NARFE BOARD MEETING NOVEMBER 18, 2015

Present:  President Michael Webb  
Vice President Barbara Early  
Treasurer Joe Shelby  
Membership Chair Fred Hoppel  
Net Coordinator Mike Ryan  
Secretary Jeanie Lynch  
Chapter Member Susan Barde  
Chapter Member Cindy Vantrease

Meeting started at 11:30AM with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for our troops.

Mike Ryan brought the letter he received from OPM concerning the Federal employees' data breach for us to review.

The minutes from the Sept. 23rd meeting were unanimously approved.

Joe Shelby gave the interim Treasurer's report:  Balance on hand as of 9-31-15 = $1,422.81.  
Total Receipts = $389.76.  Total Disbursements = $106.00.  Balance on hand as of 11-18-15 = $1,706.57.

FRED HOPPEL'S MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Fred plans to contact local Postmasters to possibly allow him to speak to Postal employees and have NARFE membership materials made available to them such as the NARFE magazine, membership applications, and brochures emphasizing the value of membership.

Mike reported that NARFE membership is still dropping but not as fast.  In the Dayton area 10th Congressional District, the Xenia NARFE Chapter is closing.  The Beavercreek and Huber Heights Chapters have had no new members thus far this year.  Our Miami Valley Chapter gained four new members, but had a net loss of 8 members.  The eNARFE Chapter has 160 members in the district.  Total NARFE membership in the Ohio 10th Congressional District as of this meeting stands at 1,228 members.  Over 30,000 federal employees and retirees reside in Ohio’s 10th Congressional District, of which nearly 13,000 are in Montgomery County.

The state of Ohio has nearly 150,000 federal employees and retirees, of which only 5,927 are NARFE Chapter members.  (Editor’s Note:  eNARFE has 846 members in Ohio bringing total Ohio NARFE membership to 6,773 members.

In the 1980s, NARFE had nearly a half of million members nationwide.  National membership now is less than a quarter of a million.  There are over 5 million federal employees and retirees in the Nation.

Member Susan Barde noted that NARFE is the only lobbying group protecting our benefits.

OFFICER NOMINATIONS

All officers agreed to be nominees for 2016.  The positions of Membership Chair and Net Coordinator are appointed.  Mike Ryan and Fred Hoppel agreed to serve another year.
MEDICARE PART B PREMIUM NEWS UPDATE

Congress passed a bill on October 29, 2015, to limit the Medicare Part B premium increase to 15% plus a $3.00 surcharge - $123.70 per month for most retirees - for CSRS retirees not receiving Social Security. Social Security recipients are held harmless in years without a COLA and their premiums will not increase. However, the $3.00 surcharge will be added to all premiums next year.

OPEN SEASON QUESTIONS – WITH AND WITHOUT MEDICARE

Some members raised questions about the pros and cons of enrolling in Medicare Part B for federal retirees under FEHBP. The discussion focused on how our FEHB Plans, specifically Blue Cross/Blue Shield, have raised copayments on prescription drugs this year for subscribers not enrolled in Medicare Part B. The differences are greater with the Basic Blue Cross/Blue Shield plan with even higher copayments and no benefit for mail service pharmacy. One member felt that this is unfair treatment for seniors who elect not to enroll in Medicare Part B and amounts to coercion. FEHB Plans are offering greater incentives to subscribers enrolled in Medicare Part B. It was noted that NARFE has resources to help members make informed decisions on enrolling in Medicare. Those resources are available on our chapter web site at www.narfe.org/site/chaper1927, under the tab Federal Retirees – Medicare Q & A that includes a link to a webinar produced by the NARFE Federal Benefits Institute – FEHBP & Medicare: Make the BEST Choices.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Retirees will not receive a COLA in 2016, even though health care and food costs have risen. This was largely because of the drop in gas prices. A bill is pending before Congress to change the way COLAs are calculated for Social Security and federal retirees to give greater weight to factors more relevant to retirees, such as health care costs. NARFE is lobbying for this bill and is asking members to write to their representatives in Congress.

A government shutdown is still possible by December 11. The budget passed but individual appropriations have not passed. (Editor’s note: A deal was reached and an omnibus funding bill was passed in December funding the government for the rest of the fiscal year.)

2016 SPEAKERS

Mike Webb will announce in the newsletter that all suggestions for speakers are welcome. (Editor’s Note: This item will be in the February Newsletter)

Barb suggested we have the speaker from Stockslager’s Greenhouse and Garden Center for our April Meeting.

It was decided to have the Board Meetings the third Wednesday of odd numbered months, two weeks prior chapter meetings. The next Board Meeting will be on January 20, 2016 at 11:00 AM. All NARFE members are welcome to attend and participate.

Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Jean Lynch, Miami Valley NARFE Chapter 1927 Secretary