construction or rehabilitation of 500,000 homes for low- and middle-income owners. An additional \$111 billion would go toward clean drinking water, including replacement of all lead pipes and service lines.

The plan sets aside \$100 billion for constructing or modernizing public schools, while another \$100 billion would be used to build high-speed broadband networks throughout the country. The goal would be for broadband to become universal for all Americans and to drive down the costs for internet.

The plan also calls for \$40 billion to improve public housing, \$18 million for Veterans Affairs hospitals and clinics, \$12 billion for community college infrastructure and \$16 million to plug oil and gas wells and reclaim abandoned mines.

3. Caregivers for elderly and people with disabilities – Biden wants to pump \$40 billion to improve access to quality, affordable home or community-based care for the elderly and people with disabilities. It would expand a Medicaid program to make more services available and eliminate a backlog that prevents thousands from getting care.

It would also boost pay for care workers, who are disproportionately women of color and typically earn about \$12 an hour.

4. Research, development and manufacturing – About \$300 billion in the plan would be invested in manufacturing, including support for domestic production of technologies and critical goods. Around \$50 billion would go toward semiconductor manufacturing and research.

The plan would spend \$180 billion on new research and development with an emphasis on clean energy, fewer emissions and climate change research. That total includes \$100 billion for worker training and an increase of worker protection systems.

5. How it will be paid for – Biden wants to raise the corporate tax rate to 28% to pay for the plan – a percentage that is still below what corporations paid before President Donald Trump's tax cuts in 2017 which was 35%. Biden also wants to increase the minimum tax on U.S. multinational corporations to 21%.

The plan would not increase the individual tax rate. Under the tax hikes and other reforms – eliminating tax loopholes for intellectual property and denying companies deductions for offshoring jobs, for example – the White House projects the spending would be fully paid in 15 years and reduce deficits in the following years.

6. Impact of Infrastructure Plan – The coronavirus pandemic exposed many problems with both our physical and social infrastructure. We must improve our physical infrastructure which routinely receives borderline failing grades from the American Society of Civil Engineers. These problems have been neglected for too long and must be addressed to make it possible for the country to move forward. The cost of not addressing them is much more than the cost of addressing them.

Most infrastructure projects are successful and provide us benefits long after they have been completed and paid for. For example, the Bay Bridge was completed in 1957. It has continued to provide us benefits long after that.

In addition, infrastructure development will provide employment opportunities for many Americans and contribute to our economic growth which will help pay for their cost.

Election of Officers

We are scheduled to have an election this May for chapter officers to serve a two-year term from 2021 to 2023. We are looking for candidates to serve in the following positions: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Secretary. If you would like to serve in one of these positions, please submit your name to Evelyn Harris at evelynharris1952@yahoo.com by April 30, 2021.

Incumbents running for re-election should submit an E-mail naming the position that they are running for and indicate the years that they have been serving in that position. New candidates should name the position that they are running for and include a short statement indicating their interests and qualifications for the job including related experiences and job skills.

NARFE Fair

During 2019-20, we had success in recruiting new members for NARFE and for Chapter 1747. We recruited at four community events and held a NARFE Fair at the Bowie Senior Center in January 2020. As a result of our efforts, we added a number of new members and three of them have become chapter officers. Our recruiting efforts were interrupted by the pandemic shutdown in March 2020. We need to resume our recruitment efforts to recruit more members for NARFE and Chapter 1747.

We are resuming our recruitment efforts by holding a virtual NARFE Fair on June 5. Congressman Anthony Brown will speak at the Fair. Other speakers will talk on how NARFE protects your rights and benefits in Congress and how you can get answers to your Federal benefit questions through NARFE.

Please help us to promote the NARFE Fair by distributing the NARFE Fair flyer and NARFE Membership Application sent to you by E-mail on April 8, to your family and friends who are Federal employees and retirees. Details about the NARFE Fair and how to sign up for the fair are provided in the flyer. If they wish to enroll in NARFE, please ask them to complete the NARFE Membership Application. Please ask them to enroll in both NARFE and Chapter 1747. If they are joining because of your recommendation, please ask them to include your (the Recruiter's Name and Membership ID) on the form. Your Membership ID is on the label of your NARFE magazine.

Thanks for your help in making the NARFE Fair a great success.

STATE LEGISLATION
Ed Bice

Budget: A 52.4 billion dollars FY 2022 budget was agreed upon after facing nearly a billion-dollar structural deficit. The significant influx of federal government COVID 19 relief money allowed the passed budget to erase the structural deficit for two years, increase general funds by \$900 million and have 1.8 billion available to restore the rainy-day fund. This budget represents a 13% increase from the prior year. The FY 2022 budget also shores up the state retirement system, fully funds the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Kirwin Commission) and other educational initiatives. The budget funds the 1.5-billion-dollar Governor Hogan bipartisan Pandemic Relief bill. The bill has anti-poverty measures that will send cash payments to the state's poorest residents for the next three years etc. and will also benefit small business, nonprofits, food banks and the unemployed for now and in future years.

Bills: The State Legislative Committee (SLC) and its allies supported the following bills this session by written or verbal testimony or both. They were: HB 1111 Income Tax - Itemized Deductions, HB 733 and SB 572 Retirement Tax Reduction Act of 2021 sponsored by the Hogan Administration, HB 731 and SB 567 Telehealth Services - Expansion. All bills were heard in the appropriate committee. None of the bills were voted out of committee

TREASURERS REPORT
Vanessa Washington

Balance on: Feb 28, 2021	\$9,278.39
Income:	\$596.87
Expenses:	\$594.44
Balance on: Mar 31, 2021	\$9,280.82
Useable Balance on Mar 31, 2021	\$9,135.82
Reserve for Alzheimer's Fund	\$45.00
Reserve for Advertisement	\$100.00

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR
Angela Hyman

Chapter Activity Report
3/1/2021-3/31/2021

- 478 Chapter 1747 Members as of 3/31/21
- 01 New Chapter Members – Valarie Hill
- 04 Members Dropped for Non-Renewal
- 02 Members Passed – Mary Keefer, 11/2020; Jason Williams, 1/2021
- 14 New Prospective Members
- 32 Members Renewed



CHAPTER 1747 OFFICERS

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President	Frank Lee	410-672-5065	Flee0716@verizon.net
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