

NARFE Chapter 1192
February 2, 2022, Virtual Meeting Minutes

ZOOM PROTOCOL: *VP Nancy Crosby* – Nancy reminded members to:

- Use the “Reactions” icon – typically at the bottom of a screen – to speak and to wait for Chapter President Pat or the speaker to recognize them.
- To “unmute” when they wanted to speak.

CALL TO ORDER President Pat Turner called the virtual Zoom meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. She welcomed 18 members and 2 guests, WSF President Steve Roy and today’s program speaker, Jason Mercier. She said there was a “delightful virtual social time prior to the meeting, and that while meeting in person is preferred, Zoom is “the next best thing.”

Pat asked members who could stand to do so, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and then asked members to remain standing for a moment of silence for:

- All law enforcement officials and their families – may their service and sacrifice be respected and appreciated.
- Our military and civilians defending and protecting our country, and for their families – may they be safe.
- All who continue to provide us care and services so we can be safe, protected and live our lives each day – may they remain healthy and able to continue their work.

Introductions – Pat recognized chapter members David and Paulette Widener from Wisconsin and Sue Hopkins, who transferred from the now-closed Walla Walla Chapter 237. She also recognized today’s program speaker, Jason Mercier, who Mary would introduce.

CHAPTER MEETING PROGRAM Mary introduced Jason Mercier, director, Center for Government Reform, Washington Policy Center. Based in the Tri-Cities, Jason has been updating the chapter since 2017 while the state legislature is in session on state legislative issues and their impacts or potential impacts to Washingtonians. Jason’s op-eds appear in *The Seattle Times*, *Tri-City Herald* and other publications. He also provides regular updates on KVEW TV and can be heard on several radio stations, including KONA in the Tri-Cities.

Jason reported that this year’s legislative session is again fully remote, including for testimony. There are 3 options for providing testimony: 1) live – requires signing into Zoom sessions at least 1 hour ahead of scheduled testimony but that does not guarantee one will be able to provide testimony; 2) electronically voting for or against a bill, which will help let legislators know voters’ preferences; 3) providing written comments either via email or the link for testimony. Jason encouraged members to take advantage of these opportunities. He said, “If legislators don’t hear from us, we can’t complain” [about decisions made/legislation passed or not passed].

For the first time in the 20 years Jason has been with the Policy Center, he said the state’s base budget is balanced, and with billions of dollars in reserves. Further, the revenue forecast is for an \$8 billion increase since last year. The legislature is reviewing a number of options for spending some of the money – everything from changes to sales tax to property tax reductions, to removing sales tax from certain items, etc.

Other legislation/issues Jason highlighted included: “emergency powers reform” as currently there is no expiration time/time frame to end the governor’s emergency powers declaration; the excise tax on capital gains legislation that passed last year, which is basically an income tax and, therefore, not legal in the state; and, changes needed to the long-term care bill that passed last year. In answer to a member’s question, Jason also provided an update on why the significant increase in auto insurance premiums. [Note: Jason’s presentation slides are on the chapter website, www.narfe1192.org, under “Programs.” (**POC: Mary Binder**)

OFFICER/FEDERATION/DISTRICT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

President *Pat Turner.*

- Pat shared that she was pleased to read recently that NARFE's theme for 2022 is "The Next Century of Success." The focus will be on positioning NARFE "to be the premier source of federal benefits information and ever-vigilant advocates for your earned pay and benefits well into the future."
- Reminders – Check the chapter website, www.narfe1192.org, for minutes, newsletters, meeting programs, updates, etc., and the WSF website, www.narfewa.org, which also has updates, and current and historical information.

Vice President *Nancy Crosby.* Nancy provided an update on virtual vs. in-person meetings:

- For the February meeting, she notified the Red Lion Hotel catering contact a week before the meeting that the meeting would be virtual vs. in-person. The catering contact understood why the change and said "no problem." [By contract Nancy needs to make these notices no later than 7 days before a meeting to avoid the chapter being charged.]
- Nancy said she will continue to send electronic notices a week before a meeting if there is a change from an in-person to a virtual meeting. The notices are sent to chapter members with email addresses on file with NARFE and who receive electronic notices.

Treasurer *Liz Bowers.*

- As of February 1, the chapter had a combined balance in its Gesa Credit Union checking and savings accounts of \$17,665.08.
- The board approved/passed the chapter's 2022 budget, which is patterned after the 2021 budget.

Secretary *Mary Binder.*

- Mary and Johanna Caylor provided "sunshine" updates since the January meeting for Faye Vlieger who could not attend the meeting:
 - Get well card to Joe Wall, husband of member Darleen Wall.
 - Get well card to member Lorie Bennett.
 - Get well and happy 89th birthday cards to member Scotty Kruschke.
 - Thinking of you card to member Bill Hoyt.
 - Sympathy card to Lanny Ross, past Region IX VP, on the loss of his wife Jean.
 - Sympathy card to Lou Kush, past WSF legislative coordinator, on the loss of his wife Anne, recent past WSF treasurer.
- Mary reminded members that she was wintering south until latter March but is available via email and mobile phone – calls and text messages.

Newsletter/Public Relations *Mary Binder.*

- March/April chapter newsletter – articles/input due to Mary by Friday, February 11.
- Reminder: The 2022 NARFE Photo Contest entry deadline is February 28. The theme is "America in Focus." Contest details are in the January *NARFE Magazine*, page 44.
- Reminder: Information about the 2022 NARFE/FEEA Scholarship Program. [Note: Graduating high school seniors related to NARFE members – children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, stepchildren, etc. – who are planning to attend college in 2022 are eligible to apply. Applications must be submitted by Thursday, March 24, 3 p.m., Eastern Time. Essay theme for this year's application is: *What idea or issue are you most passionate about right now and why does it interest you?* Max number of words is 500.]
- Reminder: The current *NARFE Magazine* is for January/February. The next issue will be for March.

WSF President/Legislative/NARFE-PAC Chair *Steve Roy;*

VP/DVP I/The Federation Reporter Editor Mary Binder; Alzheimer's Coordinator Lorie Bennett.

- WSF President Steve – Steve thanked members for participating in the virtual meeting.

- He shared that 2 WSF chapters, Northwest Cascades Chapter 196 and East Lake Washington Chapter 1404, are in the process of closing. Also, Columbia Basin Chapter 0856 is in the initial stages of exploring closing. Steve said these are very difficult times for chapters due to lack of leadership, and COVID, too.
- Steve reported he has received some NARFE-PAC brochures/kits but for chapters needing/wanting more material for March/NARFE-PAC month, they can call NARFE at 800.456.8410, and then extension 3.
- The next WSF Advisory Committee meeting [elected and appointed WSF officers and coordinators] will be virtual, February 8, 10:00 a.m. All chapter and national-only members are invited to attend. Go to the WSF website, www.narfewa.org, to register.
- NARFE's national conference, **FEDcon22**, is scheduled for August 21-23, Westin Kierland Resort & Spa, Scottsdale, Ariz. Steve said the WSF board is exploring "scholarship" options for members wanting to attend. A decision will be made when more details are available on the conference.
- The federation will have a virtual statewide conference during October 9-12. Specific days, times and agenda are being worked. More details in the months ahead.
- On the legislative front, Steve said NARFE is encouraging members to contact their elected officials regarding co-sponsoring H.R. 82/S. 1302, the Social Security Fairness Act, and H.R. 6398/S. 3518, the FAIR Act. [Note: To date, 8 of the state's 10 representatives, including Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-04), and Senator Patty Murray, have signed as co-sponsors of H.R. 82/S.1802, which repeals both GPO and WEP. No state representatives or either senator have co-sponsored H.R. 6398/S.3518, which proposes "to increase the rates of pay under the statutory pay systems, and for prevailing rate employees, by 5.1 percent, and for other purposes."]
- Steve awarded Johanna a citation for distinguished service certificate for her efforts in scrubbing the federation's 2,300-member national-only list for members eligible for NARFE's distinguished member recognition, that is, members with 20/more years membership. Steve acknowledged the significant effort this involved and thanked Johanna for volunteering and for her diligence in completing the task. Besides finding members eligible for distinguished member recognition, she also discovered several names of deceased members.
- DVP I Mary – No additional updates.
- Editor Mary, *The Federation Reporter* – Mary still has a few b/w copies of the 2021 edition.
- Alzheimer's Chairman Lorie – Steve shared that Lorie is back in the hospital. On behalf of the federation, he wished her a speedy recovery.

Legislative Mary Binder.

- Federal updates – see update from WSF President Steve, above.
- State updates – provided by program speaker, Jason Mercier. See above summary.

NARFE-PAC John Wetterling. John provided several updates:

- Fourth quarter NARFE-PAC reports [for the period ending December 31] are posted on the NARFE website. John summarized report information on chapter, federation and region contributions and contributors, disbursements, and also NARFE-PAC goals for the 2021/2022 legislative cycle. While the mean contribution is up slightly, overall figures are down from the same period in the 2019/2020 cycle. This is due primarily to the drop in NARFE membership.
- Looking ahead, John reminded members that March is NARFE-PAC month. He highlighted some key issues NARFE is working on for federal employees and retirees, and encouraged members to make a PAC donation, especially during March.

Alzheimer's *Larry Williams*. Larry provided several updates:

- October 9 – the local Walk to End Alzheimer's, Kennewick. Larry said he will soon be registering the chapter's team. He will post information on the chapter website under "Events" on the activities page. [www.narfe1192.org.]
- February 9, Advocacy Day – elected officials are asked to support the Alzheimer's Association legislative priorities. This will be online or by phone using Zoom.
- March 5, Dementia Family Caregiver Conference in Lynnwood, Wash. This is a free conference. Contact Larry for more details
- May 18, Tri-Cities Alzheimer's & Dementia Conference, which will provide attendees with valuable education, information and resources – as well as inspiration and encouragement for the caregiving journey.

Webmaster *Larry Williams*. He will be posting Jason Mercier's presentation on the chapter website under "Events."

Service Officer *Ellen LeVee*.

- A reminder! For those with Medicare Part B, Ellen said they can file now for reimbursement, if their plan provides for this. Members do not have to wait until the end of the year.
- NARFE webinars – Ellen said the upcoming webinars are more geared for current employees, but she still wanted to highlight them. To note, all are at 2 p.m., ET, and free to NARFE members:
 - February 16, "Post Retirement Tax Planning for Federal Employees."
 - March 15, "It's Not Magic: Target Your Best Retirement Date."
 - April 6, "Preparing Retirement Forms: Costly Errors & How to Avoid Them."
 - All past NARFE webinars are archived on the NARFE website.

Membership *Johanna Caylor*. No report.

Sunshine *Faye Vlieger*.

- Mary and Johanna provided a report for Faye during the secretary's update.
- Johanna has Faye's material for sending out cards while she is out of town. Let Johanna know of anyone needing a card.

Caller Coordinator *Darleen Wall*. No report.

Old Business No old business.

New Business No new business.

Announcements Nancy said she just received a notice that Dick Hames had passed away. Several members on the call knew/worked with Dick. For Faye, Johanna said she would send a condolence card to his wife/chapter member, Judy.

Open Discussion John shared that in his experience trying to recruit members, especially younger federal employees, he has found that the "younger generation does not want to join." He has tried to highlight what NARFE is doing for them. "They do not know the value," added Nancy. Others attending the meeting agreed. John added that recently he got 3 of the extra *NARFE Magazines* from Ellen and provided them along with other NARFE informational material, and a letter and his business card to a USPS retiree who would be sharing the material with 2 other USPS retirees. To date he has not heard back. WSF President Steve recommended he follow up with them. Johanna asked to be kept in the loop [as the chapter membership coordinator].

Free Lunch Drawing Not conducted on virtual meeting.

50/50 Drawing Not conducted on virtual meeting.

February Birthdays No one attending the virtual meeting.

February Anniversaries No one attending the virtual meeting.

Next Chapter Virtual Board Meeting Tuesday, February 15, 10:30 a.m. All chapter members welcome. Non-board members – contact Nancy Crosby to attend; she will send the Zoom link.

Next Chapter Meeting Wednesday, March 2, Red Lion Hotel, Kennewick. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. for social time; meeting begins at noon followed by the program. If the meeting is changed to virtual:

- Meeting changes announced in emails, posted on the chapter website, or by the callers for local members who are on the meeting call list. Members with email addresses listed with the chapter will be notified a week in advance.
- For those new to virtual chapter meetings, contact Nancy if you need assistance and/have questions.

March Chapter Meeting Program A presentation on the Franklin County Historical Museum expansions. (*POC: Mary Binder*)

Closing Remarks *President Pat.*

- A Happy Valentine's Day, February 14, to everyone.
- President's Day is Monday, February 21. It is a national holiday.
- Winter is still with us – please remain extra cautious when walking and driving.
- Finally, remember to mask up, remain vigilant, and always, family first.

MEETING ADJOURNED 1:40 p.m.

Prepared by:

Mary Alice Binder,
Secretary