



TEXAS FEDERATION EXECUTIVE BOARD

MEETING MINUTES



OCTOBER 28, 2024

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Texas Federation Annual Meeting & Executive Board Meeting/Training Minutes

Hilton Houston NASA Clear Lakes

3000 E. NASA Pkwy

Houston, Texas 77058-4322

Monday October 28, 2024, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

- **President Charles Graffam:** called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. The Secretary Steven Johnson gave the invocation. The President led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.
- **Secretary Steven Johnson:** conducted roll call of Executive Board Officers and Appointed Officers:

EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS

- President – Charles A. Graffam
- ~~Executive Vice President – Johnny Ortiz~~
- Secretary – Steven R. Johnson
- Treasurer – James W. Ploen
- ~~North AVP – Robert D. Bradford~~
- Northeast AVP – Judith Cuthbertson
- South AVP – Dora Benavides
- Southeast AVP – Rodolfo Carr
- ~~West AVP – William R. Cooper~~

APPOINTED OFFICERS

- ~~Legislative Chair – Earnest C. Hill~~
- ~~Service Officer – Sandra S. Rogers~~
- ~~Membership Chair – Ben Weiger~~
- ~~Editor – Alice Pullin~~
- ~~Alzheimer's Coordinator – Linda A. Richards~~
- ~~Audit – Frances A. Hiner~~
- ~~Network Coordinator/ DR 6 – Joel Menking~~
- Network Coordinator/ DR 5 - Dorothy Creswell
- ~~District Representative 1 – James Novy~~
- ~~District Representative 2 – Dewey H. Laroche~~
- ~~District Representative 3 – Garon Leung~~
- District Representative 4 – Robert Samborski

SIX (6) Executive Board Officers - TWO (2) Appointed Officers Total of 08 Officers Present.

- **Secretary Steven Johnson:** stated, Mr. President, a quorum is present.

Approval of the Texas Federation April 29, 2024, Executive Board Meeting

Minutes: A motion was made by Treasurer James W. Ploen and seconded by SAVP Dora Benavides, and the motion passed. President Charles Graffam stated this will be included as the minutes for the Annual meeting for the year.

FEDERATION OFFICER'S REPORTS

● **PRESIDENT – Charles A Graffam:**

- **Texas Federation Register:** The Jul-Sep 2024, and Oct-Dec 2024 editions of the Texas Federation Register (TFR) were printed and distributed.
- **NARFE's Membership Challenge:** NARFE HQ has selected a company, Street Level, to research ways to improve NARFE's recognition in the federal community, both active and retired. This effort will also focus on recruiting new members and retaining current members. The campaign will extend over the next two years.
- **Current Membership Losses:** We continue to lose chapter members and consequently chapters as well. Chapter leadership needs to personally contact lapsed members to let them know how much we value them and would like to have them back as NARFE members and hopefully also as chapter members. Nora MacDonald in NARFE HQ continues to lead the effort to contact former members to get them to renew their NARFE membership.
- **Pushing Repeal of WEP and GPO:** We need to continue to support Congressional action to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). Current efforts focus on forcing a floor vote in both the House and the Senate. Our members need to contact their representatives and senators to encourage them to follow through on their earlier sponsorship of the bills to repeal these financially harmful programs.
- **Chapter Mergers and Closures:** Chapters continue to cease operating for lack of attendance and a failure to step up to assume leadership positions in the chapters. In the Northeast Area, the Dallas-Red Bud Chapter 0981 has had no reported activity in two years and needs to formally close. In the North Area, the Boomtown-Burkburnett Chapter 2329 will be merging with the Weatherford Chapter 509 soon.
- **Open Officer Positions in the Texas Federation:** We have filled the North Area Vice President's position. Bob Bradford was appointed to this position and has subsequently won election to continue to fill the position in the next two-year cycle. Steven Johnson has told me he has a volunteer to be Federation Secretary for the coming cycle. Since the election season has passed, I will appoint this person with the concurrence of the Executive Board. In addition, both the NARFE PAC Coordinator and the Alzheimer's Coordinator positions remain vacant. Linda Richards has indicated that she will continue to help us out by managing Alzheimer's contributions until we can get someone to take over these responsibilities.

- **Executive Vice President – Johnny A. Ortiz read by Steven Johnson:**

- **Texas Federation Budget Committee:** I participated in the Federation Budget Committee, as a member of the current Budget Committee.
- I voted to approve the 2025 – 2027 Budget.
- **Membership recruitment:** Members want to learn more about changes in our health insurance.
- In the past we would invite the BC/BS and GEHA representatives to come to our meeting. Members and non-members will attend the meeting. This year those representatives will not attend our NARFE Meeting. We need to find new ways to recruit Retired and Active Federal Employees.

- **TREASURER – James (Jim) Ploen:**

- **General Information:** The September 30, 2024, **Federation Financial Report** was sent to the Executive Board and by reference is included as a part of this report. A summary will be available in the next Texas Federation Register (TFR). Federation annual, quarterly, and monthly reports were issued and required payments made.
- The Federation consistently falls short of budgeted financial support for our chapters and members. Reminders have done little to elicit action from Federation officers. As a result, we have increased our investments (see below).
- **We need to discuss if officers can free up their budget line** for other officers that could use it in the final ½ year of the 2023-2025 Federation Program. Officers have begun a position of non-responsiveness regarding alerts, requests, and follow-ups.
- **Investments:** We have increased our investments from \$48,000 to \$66,000. Our checking account has gone from \$74,000 on March 31 to \$43,000 on September 30.
- **Chapter Dues:** Dues are based on December 31 chapter membership and statements are issued around January 15. **Verify that all chapters have updated their Dashboards** at HQ.
- **Chapter Closings: We have 29 chapters.** What is the status of closing Chapter 344 Rose City Tyler, 559 McKinney, and 981 Dallas Red Bud (see Minutes of Fredericksburg meeting)?
- **Dues Withholding Incentive:** None
- **2025-2027 Budget:** While the proposed budget was approved by the Board, **NOT all Board members choose to vote** on the proposed budget.
- **Chapter Assistance:** I have spent much time assisting chapters and Federation officers on a variety of issues (program funding levels and status, treasurer duties, HQ Chapter Dashboards, possible closings, honorary members verification, chapter financial status, training needs, etc.).
- **Recruiting:** While a few officers have increased their recruitment activities, results have been minimal. **An open discussion among officers should begin** to determine if there are ways to reverse this trend.

- *James Ploen stated that this may not be my last meeting as Federation Treasurer, but I was elected 8 years ago to be Treasurer, and I would like to thank everyone for their help.*

- **SECRETARY - Steven R. Johnson:**

- **Texas Federation Executive Board** – Prepare and distribute minutes of the April 29, 2024, EBM to the board members. Prepared summary of minutes for publication in the Texas Federation Register (TFR).
- **Updated the TX Federation TF-10:** I have updated the TF-10 dated 05/15/2024. It was posted on the TFR website.
- **Federation Chapter Visit** – Visit local Chapter 828 Greater N. Houston, Chapter 1321 Houston NASA, and Chapter 1430 Austin County. I just visited Chapter 228 Austin Bluebonnet for their meeting and luncheon.
- **Received Death Notices from Chapters** – A chapter should report the death of a NARFE Chapter member to the TF Secretary and to NARFE Headquarters. As the TF Secretary I receive death notices from Chapters and prepare a listing for publication in the TFR.
- **Requested NARFE HQ to issue Anniversary Certificates** – Anniversary Certificates to be issued for 2025 to Chapter 509 Weatherford - 70 years, Chapter 520 Rio Grande Valley – 70 years, Chapter 1430 Austin County – 50 years.
- **Prepared awards certificates** – 2 awards sent up to the TF President for approval for Chapter 1201 Arlington.
- **Contact Us** – Answer many questions on Contact Us emails from the Federation.

- *Steven Johnson stated he has been the Federation Secretary for 3 ½ years. I wanted to thank everyone who helped me along the way. I have learned a lot, and the Secretary before me was Fran Hiner who had done 8 years. She has helped me a lot, also the AVP' and DRs were a great help. I would like to visit more Chapters to help them with membership.*

- **North Area Vice President – Robert D. Bradford read by Charles Graffam:**

- My name is Robert (Bob) Bradford. I am the appointed VP of the North Area. I am also the President of Chapter 229 Waco. Since being appointed as North Area VP I have visited two chapters in my Area, the Arlington and the Weatherford chapters. They each had highly organized meetings and gave me great ideas on how to run my Chapter meetings. They discussed the TFR and bills before Congress that would help our members, if passed.
- My Chapter was the host chapter at the last Federation conference, and I was the Chair for that conference. We had great guest speakers and a great entertainer at the banquet.
- I also went to the FEDcon24 which was informative. I talked to the membership leader for our Headquarters. I have changed some of their ideas and plans that would work better in Texas. I have another organization that I am a member of and will try my ideas at the next NAPS state convention.

- o I ran for National VP for region VI but was not successful. Which is okay since per article I would have had to resign my local chapter and federation positions if I won the national position. That article needs to be changed since we have trouble getting anyone to run for the office. I still have a lot to learn so I can do my jobs better. Hope to see you at the next federation conference.

- **NE Area Vice President - Judith Cuthbertson:**

- **Chapter 862 New Boston:** Wanda King selected to nominating committee. Chapter had Four members attend the National Convention Conference in St Louis. The members who attended were Linda and Gene Baxter. Wanda King, President Of Chapter 862 and myself.

- **District 2 Representative: Dewey LaRochelle.**

- **Chapter 122 Dallas:** Met with officers gave their update and concern on issues. Also had an excellent presentation by Shannon Miller LMSW, for Senior Source. The October meeting was cancelled due to elections.
- **Chapter 559 McKinney:** Did not meet.
- **Chapter 981 Dallas-Redbud:** They show no signs of meeting and have not met in over two years.
- **Chapter 1191 Bluebonnet-Ellis-Navarro CNTY:** had a presentation by the Ennis Parks Department, the chair of Homeless. Community National Bank & Trust of Texas Caleb Loftis, Scam Investigator. September had lunch at Bubba's Bar BQ presentation with the new Homeless Coordinator.
- **Chapter Eppard 1273 Eppard-Richardson:** had a presentation by the Richardson Fire Department Chief Curtis Poovey. He covers the depth and expense of operating the fire department. Note the fire department supplied emergency food and health services for weather disasters. Also had an hoc discussion on Ancestry.
- **District Representative: Dr. James Novy.**
- **Chapter 344 Rose City Tyler:** approved chapter budget includes to help send two members to the National Convention Conference in St Louis, MO. IRS form 990-N submitted and approved. Chapter 344 had Representatives present presentation from Chaplain Hospice of East Texas, Amy Russo, Ambassador Engagement Manager for Mercy Ships, Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County, Heart Gallery deal with foster and adoption, Constable Josh Joplin Precinct 4 of Smith County. Chapter 344 NARFE Concerns: Viability of Chapter, inflation, cost of living adjustments, WEP, upcoming elections, cost of Health insurance for Senior Citizens, changing COLA for elderly.
- **Chapter 801 Longview:** invited to attend the next two meetings Oct. and Nov. 2024.

- **Chapter 862 New Boston:** invited to attend the next two meetings Oct. and Nov. 2024.
- These are the last five months' Chapter reports I received from District Representatives.

- **SE Area Vice President – Rodolfo (Rudy) Carr:**
 - Fall has finally arrived. The summer heat was brutal, and Hurricane Beryl left the Houston area devastated with down power lines, mountains of tree debris, flooding in north Houston and thousands of homes without power for days.
 - Activity in the Southeast Area was slow during the summer due to chapters on summer break (Chapters 828 and 1430). Chapter 607 cancelling meeting in July and Chapter 1375 cancelling meeting in August due to conflict with 75th Division Reunion whose members are also key officers, and FEDcon24 scheduled during the same time.
 - Southwest Chapter 1375 has been busy coordinating the hosting of the Executive Board Meeting on 28 Oct 2024 and the Texas Federation Conference in April 2025 at the Hilton Houston NASA, Clear Lake.
 - Chapter 828 Greater North Houston – with the assistance and guidance of three federation officers, we were able to transfer two National Only Members (NOM) to Chapter members holding the key officer positions of Chapter President and Chapter Treasurer.
 - *Chapter 828 Treasurer Oscar Cardenas organized the Alzheimer's Walk in Katy, and the Chapter raised a bit over \$1,000.00. I assisted with the Budget Committee. The Chapter 1430 Austin County chapter dues were \$1.00. I attended the last meeting to have the Bylaws update but they did not have a quorum to vote on the Bylaws change.*
 - I volunteered to assist the 2025-2027 budget committee. I also attended FEDcon24 in St. Louis as part of the Texas Delegation and provided a summary of the conference to all five SE Area chapters, briefed Chapter 1375 on their September meeting and will brief four other chapters on upcoming visits. I scheduled a visit for Chapter 1430 Austin County in Bellville on 1 October 2024 to help with amending Chapter By-Laws to increase their chapter dues and aid efforts to celebrate their 50th Anniversary in April 2025. In addition, we are scheduling visits to four other chapters in the SE Area before year end. Also reminded chapters of the National Election and the importance of their vote.
 - I will continue to coordinate with SW Houston Chapter 1375, TF Secretary, DR4 on the Texas Federation Conference in 2025.
 - *I also attended the 27th Annual Retiree Appreciation Day on Saturday 12 October 2024. It was located at the Joint Reserve Training Center Ellington Field Houston, TX.*

- **South Area Vice President – Dora Benavides:**
 - The South Area has six chapters and two District Representatives.
 - **Chapter Updates District 5: Dorothy Creswell, Representative** visits chapter and participates in recruitment activities hosted by individual chapters in addition to providing guidance and assistance. Attended FEDcon24 in St. Louis.
 - **Austin - Bluebonnet Chapter 0228** – President James Ploen, Chapter Service Officer, and DR-5 exhibited at Prof Mgrs. Assoc (IRS employees) on June 26 in Austin arranged by NARFE HQ. Thirteen M-2 cards rec'd and important contacts established for NARFE to speak to the IRS group in near future. Members attend monthly meetings in person or can attend via Zoom. Monthly guest speakers. James Ploen is President and webmaster of NARFE-hosted microsites.
 - **New Braunfels Chapter 0672** – Meetings continue to be held monthly and well attended with guest speakers and meeting dates are publicized in the local paper, FEDHub, and Facebook. The Chapter quarterly newsletter is distributed to all members. The May 18th meeting recognized members who passed away and Distinguished Members. Had an exhibit table at the TX Rural Letter Carriers Assoc State Convention on June 10-12. 45 M-2 cards were sent to NARFE Membership. NARFE HQ approved matching funds request for Rural Carriers event. Officer elections will be held in October. Participated in Feds Feed Families Food Drive during the summer months. Plan to hold an Open Season Health Fair in November.
 - **San Antonio Chapter 1594** – The chapter has resumed monthly meetings. Chapter will participate at the October 19th Military Retiree Appreciation Day at Joint Base San Antonio Fort Sam Houston. President Gerry Rendon is webmaster for San Antonio Chapter 1594 microsite.
 - **Fredericksburg Chapter 2111** – Cancelled April 8th meeting due to Solar Eclipse. Chapter members meet monthly and have guest speakers. My thanks again to JoAnn Krauskopf and Grace Crook for their help in finding the location for the April 28-29 TF Executive Board Meeting.
 - **Chapter Updates District 6: Joel Menking, Representative**
 - **Sparkling City by the Sea Chapter 0091** - Chapter 91 has been having well attended meetings the first Tuesday of each month with guest speakers. Chapter 91 NARFE microsite running smoothly. On May 24-26, Chapter 91 President Joel Menking and members manned an exhibit booth at the TX Postal Supervisors State Convention at the Omni Hotel in Corpus Christi courtesy of Bob Bradford, North Area VP and former Postal Supervisor who provided and set up NARFE exhibit materials while also attending Postal State Convention. Twenty-four M-2 cards were completed and forwarded to NARFE Member Services. In May, NARFE members voted to raise monies toward helping to establish a “sensory room” for special needs children visiting local libraries.

- On June 25th, Chapter President and NARFE members presented a check for \$326 to Friends of Corpus Christi Public Libraries for their “sensory room” fundraising efforts. On July 16th, NARFE Chapter 91 suffered an unexpected loss of Mr. Armando Brambila, NARFE Chapter Treasurer, to a very aggressive form of cancer. He had just been elected TR in January 2024 and served until his passing in July.
 - **Rio Grande Valley Chapter 0520** – DR 6 Joel Menking and I visited Chapter 0520 on June 11th to update members on information requested. President John Ramiro holding monthly meetings with speakers. They have energized members to invite and recruit new members. The chapter meets monthly in Brownsville, TX, at Golden Corral. Chapter 0520 will again participate in the 2024 Walk to End Alzheimer’s.
 - **Pending Concerns:**
 - Members continue to have no interest in serving in officer positions.
 - Members lack interest in participating in FED HUB.
- **West Area Vice President - William (Bob) Cooper read by Charles Graffam:**
 - **Report for EMB October 28, 2024, meeting:** Throughout this year, I voted on executive board items by email from my phone.
 - **West Texas** now has one Chapter remaining Chapter 1495 West El Paso.
- **FEDHub Texas Community - Dorothy Creswell:**
 - In April I made two recommendations, **neither of which have been implemented:**
 - Announce each new issue of the Texas Federation Register using **FEDHub email** (described later). Currently the TFR Coordinator uses a FEDHub post to distribute it. If the TFR Coordinator will continue to distribute the TFR, then that person should be made a Community Administrator so they can use FEDHub mass email which is more effective. Otherwise, the Federation Secretary should do this.
 - Get more participation by Federation officers to start conversations or participate in them in the community and encourage others to participate. Since the April meeting, 12 Federation officers have logged in, but nine have not. Only seven have posted or replied to a message. It is impossible to have a one-person conversation.

- The Texas Community has grown since the April 2024 Executive Board meeting.
- Usage has **doubled since the last report**. There are 602 discussions and 74 library files. Other Administrators are Charles Graffam, Steven Johnson, and James Ploen. Administrators can manage posts in moderation, send FEDHub email, and access reports.
- As of 10/2/2024 there are 5,728 TX Community members including NARFE members who live in Texas but belong to chapters in other federations, and those interested in following Texas discussions. The number includes members without an email on their membership record, but who may login using their member number. Since April, 704 have logged in.
- The two leadership book discussions have generated more participation while developing leaders. I am seeing more participation by National-only members as well as chapter members. Looking at member gain/loss, chapters that are posting meeting announcements in FEDHub are doing better compared to the overall federation chapter membership.
- This is a tool where we can reach more members to provide federation services.
- **FEDHub email** allows mass email to every member in the community (unless they have unsubscribed). These messages are different from the Community digests.
 - Only a Community Administrator can send a FEDHub email and use a different process.
 - Recipients can reply, view attached files or click a complete link without logging into FEDHub.
 - Messages are shorter because they do not use FEDHub formatting. Because of this, Administrators must remember to include identifying information.
- **Federation Membership Coordinator – Ben Weiger report by Steven Johnson:**
 - **Changes in Texas Federation Membership from May 1, 2024 – October 3, 2024**
(Generated from the AMS)
 - 36 new chapter members
 - 246 members renewed
 - 36 members reinstated
 - 59 members dropped for non-renewal
 - 41 members passed away
 - 3 voluntary cancellations

- **Top Individual Recruiters**
 - Dorothy Creswell Chapter 672 – 3
 - Fran Hiner Chapter 2365 – 2
- **Top Chapter Recruiting**
 - Chapter 672 – 3
 - Chapter 2365 – 2
 - Chapter 1201 - 2
- **Net Change - 67 during the 5-month period – loss of 67 members.**
- **Membership Coordinator Activities**
 - Received matching funds for the Arlington Aging Well Expo. Working on three interesting leads at the present time from the event.
 - Coordinated with James Ploen and Dorothy Creswell regarding an IRS training event in Austin TX. The NARFE HQ worked with their IRS contact to allow us to attend this training session.
 - Coordinated with Robert Bradford and Joel Menking regarding a TX NAPS event in Corpus Christi on May 24-26, 2024.
 - Coordinated with James Ploen and Dorothy Creswell regarding a Rural Letter Carriers State Convention in San Marcos June 10-12, 2024. Two new members were recruited from this event.
 - Coordinated with Dorothy Creswell and Steven Johnson regarding several Army Retiree Appreciation Days in Central and Southeast TX this fall. Dorothy and Steven coordinated with Chapters in their areas regarding participation at these events.
- **Planned Activities for 2025**
 - Collaborate with Dorothy to develop an Excel spreadsheet program to generate chapter spreadsheet lists of upcoming membership renewals to try and reduce the number of dropped for non-renewal members. Share these lists with chapter membership chairs and Presidents.
 - Continue to identify TX and national conferences/conventions/training events for membership recruitment opportunities (see below).
 - Update membership recruitment presentation for use by TX chapters.
 - Identify new innovative ways to market NARFE in collaboration with the Membership Advisory Committee.

Recruit more annuitant spouses for the organization

Upcoming Membership Recruitment Events

Retiree Army Appreciation Days

- Fort Bliss – October 10-11, Contact – 915-568-5204
- JB Ellington (Houston) – October 12, Contact – 210-221-9004/9793
- JB SA (Sam Houston) – October 19, Contact - 210-221-9004/9793
- Fort Hood (Cavazos) – October 25-26, Contact – 254-287-5210
- JB SA (Randolph) – November 2, Contact – 210-652-6880

Business Meeting

● Nominating Committee Report – Dorothy Creswell:

○ **NARFE Texas Federation Nominating Committee Report for 2025 Election**

- The Texas Federation Nominating Committee received candidate statements for eight of the nine positions to be elected for the 2025-2027 Federation Executive Board.
- We are still seeking a qualified candidate for the Federation Secretary position.
- Members of the Nominating Committee are Wanda King, Chapter 0862, Northeast Area; Ben Weiger, Chapter 1201, North Area; Marlys “Marcy” Williams, Chapter 1375; Southeast Area.
- William “Bob” Cooper, Chapter 1495, West Area, and Dorothy Creswell, Chapter 0672, South Area and committee Chair. A big “Thank you” to all the committee members for their work.
- Per the Texas Federation Bylaws, Article IV Section 5 Nominations and Elections, subsection B, *“The officers shall be elected by ballot vote.” and “If there is only one candidate nominated for an office, that candidate shall be declared elected by acclamation without need for a ballot.”*
- Thus, the following candidates for Texas Federation elected positions shall be declared elected by acclamation without need for a ballot.
 - **President: STEVEN RENARD JOHNSON**
 - **Executive Vice President: JAMES PLOEN**
 - **Treasurer: BEN WEIGER**
 - **North Area Vice President: ROBERT BRADFORD**
 - **Northeast Area Vice President: JUDITH (JAYE) CUTHBERTSON-MCDADE**
 - **South Area Vice President: DOROTHY A CRESWELL**
 - **Southeast Area Vice President: RODOLFO (RUDY) CARR**
 - **West Area Vice President: WILLIAM “BOB” COOPER**

- ***Dorothy Creswell**, the Nominating Committee Chair made a motion that the Board declared the nominated officers be elected by acclamation. It was second by Federation Secretary Steven Johnson. President Graffam stated any discussions, with none the motion was approved by the Board.*
- ***Treasurer James Ploen** made a motion to the Board that **Tiffany M. Chase** upon confirmation by National approving her as a NARFE Member from the paperwork that has been submitted she be the next Federation Secretary. The SE AVP Rodolfo Carr second the motion. The motion was approved by the Federation Board.*
- ***Treasurer James Ploen** made a motion since Alice has resigned as the Texas Federation Register Coordinator that **Charles Graffam** hold the position of the TFR Coordinator till the end of his tenure June 30, 2025. SE AVP Rodolfo Carr asked if Charles would accept the motion, President Graffam stated “YES.” The motion was second by Secretary Steven Johnson. After further discussion, the motion passed.*

o **Awards Submission and Anniversary Certificate – Secretary Steven Johnson:**

- The mission of the Federation Awards Program is to recognize, honor, and bestow awards to federation and chapter leaders and members for their outstanding services. The Executive Board has established the awards program and guidelines.
- The Federation President oversees the awards program.

Deadline for Nominee Award Recommendations

- For plaques and certificates awarded at the TF Biennial Conference or other events, all Nominee Award Recommendations **must be received by:**
 - 1) The DR for his/her district nine (9) weeks prior to the TF Conference.
 - 2) The AVP for his/her area must ...eight (8) weeks prior to the TF Conference.
 - 3) The TF President seven (7) weeks prior to the TF Conference.
- The Federation Secretary will provide TF-10 Award Program Sections 8-6 through 8-10 as reference material to all chapters via the NARFE email system in early January of the year of the biennial conference. This email will be sent to chapter presidents, secretaries, and secretary/treasurers.

- *Secretary Steven Johnson stated that we must recognize our Federation Officers, and it would be good to have more members awarded at the Convention coming up. SE AVP Rudy Carr stated why as an AVP I must send the paperwork to recognize my members to Charles then he sends it to Steve to create and then Steve sends it back to Charles and then Charles mails it back to me. This is a waste of money to mail out and a lot of time wasted. The TF10 Chapter 8-9 and 8-10 stated Chapter President may sign these Awards, DRs, AVP or the Federation President at the desire of the nominating officers. It is noted that we will get a committee to review the Federation Awards Program. The TF-10 needs to be looked at and set up as a small working group, instead of finding the answer in this meeting.*

o **Financial Items – Treasurer James Pleon:**

- **Proposed 2025-2027 Budget:** I wanted to share my responses to the comments before you vote.
- Revise the 10% Rebate Funds down by \$5,000 to \$10,000. The committee carefully considered the declining membership and the effect it would have on Federation Receipts. While numbers by themselves might suggest we reduce the receipts, the committee felt that the proposal could be met with attention by the Board and all Federation members to recruitment and retention. We ask the Board to make more effort with these activities and to consider options for generating more and different revenues. There needs to be a discussion of a different source of revenue because our current two major sources rely on membership. We hoped that a discussion would find innovative options to generate revenue (sales of some type, donation campaigns, etc). We discussed options to increase various dues but pointed out that those options would take time and may have the opposite effect on increasing revenues.
- Look at ways to reduce the amount proposed for withdrawal from investments. While the committee does not like recommending large withdrawals from investments, the Board has been reminded on MANY occasions that the Federation is a non-profit and is not in the business of continually increasing its investments. While we have an excess of investments, the Federation has NOT had a history of using those investments on programs. Officers across the Federation have tended to spend way below their budgets, so proposing a Budget that uses a large figure for withdrawal from investments, historically it probably will not happen. Plus, the Board, the treasurer, the president should monitor the Monthly Financial Reports and take action to minimize that from happening.
- Increase emphasis on dues withholding. On the surface, this would reduce our receipts by decreasing what some members pay to NARFE. However, it could decrease the decline in membership by retaining more members and thereby increasing total receipts. As stated above, we have said that the Board and Federation need to increase their efforts in recruiting and in retention.
- Seriously evaluate improving services while reducing costs. While this is a lofty goal, it has no specific actions or relative relationship to the proposed Budget. The Board should always have this in mind when having meetings and develop specific actions to achieve the goal.
- Use caution when exploring non-dues revenue. I do not understand how this relates to the line items in the proposed budget. If it relates to the recommendation that the Board consider other non-membership related options, which I discussed above, then we agree the Board should use caution in all its discussions.

- Avoid raising Chapter Dues. We briefly discussed this above. Specifically, per capita dues (now called Chapter Dues) are set in the Bylaws and need a Bylaws change to be increased. That process can take up to two years. In addition, any increase could result in an immediate decrease in Chapter membership and even the closing of some chapters. The Committee has NOT recommended an increase in any Chapter Dues (see the narrative with the Proposed Budget).
- Do a serious study of the TFR format, purpose, content, and distribution. The committee and past committees have made specific recommendations to the Board to take various actions. The Board has voted to keep things as they are. This proposed Budget, line 24, keeps the TFR as is with an increase in the Budget amount, but the committee DID recommend that the Board appoint a committee to study the TFR.
 - *The committee needs to produce other ways to make money. Do we want to increase Chapter dues from \$2.00 to \$4.00? It was also brought up that we can sell ads in the TFR.*

○ **Review the Treasurer's Report - Treasurer James Pleon:**

- Some DR's said they are short on their budget. You can move money within the AVP's or within the DRs, but you cannot move APPs to DR's or DR's to AVP's. Some DRs are not spending their money if there is a need then they need to let the AVP know then the Treasurer and the President to move money. SE AVP Rudy Carr asked the Board can he move money from his AVP of \$100.00 and can DR4 Bob Samborski move money from DR to Chapter 1430 Austin County and help them with their 50-year Anniversary Party in June 2025. It will require a TF-2 Expense Report.
- A motion by James Ploen to raise the Meals rate by \$8.00: Breakfast \$16.00 to \$24.00, Lunch \$18.00 to \$26.00, and Supper \$22.00 to \$30.00 effective January 01, 2025. Secretary Steven Johnson then seconded it. There was a big discussion about the money we are spending. DR4 Bob Samborski said we need to figure out how to raise money, since it looks like we are bleeding our budget. After all the discussions, the motion was passed.

○ **What is happening in the Legislative Area? – Charles Graffam:**

- We need to continue to support Congressional action to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). Current efforts focus on forcing a floor vote in both the House and the Senate. Our members need to contact their representatives and senators to encourage them to follow through on their earlier sponsorship of the bills to repeal these financially harmful programs.

- The latest news shows that HR 82, the Social Security Fairness Act, which would fully repeal the WEP and GOP, has some movement. The two Bill Sponsors filed a "Discharge Petition" on September 10, 2024, to force a floor vote in the House of Representatives. We encouraged everyone to contact our Congressperson to ask them to sign the discharge petition.

○ **Who will attend the Legislative Conference in 2025 – Charles Graffam:**

- Whoever wants to go, I believe it will be in June 2025. We are not sure if it is going to be Zoom or in Person. It is better if it is Zoom format, if it is in person you may spend up to \$1500.00. When it is on Zoom you pay only a registration fee of \$100.00. This is one of the best training NARFE puts on.

Federation Conference

● **The Federation Conference is coming April 2025 – Philip R. Kraus:**

- I would like to put some remarks out. Let me tell you how this works. It is the number of rooms per night and numbers of meals to allow us to get complimentary meeting rooms and the Hospitality Room. We have a hotel rate of \$139.00 in April 2025. I realize that some of you are Hilton Honor members, and you get a reduced rate. That does not count for the hotel with our programs. Registration fee is the same as in Waco. We will have dinner on Monday night and Tuesday night. We are going to have a 90-minute boat tour in the afternoon on Saturday. The Houston Harbor boat tour is a very educational tour, costing \$20.00. We would like to see as many people as possible. On Sunday we will have a tour of Johnson Space Center down the street. The final date to book your rooms will be April 4th, 2025.
- The Hilton Houston NASA Clear Lake Hotel will now give us a tour of the Hospitality Room on the 14th Floor. This will be open daily, and the hotel has allowed us to bring our drinks up. We will also take a tour of the Endeavor, a large meeting room on the second floor. This Hotel has a Waterfront view beside NASA Mission Control. It is on the bank of Clear Lake, next to Johnson Space Center. Waterfront dining, shopping, and entertainment at Kemah Boardwalk is five miles away. The hotel has an outdoor pool, a fitness center, free Wi-Fi, and free parking. If you fly into town, we recommend William P. Hobby Airport, which is 18 miles away. The George Bush Intercontinental/Houston is 48 miles from the Hotel, more than an hour's drive.

- o **Who will lead the Memorial Service – Charles Graffam:** The President Charles Graffam stated he will talk to Linda Richards to see if she is able to do the Memorial again.
- o **Which National Officer should we invite to speak – Charles Graffam:** President Charles Graffam stated that we would like to have the National President William Shackelford, we will reach out to him.

TRAINING

- **Getting Started on FEDHub – Dorothy Creswell:**

- o Using FEDHub, the Federation Community Administrator can send out emails to everyone in the Federation Community, to both chapter and national-only members. The system sends emails to all members, even if they have not registered in FEDHub. Only authorized officers can send emails from FEDHub, just like our legacy system, the NES (NARFE Email System). These include President, EVP or 1st VP, Secretary, Secretary/Treasurer, Treasurer, and Membership Chair.
- o **Build My Network** – Make the most of your FEDHub experience. Click Sign in at the top page. Use credentials you would for narfe.org. If you need your username and password, click the [Contact Us](#) form.
- o **Complete My Profile** – Fill out your profile! Click the “Complete My Profile” button on the FEDHub homepage. Upload your profile picture and add it to your bio so members can learn more about you on FEDHub! Join the conversation! Find a list of communities available to join from either the Communities drop down bar or the Explore button. Participate in discussions with fellow NARFE members by pressing the Engage button.

- **Getting Started on FEDHub – Dorothy Creswell:**

- NARFE implemented FEDHub to engage and serve younger members more familiar with social media and a growing National-only population seeking to network with other federal employees and retirees and learn more about their benefits and solve problems.
- The session provided an overview of NARFE’s exclusive member network, and the two types of communities. Members can reply to existing discussions and start their own discussions once they agree to the service terms and conditions.

- The session described how to login, find the Quick Start Guide, fill in a basic profile, reply to or post a new message, and moderation. Any member of the Texas community can post a message. Chapters are encouraged to publicize each meeting so they can be seen by chapter and National-only members. There is no charge to use FEDHub. It can be accessed with a computer browser or smartphone app called “Connected Community.” After the overview, a live demonstration of the service was given.
- A FEDHub Federation Community Administrator can send out emails to everyone in their community which reaches both chapter and National-only members, even if they have never logged into FEDHub, and allows the recipient to open links and attachments and reply to the sender, all without logging into FEDHub.
- **Update on the Association Management Software (AMS) – Dorothy Creswell:**
 - NARFE recently upgraded the Microsoft software on which the NARFE AMS was developed. Officers now have access to all data lists including officer list, member lists, and federation search. But, all reports still need to be converted or recreated so no reports are available for either NARFE HQ or chapters and federations which will delay deposits. NARFE is working to make priority reports available as soon as possible.
 - **Online Resources** – Many tutorials are available for officers on the NARFE Configuration Advisory Board “CAB” microsite at <https://www.narfe.org/CAB/> Among these are a “Chapter Dashboard Overview,” “Update the Chapter Dashboard,” and “Update the Chapter Officer List.”
- **What adjustment needs to be made to the Timeline? – Steven Johnson** On page 3 of the Timeline 12/05/2024 delete the Bylaws and Resolutions Bylaws Amendments and Resolutions there were none. Also delete the number 3-bullet comment “Candidates, full bylaws, proposed bylaws amendments, and resolutions”.
- **For the good of the Federation – Charles Graffam:** When will we hold the next EB Meeting? The President stated no meeting till the Texas Federation Convention in April 2025, or a Zoom call to help prepare with the Conference coming.
- **Meeting Adjournment - Charles Graffam:** Meeting completed at 5:10 pm.

CHARLES GRAFFAM, PRESIDENT

STEVEN JOHNSON SECRETARY