

**Minutes of the
Air Force Public Affairs Association
Quarterly Board of Directors Meeting (Zoom)
Friday, September 1, 2023**

Call to Order: Chairman Brett Ashworth called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. EDT.

Roll Call: Secretary Carla Sylvester called the roll. A quorum was present.

Board Members Present: Chairman Brett Ashworth, President John Dorrian, Treasurer Phil Ratliff, Secretary Carla Sylvester, Julie Briggs, Dick Cole, Jim McGuire, Chuck Merlo, Perry Nouis.

Board Members Absent: Vice President Eric Schnaible (proxy to Carla Sylvester), Col Allen Herritage, Doug Kennett, Mike Paoli.

Others Attending: Judy Bivens, Jay DeFrank, Art Forster, Clem Gaines, John Gura, Jim Hart, Christine Queen, John Terino, Lou Timmons.

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes: Phil Ratliff moved to approve the minutes of the May 19 meeting, Jim McGuire seconded, and the motion passed.

SAF/PA Update: N/A in Col Herritage's absence.

Financial Report: Treasurer Phil Ratliff reviewed the financial report he had provided in advance.

1. Endowment Fund: The endowment fund balance is approximately \$540,000. Earlier in the year, the finance committee reprogrammed some funds to a more aggressive investment, and that has proved a good decision. The committee recommends to stay the course right now.
2. Financial Report: The current financial report goes through the end of June; the next one will be at the end of September, and Phil hopes to have it ready for the annual meeting in October. The bank account balance is \$9,239.36.
3. Donations: We received an endowment fund donation from Bud Ross in memory of Ed Robertson, Dave Shea, and Ted Tilma, in the amount of \$100 each.
4. Annual Meeting: For the annual meeting, we have virtually paid for the President's lunch. We probably will owe an additional \$15,000-\$20,000 for annual meeting expenses. This is shaping up as one of the more expensive annual meetings, because things are more expensive now.

Phil Ratliff moved the board accept the financial report. Perry Nouis seconded; the motion passed.

SAF/PA Liaison Report: Lou Timmons reported the C.B. Kelly wing sculpture is now installed in the SAF/PA front office, where it will have more visibility than in the conference room. Both Alice Price, former SAF/PA art program director, and Dave Shea, who for years ordered engraving for AFPAA plaques at SAF/PA, knew the sculpture was going to the Pentagon. Lou will write an article for the AFPAA newsletter, and Jim McGuire will add it to website. Dick Cole thanked Lou for the photos he provided of the presentation at SAF/PA.

Lou asked whether he should send a photo of the Best of the Best plaque to the recipient. Art said we haven't done it in the past, but agreed it was a good idea to add to the checklist, and Lou agreed to do it.

Committee Reports

- A. **Annual Meeting:** Perry Nouis sent an information sheet about the meeting in Tampa to all registrants and board members. We have 45 members registered, 23 guests, and 16 partial registrations. Perry expects about 90 people at the banquet. Registration is open for one more month. The hotel reported minor damage from Hurricane Idalia, but they anticipate no effect on our plans. MacDill AFB has not reported any concerns.
1. SAF/PA Rep: Because Jerry Renne will be TDY in Europe, SAF/PA will be represented by IMA Col. Beth Horine.
 2. President's Award: At the President's Lunch, John Dorrian will present the President's Award to the chief operations officer for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Brian Ford, at the recommendation of CENTCOM. John Gura requested the details so he can order the award.
 3. Memento: Perry said we need to decide on a memento, and recommended a set of four luggage tags for each attendee. He noted prices for everything have gone up, and personalizing costs even more. The luggage tags cost \$8.00 for the set of four. Phil recommended we order 100 of them. John Gura asked if they could be personalized with the AFPAA name. Perry replied that would increase the price significantly, but he will look into a personalized option. **Perry moved the board approve the luggage tags as the memento, and he will check on personalization. John Dorrian seconded, and the motion passed.**
 4. Transition: Jay DeFrank asked if the membership would want an update on the transition to AFPAA. Perry and other stated that would be part of the annual membership meeting.
 5. FAQs: Jim McGuire asked if he should put the FAQs on the website. Perry said that would be fine.
 6. Costs: Perry cautioned that the meeting costs will be higher than in the past. The costs for audiovisual support are still TBD.
 7. Next Annual Meeting: Looking ahead to 2024, the meeting for next year is planned for Oct. 3-5 in San Antonio. Annette Crawford is our local organizer. The team has contacted some hotels, and is collecting proposals. They expect to have a decision by the Tampa meeting. The area bases look forward to hosting us Oct. 4, 2024 at Lackland.
 8. Chairman: Chairman Brett Ashworth noted he is unable to make this year's annual meeting. President John Dorrian will lead the meeting in his place.
- B. **Membership:** Christine Queen reported membership is at around 468 members. We have 49 non-renewals from last year, and two who renewed from 2019. Anyone who has not renewed since 2022 does not have access to the password-protected sections of the website. Several new members joined in the last few months, many of whom are enlisted.
1. Directory: BAE Systems is again donating printing of the annual directory, which will go out in November. It will include a group picture for the first time since the onset of the COVID pandemic. Christine has asked John Gura to send out a blast asking members to review their information and update it if necessary before the directory is published.

2. Database: She asked if anyone needs information from the database, to please request it so she can generate it. She noted Perry asked for list of members who passed away since our last in-person meeting, so they can be acknowledged at the annual meeting.
 3. Best of the Best: Christine is creating a membership certificate and frame for the Best of the Best presentation in Tampa.
- C. **Communications/Newsletter**: Dick Cole noted that today is the deadline for submissions for the next newsletter. He asked if the board would prefer to stay on a quarterly schedule and publish the next newsletter in October, or wait until after the annual meeting in Tampa, and publish in November, including photos from the meeting. John Gura said it would be a good idea for the next newsletter to include coverage of the meeting, and Dick said he would plan on that. He also solicited tributes for recently deceased members Dave Shea and Ted Tilma. Jim McGuire asked if it was OK to post the photos of the C.B. Kelly wing sculpture presentation on the website now, instead of waiting for the next newsletter. There were no objections.
- D. **Website**: Jim McGuire reported he completed the Hall of Fame pages. He also said that thanks to Clem Gaines and Judy Bivens, he was able to post a video of the ceremony where Jerry Dalton and Stacy Pearsall were inducted into the DINFOS Hall of Fame. He's now working on a new membership page and application in conjunction with the transition to the new name, pending finalization of membership categories and dues.
- E. **Oral History**: John Gura advised nothing significant to report on the oral history program.
- F. **Facebook**: Judy Bivens continues to gather information and share on our AFPAA Facebook page. She encouraged members to also make their own posts as well.
- G. **Organization Transition**: Jay DeFrank began by asking Jim Hart to discuss the topic of membership categories and documents.
1. Adoption of Board Resolution: Jim Hart reported there were two documents to be adopted, which were sent in advance of the meeting. The first was a set of Board resolutions prepared by our lawyer, as required by the state of Virginia where AFPAA is incorporated. **Jim McGuire moved to approve the resolutions, Perry Nouis seconded, and the motion carried.**
 2. Adoption of Bylaws: The second document was the bylaws as restated and amended. The changes to the bylaws include: the change of the organization name; in Article III, Section 1, the classes of members; then at the end, the list of all the changes. **Dick Cole moved to adopt the bylaws as restated and amended; Clem Gaines seconded.** Carla asked about references in the bylaws to Associate membership, which is no longer a class of membership under the new structure. Jim Hart stated that "Associate" should be eliminated wherever it exists. **Phil moved to strike the term "Associate" wherever it exists, Jim McGuire seconded, and the motion passed.** Carla asked whether we should retain the reference to a non-voting member from SAF/PA, now that all PAs are eligible to be voting members. Jim Hart stated that is an issue for the board to address later, but at this point we are acting specifically on the name change and membership categories. With discussion concluded, the **board voted and passed the motion to adopt the bylaws as restated and amended.**

3. Membership Wording: Jim McGuire asked if anyone in the active Air Force has been involved with the definition of membership. He said he was working on simplifying the website description of who is eligible. A discussion ensued regarding the wording used for membership. Jim Hart said the wording has to be specific for us to qualify as a 501(c)(19) tax-exempt veterans organization, but that wording for the website can be simpler.
4. Board Seats: Jay DeFrank thanked Art Forster for setting up a meeting with the other military PA associations, and Jay had previously sent the after-action report from that meeting. He proposed possibly discussing in Tampa the idea of creating board seats to represent the categories of membership we want to attract. We've taken the first step by making SAF/PA a voting member. The sister services found that it was the advocacy of leadership that got members active.
5. Annual Meeting: Jay added that the Army holds its annual meeting in conjunction with their active-duty worldwide workshops, something we might look at for its advantages in terms of visibility, allowing us to present our value proposition, and creating discussions about mentorship and other topics. He recommended we discuss this topic when we meet in Tampa.
6. Research: Jay also reported on the meeting with the SAF/PA working group transition committee. He said the main takeaway was the benefit to conducting research. They are looking at conducting focus groups during the week of the AFA national convention, with Steve Everett offering to conduct the groups. This is another topic Jay would like to discuss in Tampa. He noted that surveys are both a way to get information and also a way to start presenting ourselves. As a backup plan, Steve can conduct focus groups by Zoom.
7. Dues Structure: Phil asked about the plan going forward on establishing dues structure. The board discussed at length whether a structure had been agreed on, and the pros and cons of a free introductory membership and reduced rates for junior personnel. Christine said the dues structure has to be decided before the end of October in order to complete the membership form for the directory and the website. In response to a question from Julie, Phil stated the current fees are 1 year for \$25, 3 years for \$50, and lifetime membership for \$300, which can be paid quarterly over a year. We have also offered active-duty members a two-year free Associate membership, but with the transition to AFPAA, that category of membership no longer exists. Jim McGuire offered a screen share of the dues structure from the website. Art recommended the transition committee take this up and give the board a recommendation. **Julie Briggs moved the board conduct a special meeting for this issue. Jim McGuire seconded. After additional discussion, the board agreed that Jay's committee would submit a proposed dues structure by Oct. 6, and the board will conduct a special meeting Friday, Oct. 13, at 3:00 p.m. ET to vote.** The matter having been resolved, Julie withdrew the motion.

Old Business

- A. **Hall Of Fame**: Art Forster reported everything is on schedule. The director of the Eaker Center at Maxwell AFB will accept the award for Eaker. At the meeting will be family members of Dave Schillerstrom, Dave Shea, and Mike Terrill. Jack Oswald is unable to attend; John Gura will arrange a presentation in California.

- B. **Dalton Scholarships:** Chuck Merlo reported that Brett notified the selectees, and Chuck notified the nonselects. Phil has sent a check to one selectee. Chuck will check with Sherry Medders at SAF/PA to fine-tune the process. He thanked Carla Sylvester and Mike Paoli for helping select the recipients. The committee had to make difficult choices, and unfortunately some deserving applicants were not able to be selected. Chuck said he's happy how the program went this year. The number of applications increased, and he anticipates that trend will continue.
- C. **Archives:** Art asked about the status of the digital archives. Perry had contacted Tom Dolney; his reply indicated it could be a long-term process. The question was raised as to whether the board wants to hire it out. The board discussed whether the digital archives were a priority, and there was strong support from several board members for creating an archive of important documents, including past meeting minutes, newsletters, and directives on how to manage programs such as the Hall of Fame and Best of the Best programs. The board discussed what work might need to be done and various ways we might make progress. Jim McGuire suggested we solicit volunteers via the newsletter to collect documents from whomever might have them. There are an estimated 15 boxes of documents that would need to be sorted to determine which are important. Then, if we want it digitized, someone would have to get estimates and present it to the board to determine if it were affordable and feasible. Dick Cole said he could scan and store documents if someone has a set of documents that don't need to be sorted. He also suggested maybe we should create a historian position. Perry said he will ask Tom about the status of the project and what needs to be done.

New Business:

- A. **Airman of the Year:** Art Forster asked about Air Force Magazine's article on the Airman of the Year. He said he hadn't seen a PA included in recent years, and suggested we talk to Col. Herritage to see if the career field has way to get people nominated. Judy noted that unless the process has changed, Airmen compete within the command structure — through the wing and MAJCOM levels — not within the functional PA structure. Dick said it might help to circulate the nominations that were successful; others noted that past nominations might be out of date and not account for changes in criteria. Art thanked the Judy for the clarification.

President Dorrian: John Dorrian said he looks forward to seeing everyone in Tampa at the annual meeting.

Chairman Ashworth: Brett Ashworth reminded the board of the special meeting on Oct. 13 at 3:00 p.m. ET to discuss membership rates.

With no further business, **Phil Ratliff moved to adjourn, Perry Nouis seconded, and the motion passed.** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:10 p.m. EDT

Minutes prepared by Secretary Carla Sylvester