

**Minutes of the
Air Force Public Affairs Association (AFPAA)
Quarterly Board of Directors Meeting
Friday, May 19, 2023**

Call to Order: Chairman Ashworth called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. EST via ZOOM teleconference.

Roll Call: The following members were virtually present: Chairman Brett Ashworth, Treasurer Phil Ratliff, John Terino, Perry Nouis, John Dorrian, Jim McGuire, Secretary Eric Schnaible, Chuck Merlo, Doug Kennett, Carla Sylvester, Julie Briggs, John Gura, Jim Hart, Pat Miner, Jay DeFrank, Art Forster, Dick Cole, Mike McRaney, and Hank Hufnagel.

The following board members were absent: Col Allen Herritage, Judy Bivens, Dave Phillips, and Greg Smith. A quorum was deemed present with proxies counted.

Minutes Approval: Doug Kennett motioned to approve the minutes, Jim McGuire seconded, and motion passed.

Chairman: Brett kicked off the meeting with Jay DeFrank's Organization Transition Committee business first.

Organization Transition Committee: Jay DeFrank advised the name change from AFPAAA to AFPAA passed, with 57% of eligible members voting. Of those, 233 voted yea, and 29 voted nay, with an approval rate of 88.9% of voting members.

- Jim Hart is heading the effort to update the organization's by-laws and other documents.
- Active Air Force PA members can now participate as voting AFPAA members. Jay recommended the SAF/PA non-voting board member (Col. Herritage) be nominated as a full voting member of the Board.
- The Organization Transition Committee is working with SAF/PA to stimulate interest in active duty members, including creating a working group of active PAs to develop a way forward. He also proposed conducting research to determine the best way to involve the active force, including in-person focus groups. John Terino urged the group to include junior enlisted PA members.
- The board discussed funding travel, with Treasurer approval, for transition committee members to conduct research and introduce the Association at MAJCOM and SAF/PA conferences. Motion seconded by Phil and passed.
- Chuck Merlo offered to provide the committee a fact sheet on the Dalton Scholarship. Jay DeFrank invited input for the committee at any time.
- Mike McRaney congratulated the board and the team that worked on the name change, and then he had to depart the meeting.
- Dick Cole commented that in accordance with discussions at the last meeting, he re-created the organization logo for Jim McGuire to use on the website and Judy Bivens to use on the Facebook page.

Financial Report:

- Treasurer Phil Ratliff briefed current budget figures/expenses/taxes. We have a \$22,000 balance, there is more than \$500,000 in our endowment fund, and we have received an anonymous donation

of \$5K in addition to a \$5K Lockheed Martin grant for the Best of the Best program. Art Forster confirmed he has ordered the Best of the Best plaque and seven plaques for the Hall of Fame awards.

- Phil reported an increase in active-duty applications at the active-duty rate. He suggested the board consider restructuring the membership fees now that active duty people will have equal standing as members. Chuck Merlo urged a lower rate for junior enlisted, and Phil agreed. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding membership categories and fees. Jim Hart said the committee will submit recommended changes to the bylaws, including membership fees, to the board, and then the board can make any changes and vote.
- Phil advised we are funding PA badges for DINFOS graduations, and Judy Bivens has provided DINFOS updated AFPAA cards to accompany presentation of the badges.
- Phil mentioned that one-third of registrations for the annual meeting came from the registration form in the newsletter, so it is important to get the newsletter in the hands of those who don't or can't apply using the form on the website.
- John Gura moved to approve the Treasurer's report. Doug Kennett seconded, and the motion passed.

Committee Reports:

- A. **Annual Meeting Update:** Perry advised that plans for the Oct. 26-28 Tampa, Fla. meeting are coming together, with 43 registered to date (including 13 guests). Registration information is posted on the website. CENTCOM/PA and MacDill AFB's host 6th Air Refueling Wing PA are providing support of events.
1. Perry introduced discussion of locations for the next meeting. San Antonio, TX had been suggested; Annette Crawford agreed to help organize a meeting there and other local members offered to help. A discussion ensued regarding whether the meeting should take place in spring 2025 or fall of 2024. Ultimately Perry moved to conduct the meeting in San Antonio in fall of 2024. Carla seconded and motion passed.
 2. Eric inquired about "swag" such as AFPAA-branded golf shirts, water bottles, etc., and John Terino advised of historical low sales.
- B. **SAF/PA Update:** On behalf of Lou Timmons, Eric advised that the Lt. Col. C.B. Kelly historical wooden carved wing was received at SAF/PA for future dedication.
- C. **Membership Committee:** Christine Queen could not attend but sent in membership report.
- D. **Communications/Newsletter:** Dick Cole reported he had sought input by Mar. 1 for the newsletter that would have been published Apr. 1, but input was sparse.
1. A discussion took place about the frequency of the newsletter; the consensus was in favor of keeping it quarterly. Art requested all provide Dick support for content going forward, and pointed out the potential for current SAF/PA news now that the organization will include active duty members.
 2. John Terino advised 355 copies are still being mailed to membership, and cautioned against relying on online platforms as a way to disseminate news to members. Julie Briggs supported a quarterly newsletter, even if the news were only a brief summary of the business meetings of the association. The board discussed content for the next newsletter.

- E. **Website:** Jim McGuire provided website updates including Hall of Fame write-ups for new inductees. He is drafting an e-ballot for elections for the website (not yet live) and building out the annual meeting page.
- F. **Oral History:** John Gura advised nothing significant to report on oral history program.
- G. **Facebook Page:** Judy not on call, but pre-advised nothing significant to report.

Old Business:

- A. **Hall of Fame:** Art Forster advised Hall of Fame is on schedule and he is working the awards for presentation at October Tampa meeting. He also reminded all of former SAF/PA Brig Gen Ed Robertson's recent passing and Al Defend would share funeral arrangements.
- B. **Dalton Scholarship:** Chuck Merlo reported that three applications were received: a SMSgt (retiring in Sept), a GS-12, and a TSgt. SAF/PA Liaison Lou Timmons was in contact with SAF/PAR's Sherry Medders to push/solicit for additional requests by 31 May suspense.

New Business:

- A. **Elections:** Brett reported Nomination Committee met.
 - 1. All current members whose terms are expiring agreed to run with the following exceptions: Dave Phillips will not seek re-election; Mike Paoli was nominated to replace him; and Greg Smith's nomination will not move forward due to health. Col. Allen Herritage will be nominated as a voting member.
 - 2. With Greg not moving into the Chairman position, Brett reviewed options on how the board could proceed. Jay advised the board could freeze all positions in place to be less interruptive. Phil motioned Brett to remain on board for another year, Chuck seconded. Carla volunteered to take the Secretary position, and was appointed by Brett in accordance with the by-laws. Jim Hart suggested a special mailing of ballots so all members have opportunity to vote before the new terms begin July 1.
- B. **Archives:** Eric asked about status of digitized records. Perry had to leave the call, but Brett would ask Perry to reach out to Tom Dolney for status.
- C. Eric advised SAF/PA Jerry Renne's dad passed.

Next Meeting: Brett suggested next board meeting on a TBD August Friday. Doug moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Carla and all members voted in favor of adjournment at 11:55.

Respectfully Submitted, Eric Schnaible, AFPAA Secretary