



Approved April 7, 2024

Minutes Fall Virginia Federation of NARFE Board of Directors Meeting  
Hotel Madison, Harrisonburg, VA  
January 23 & 24, 2024

In Attendance: (21 officers eligible for a quorum, 15 in attendance – quorum certified to conduct business)

Frances Boatman  
J.Larry Mcilwee  
Deborah Fisk  
Thomas Rachele  
Donna Shackelford  
Bob Martin  
Dr. Constance Bails  
Deborah Brown

Doris McAdams  
Marilyn Riddle (by phone)  
Jim Little  
Wynn Hasty  
Ted Pasek  
Melissa Groppe  
John Bankson

Voting Members Absent:

Patricia Wolfe  
Leslie Ravenel  
Julia Hobbs  
Graylin Taylor  
Membership (interim F.Boatman)  
Service Officer (Vacant)  
Gaston Gianni (Proxy – Jim Little)

Committee Chairs Absent:

Kathy Arpa – Newsletter Editor  
Wanda Ware – Chaplain

Committee Chairs Present:

Beatrice Squire, Parliamentarian  
John Bails – Sgt-at-Arms & Net Coordinator  
Ted Pasek – Training  
Stan Palen – WebAdmin  
Jim Little – Bylaws (Nat'l Leg Proxy above)  
Luther Santiful - Nominating (partial meeting)

Guests:

Robert Allen, Region X Vice President

The January 22, 2024, meeting was called to order at 9:04 am by President F.Boatman and Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance by Sgt-at-Arms J.Bails. President F.Boatman began the official business of the day. Roll call completed, a quorum certified, (simple majority for normal business & 2/3's majority for amendment to bylaws and handbook). President Boatman added "Membership Policy" after the 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Comments and Program Chair Reports and Bylaws Committee Report after Strategic Planning Committee. A **MOTION** by T.Pasek w/2<sup>nd</sup> to approve the agenda as amended. Unanimous Consent

President Boatman gave a brief overview of recent activities. She continues to visit chapters, take part in membership drives, monitor all committee meetings, and take part in the monthly FLAG group meetings. Encouraging everyone to continue to work together. A detailed list was distributed. FEDHub is being used to distribute important information, the NES email system is not current. Membership issues will continue to work more efficiently if members forward inconsistencies to the membership officer, currently F.Boatman. Membership is divided into three categories, recruitment, reach out to members who have dropped out, and engagement. Be aware of members who may be interested in leadership opportunities. There are current opportunities for a Service and a Membership Officer. The annual conference planning is ongoing and everyone is encouraged to contact the appropriate committee member for assistance.

B.Squire reminded the group of a few simple rules:

- a. always address the chair as Madam President
- b. you do not begin discussion on an item until a motion has been presented
- c. the procedure to interrupt the President, "Madame President point a person a personal privilege" and then the President answers "state the privilege"
- d. always direct questions during the meeting to the chair

President Boatman inquired about the October 2023 board minutes. D.Fisk explained that they were distributed prior to the meeting. President Boatman asked if there were corrections or additions, hearing none the minutes were approved as presented. D.Fisk gave a summary of the executive board meeting, 1/21. Financial reports were reviewed and there were no issues. Brief report by the 1<sup>st</sup> VP on chapter work. The treasurer asked for clarification on membership dues paid by the VFN which will be an added agenda item. Strategic planning is in the process of finding solutions, delegating responsibilities, and creating benchmarks so that the plan is completed successfully. Each chapter should turn in their deceased member list to W.Ware as soon as possible. Information is found in the M-112 reports. In 2024 there are plans for AVP's to meet monthly with chapter presidents and above all, communication will be critical as we continue the work of the VFN.

Action team (C.Bails,D.Fisk,T.Rachele) assigned to review and update former minutes . No report was given.

T.Rachele gave an overview of bank balances and expenditures as of 12/31/23, as well as an update on the current budget totals. The PAC report was given separately and two donations were made per an October motion. One check has cleared and one has not. D.Fisk to follow up. Expenditures are listed by the officer position title. Clarification on the PAC SCC statement that B.Martin continues to be listed because it is difficult to remove a name form the Virginia register. Agreed Upon Procedures is partially complete and anticipate complete report within the next several weeks.

Region X Vice President Robert Allen commented on the state of the NEB. The last meeting was in December and a January meeting is scheduled to discuss one particular topic followed by a full February meeting. The current National Only Member policy passed unanimously and limits communication to NOM only to Federations. NEB policy that supplemental funds can be distributed to Federations up to \$4,000 if bank balances are declining. In Region X there is only one Federation that qualifies. Of the 54 federations there are about 26 federations that might qualify for that assistance. The FY 2024 budget was approved. It is not clearly determined the eventual fate of the NARFE HQs building. A list is being compiled to determine member skillsets and qualifications to assist the roughly 26 staff at HQs on a volunteer basis. Funding has slowed down hiring. A contract specialist officer has been discussed. NEB is in the process of developing a communications process and privileges. March the 8<sup>th</sup> is the deadline to submit any National Bylaws amendments ([bylaws2024@narfe.org](mailto:bylaws2024@narfe.org)). The form to use is found on the website is F-3c and should be submitted by a federation or if by individual it requires 10 signatures. Two amendments will be sponsored by the NEB and this one in particular is important, "The NEB shall be the final governing authority on all NARFE HQs activities, including hiring personnel at certain levels and structures". The NEB is in the process of setting up a tracking system for all NEB actions. They approved a procedure for closing and merging federations. Arizona and New Mexico federations are the first to test this new process. Currently chapters cannot merge, they can only close. Discussion about chapters performing audits. There is a form F-131 that should be filled out and forwarded to the VFN Treasurer annually. Membership Gain/Loss reports are important at the region and federation level. The

administrative 15% fee that was attempted to be levied on federation vendor sponsorships has been rescinded. The current database review is working to simplify collection of data. Frustration on the part of federations that there is no dedicated access to an email client. FEDHub is a social media platform and there should be some sort of disclosure to advise appropriately.

C.Bails began a discussion about the future of NARFE. With membership numbers and member enthusiasm declining, what is the future of NARFE. R.Allen believes that it is not currently on the agenda of the NEB to consolidate chapters and federations into a National Only organization. It was strongly stressed that solutions reside within reorganization and strengthening the structure of NARFE.

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, L.Mcilwee referred to the current Area Vice President's reports which were distributed prior to the meeting. As each Area VP spoke about their areas the common thread is the same, declining enthusiasm and engagement. President Boatman and 1<sup>st</sup> VP Mcilwee are available to troubleshoot and help out as asked. Any specific chapter problems should be communicated directly to L.Mcilwee and President Boatman. One key suggestion from Area IX was that advertising is not sufficient and much more can be done. C.Bails addressed training and succession plans that are in the planning stages and accountability will be stressed.

D.Fisk read the highlights of 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Patricia Wolfe's report. Understaffing was mentioned with vacancies for Membership and Service Officers. Welcome to D.Brown, our new State Legislation Chair and a huge thank you to J.Little for helping out with National Legislation during G.Gianni's temporary absence. Each program chair gave highlights to expand on their written reports. D.Shackelford reported that as of December 31 the total collected was \$15,985,839.29 which does not include the Alzheimer's Walk or the Longest Day. In the month of December NARFE members' contribution were \$42,819.43. Keep up the good work. State Legislation is in the process of transition from D.Fisk to D.Brown. The trifold was complete, and the session began on 1/10. A recommendation for anyone interested to download the VPAP General Assembly app which brings a great deal of information to your smart device. D.Brown spends a great deal of time and energy advocating in Richmond. Public Relations advised that rack cards will be created to garner interest in NARFE. Continued exposure to our mission through outlets available. National Legislation continues to monitor WEP/GPO sponsor information, advocacy efforts continue to be healthy. All CDL and SL liaison positions are filled. Membership gain/loss numbers as reported in the written report has changed and in Virginia our total number has dropped below the 10,500 previously reported number. The net loss was 7-chapter members but there are 16 new prospects. The membership incentive drive from 9/1 to 12/31 successfully signed 10 new members and the recruiters will receive \$10 HQs and \$10 from the VFN for each member recruited. Membership is everyone's responsibility. Efforts on retention is as important as recruitment. Use the information contained in the M-112 report to help you contact members. Members dropped will remain on the report for 3-months once their membership expires. Stay current. **MOTION:** D.Shackelford w/2<sup>nd</sup> moved that the VFN will continue to pay for free memberships to NARFE when there is a specific recruiting event and a drawing held from prospective cards. Unanimous Consent. The membership chair will approve all free membership drawing opportunities prior to the event.

Public Relations reported on marketing items, tablecloths and pop-up banners. Suggested sites that carry promotional items was discussed and a follow-up email was sent to each board member. Rough estimates for items researched, \$191 for 72" Retractable Banners and \$160 for tablecloths.

C.Bails gave overview of the Electronic Communications Group which began as a committee and was upgraded to a Program Chair in July 2023. The VFN has purchased ten ZOOM licenses and can provide training as necessary. The goal for the group was to re-establish a WordPress based website. Every area has a communication administrator who is tasked with liaison between Area VP's, Chapters and the Board. The first draft copy of an information brochure was distributed to each board member. Everyone is encouraged to follow the VFN calendar for training opportunities as they are posted.

C.Bails spoke about team building among the board of directors. Refer to the written report to review the current accomplishments of the electronic group. Their current emphasis is on training and a training schedule is under development and will be distributed. A draft copy of the currently developed information trifold was distributed.

D.McAdams asked about branded email accounts. Any email can be created but we do not have a dedicated web server to host mail. We use a pass-through system and anyone wanting to use a branded email should contact S.Palen and he will set it up and give instructions how to use it with your personal email client. Yes branded email is available; however, end users need to know how to use it. HQs currently recommends using forms for communication instead of adding personal information on websites.

T.Pasek spoke about training which usually occurs on the 4th Wednesday of each month. He is currently the coordinator for all training developed for the VFN. The training committee is composed of a representative from each Area. Considerations made by the committee is: what are the subjects that are important, what do members need to know, and what are interesting subjects for future presentations. There is currently no budget item allocated for Training. A planned presentation on AI was discussed. T.Pasek w/2<sup>nd</sup> made a **MOTION** that the VFN will fund the VFN Training session on Artificial Intelligence to be presented by Lindsey Mastis. After an in-depth discussion surrounding payment and specific details the President entertained a **MOTION** by T.Rachele w/2<sup>nd</sup> to postpone further discussion and decision until 1/24 to give T.Pasek time to clarify if the presentation could be recorded. Unanimous Consent

L.Santiful, Chair of the Nominating Committee gave an unofficial report that there is currently a full slate; however, the committee has not reviewed all the nominee credentials. President, incumbent Frances Boatman; 1st Vice President, incumbent Larry Mcilwee and Deborah Fisk; 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, incumbent Patricia Wolfe; Secretary, Doris McAdams; & Treasurer, Jim Little. Chair will submit the official slate by February 7, 2024.

In Kathy Arpa's absence, D.Fisk read the Newsletter Editor highlights. Articles for the Spring Newsletter will be due on May 20<sup>th</sup> to cover November 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024 and should include a complete report of the VFN Conference. Per the approved October 2023 board meeting reports for AVP's should be submitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Program Chair reports should be submitted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. The cutoff date is April 30, 2024. The 2024 Annual Report will be due on July 20<sup>th</sup> and it covers July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

C.Bails gave an overview of the current progress of the Strategic Planning Committee. The committee is composed of: C.Bails, J.Bails, L.Ravenell, C.Graunke, L.Santiful, W.Hasty, and F.Boatman. Previous strategic plans (2013 & 2019 as well as the 2017 National) have been reviewed and there will be suggestions in future discussions. The team has assembled into groups concentrating on important

areas which consist of: Training, Affirmative Action, Gaining entry into federal agencies, changes in ADA regulations, etc. The ultimate goal is to develop the plan, find solutions, delegate and provide benchmarks. Emphasis should be on team building. Strong leadership is the responsibility of all. The vision of the board is carried on primarily by the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and the Area VP's. C.Bails asked that the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Area VP's commit as we prepare for the conference to make sure there are enough people to have a fair vote for Area Vice President at the conference or that the vote is postponed until a fair vote and accountability can be taken back in the area so that the best leader can be elected. Part of strategic plan benchmarks are to decide what needs to be done, but more importantly who is going to carry it out.

Bylaws Update given by J.Little. Pleased to report that the board was able to assemble a Nominating Committee; however, the current Bylaws Committee members have out served the 3-year term and new candidates should be found. In the future it is recommended that the 3-year term should be amended. Notification was made in the NARFE Jan/Feb issue about the conference and R.Allen will work to upgrade the notification for the Mar/Apr issue. The magazine gave official notification that the conference will be held and there will an election of officers and any Bylaw amendments presented by the membership. All former Bylaws Committee members have been invited to rejoin as a new committee is being organized. If there are any Bylaws amendments that may be proposed notification should be posted by June 7.

Handbook revision report was presented by J.Little.

**MOTION** by T.Pasek w/2<sup>nd</sup> to amend Handbook, page 14G Newsletter Editor paragraph 2 item 5 to strike /Secretary and leave President only. Item #5 to read "Obtain approval from President on the final editing of the newsletter. Unanimous Consent.

There was a recommendation to add the Bylaws Chair, Newsletter Editor, Network Coordinator, and Web Coordinator as voting members of the board. **MOTION** by B.Martin w/2<sup>nd</sup> due to the time of day and complexity of the item, including adding members, to postpone further discussion until 01/24 @ 9:00 am.

**Adjourn at 5:23 PM until 9:00 AM 01/24**

### **Reconvene meeting at 9:04 am**

President Boatman called the meeting to order and Sgt.at Arms J.Bails led the devotion.

President Boatman continued with unfinished business from yesterday's meeting.

VFN Payment - There was a **MOTION** postponed from 1/23 stated by T.Pasek w/2<sup>nd</sup> for the VFN Treasury to fund a VFN Training session on Artificial Intelligence to be presented by Lindsey Mastis on March 27, 2024 in the amount of \$250. During discussion D.Shackelford added an **amendment** w/2<sup>nd</sup> to make this a one-time event. Amendment was adopted (8 yes/4 no/3 abstain). **MOTION** for the VFN Treasury to fund a VFN Training session on Artificial Intelligence to be presented by Lindsey Mastis on March 27, 2024 in the amount of \$250. This will be a one-time event. w/2<sup>nd</sup>. Comments from the treasurer reminding fiscal responsibility, that items like this are not part of the budget, and are we setting a precedent?

There was a request by T.Pasek to withdraw the motion. Because the Motion currently belongs to the Assembly President Boatman called for a vote. Unanimous Consent to withdraw the motion.

A question was posed as to current policy and liability issues surrounding individuals paying for VFN speakers personally. There is no current policy. Further investigation on insurance coverage carried by the VFN. A reminder that we have an established training committee and chair and in the future requests similar to the motion just discussed should be brought to the board prior to commitments being made.

Handbook Review - A second postponed item brought forward from yesterdays discussion so that the board could be given time to review the document prior to a vote. A **MOTION** made by D.Shackelford to accept the Handbook as submitted with the newsletter editor amendment (approved separately) was postponed at the 1/23 meeting. A major concern was adding additional voting members to the board, i.e. newsletter editor, net coordinator, web coordinator, and Bylaws. The treasurer added that there could be a devastating financial implication to adding additional expenses to the budget. We have an estimated income of \$51,750 and estimated expenses to fund the 2024 conference is \$24,175. Estimated annual expenses run about \$75,000. Question about adding AV team to policy.

J.Little quickly went through the Handbook notating changes to include: page 5 – added Electronic Communications (seven program chairs); page 6 - Area VP's elected at annual meeting or other assembly (to be consistent with Bylaws); page 7 – removed reference to the ECC chaired by the 1<sup>st</sup> VP; page 8 – clarify items C.2,d. & e.; page 9 Treasurer to make changes for travel reimbursement consistent with GSA guidelines; Page 10 – reiterate that AVP elections can be held separate from the annual meeting; page 11 – added Electronic Communications to Article VII this Chair reports to the President; page 14 expanded Editor, Net Coordinator and web coordinator responsibilities; page 15 – Training Committee added with description; page 25 – added Appendix E “Newsletter and Annual Report Guidelines”.

**MOTION** by D.Fisk w/2<sup>nd</sup> to accept the Handbook as presented, notating the editor amendment previously passed, with the exception of page 4 (organizational chart). Unanimous Consent. No additional board members were added at this time. President Boatman to review the organizational chart, revise, and publish. **MOTION** by T.Pasek w/2<sup>nd</sup> to add the Electronic Communications Chair under the President to coincide with the Bylaws.

President Boatman shared that there is a current official policy concerning communication with National Only Members. Communications can be originated at the Federation level only. Chapters must refer to the Federation if there is information they want disseminated. You cannot use the NARFE system to contact NOM's with the exception of FEDHub.

T.Rachele presented a **MOTION** w/2<sup>nd</sup> to change the current rates that we are allowing for expenses reimbursement for mileage and per diem – mileage from \$.60 to \$.67 per mile, breakfast from \$15 to \$18, lunch stay the same at \$20, dinner from \$30 to \$36 per the current GSA and IRS guidelines, effective January 1, 2024. Motion Passed (14 yes/1 no)

W.Hasty added comments for future thought to think about scheduling some board meetings to be held via ZOOM to be more conservative on expenses. T.Rachele added that this conference was designed to draw members to the conference and will not be self-funding.

2024 Conference Ideas – presented by Missy Groppe and Larry McIlwee. Overview of the city attractions, the hotel sits on the edge of the JMU Campus, a very beautiful venue. Members are interested in the social aspects of NARFE so both business and pleasure will be intertwined. J.Little reported that there were 20 current registrants (15 online and 5 paper). The hotel has been very accommodating, the committee has been cooperative,

Round Table Discussion:

D.Fisk asked about the addition of the former William Martin Award. **MOTION** by D.Shackelford w/2<sup>nd</sup> to rename the 2022 William Martin Management Award to the VFN Management Award. Motion passed (10 yes/3 no/ 2 abstain) Members can make recommendations online.

C.Bails **MOTION** w/2<sup>nd</sup> to purchase a baby give for Morgan Canterbury Bowls, not to exceed \$50. Motion passed (8 yes/ 4 no/ 3 abstain)

Discussion agreed upon by the group that NARFE marketing needs to be more focused on the entire federal community.

D.Fisk asked that the addition of an AV or Technology Team could be investigated in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:28 pm

*Deborah O. Fisk*, VFN Secretary

02/24/2024