

MONTANA NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION

**P.O. BOX 4789
HELENA, MT 59604-4789**

MINUTES OF MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

HELD: 16 OCTOBER 2000

A meeting of the Officers and Board of Directors of the Montana National Guard Officer Association was held at 1600 hours on October 16, 2000 at building P1-517(Logistics building), Fort Harrison, Montana. The following Officers and Directors were in attendance:

LTC Peter Hronek, President
LTC Loren Oelkers, Vice President
LTC Steve Mehring, Executive Director
Maj. Jeff Ireland, Treasurer
Major Monte Boettger, Secretary (by telephone)
LTC Jonathan Jackson, Director
Maj. John Swanson, Director
Maj. Jim Oehmcke, Director
2Lt. Larry Gardner, Director
LTC (Ret) Doug Remick, Insurance Manager

The following guests were in attendance:

Maj. Nikki Dewolf, Chair, Scholarship Committee
Cmsgt Roger Larsen

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF MINUTES. The meeting was called to order by President Hronek. A motion to approve the minutes from 15 June 2000 was made by LTC Jackson, seconded by LTC Oelkers and unanimously passed.

COMMITTEE / OFFICER REPORTS

Financial Report. Maj. Ireland gave the financial report. There is a present balance of \$6191.48 in the Association=s bank account. This balance takes into account payment of the 1st and 2nd quarter stipends and all Association expenses to date. The budget is on track and the treasurer will follow up with periodic reports to the president. Maj. Ireland recommended adding a new line item in the budget for the annual conference seed money. Currently we are tracking membership dues separately from what we are paying to NAGUS. Thus far, we are under budget on scholarships. The insurance check for year 2000 has not yet been received. When it is received, revenues should also be on track.

Total expenses for the National Conference were about \$3000.00. Montana had 10 voting delegates in attendance at the Conference.

There was discussion that the Association approve a budget in January, 2001 so a proposed budget needs to be ready for presentation by that time. Items to include in the budget are an accurate amount for NAGUS as well as any amount we may desire to spend for legislative efforts/initiatives.

Stipends for the 3rd quarter 2000 have been budgeted. President Hronek approved payment of 3rd quarter stipends.

Membership Report. LTC Mehring gave the membership report. The Association is already taking dues for 2001. Information is available on the WEB site. Starting early should help us meet the goal of having at least 70% of the membership dues paid by February 1, 2001 in order to qualify for the rebate from NAGUS.

LTC Mehring stated that he would like to have a review of State dues. He has surveyed the dues structure of eight other states besides Montana. A chart showing this comparison was presented to the board. Most states have a different price for every rank. Georgia sets state dues at 50% of National dues. Others have a flat rate. For instance, Florida charges \$10.00 for all officers but also has corporate sponsorships. The highest dues rate was Georgia. On average Montana charges less than most of the states compared. Several states charge about the same as Montana. A few charge less. Florida, Illinois and Texas have flat rate of \$10.00 but they also have corporate sponsorship where companies pay \$500.00 - \$2500.00 each year to that state=s association.

This year the Association suffered an 8% decrease in members submitting dues over 1999. So far for 2001, 10% of Air have paid their dues. Three army officers have already paid for 2001.

Insurance Report. LTC (Ret) Remick gave the insurance report. LTC Remick reported that last year was a record year as far as revenues received from the insurance program. We received a refund of \$5000.00. However, this year the insurance refund will only be \$1300.00. The enlisted association will receive the same amount. The increase to \$200,000.00 in life insurance for members of the National Guard has had a major adverse effect on the insurance program. Many people do not feel that they need more insurance than what they are now receiving from the Guard. We are now getting older members and death claims are mounting up. Last year was the first year Montana did not have a claim. The insurance program contributed \$80,000.00 to the insurance pool yet we will only be getting back about \$1300.00. LTC Remick asked for any help and suggestions that might help this situation.

President Hronek noted that about one-half of the Association=s budget comes from the insurance program. We will need to plan ahead for this next year. LTC Remick was requested to estimate what amount the Association can expect to receive next year so that we can plan accordingly.

Scholarship Report. Maj. Dewolf gave the scholarship report. LTC Jackson, Maj. Dewolf, LTC Lynde and Capt. Seitz have been selected to act on the scholarship committee.

The scholarship money will be gone in June, 2001. This was funded by the legislature for \$250,000.00 for the biennium. We plan on asking for \$350,000.00 for the biennium beginning in the fall of 2001. Meanwhile, we will be gathering data from scholarship fund recipients to use in our efforts to both retain and/or increase funding. There are already 150 applications for scholarships this fall; 50 from Air National Guard and 100 from the Army National Guard. The goal is to have all of the scholarship money spent or pledged if at all possible before we present a proposal to the legislature. A letter campaign is planned to all state representatives about this to foster and encourage continued funding. We want to present information on how the program has helped recruiting and retention. We need support from as many people as possible to keep this program alive. The goal is to promote the image of the Guard in this whole process.

President Hronek emphasized the need to be proactive. The Association can help out in this process. The Association usually budgets \$1500.00 for NAGUS scholarships. We don't have to do this but we have chosen to do so. We have also pledged two \$250.00 scholarships to the Challenge Program. This could come out of the \$1500.00 or could be in addition to it. President Hronek indicated his desire to give Maj. Dewolf some guidance in this regard. It was discussed that the Scholarship Committee would look at this and decide what would be the best way to give out the money.

A motion was made that the Association have two - \$500.00 scholarships for the Scholarship Program plus one \$250.00 scholarship to the Challenge Program for 2001. The Scholarship Committee is to develop criteria for awarding these scholarships. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed. These scholarships will be awarded at the next State conference. President Hronek encouraged the Scholarship Committee to get the word out on these scholarships by January, 2001.

Executive Director=s Report. LTC Mehring gave the report.

National Resolutions the Association has chosen to sponsor have been added to the Web site. We have material relating to these issues. We want to start tracking those national resolutions that we have chosen to sponsor and updating their status on a periodic basis.

The next printed membership publication will go out in November with a dues statement included. We want to include as much information as possible in this mailing such as scholarship programs, etc. We also want to avoid too many mailings in order to save on costs. The goal is to send as much information as possible electronically. People with good email addresses will get all of this electronically.

LTC Mehring also reported that Col Cusker was asked by NAGUS to present a paper at the Conference. Col Cusker=s paper will be published on the Association WEB site. Lt Gardner=s report of his perspective of the National Conference attended this fall will also be published there. Membership statistics will be added to the WEB site, broken down year by year, so the Board can make comparisons and monitor membership status.

President Hronek commented that the Web site is a great tool to monitor Association activities.

State Conference Report. LTC Oelkers presented the report. The State conference will be at Chico Hot Springs next year. 90 rooms have been reserved. Old style rooms are available as well as new style rooms. The cost is \$90.00/night for new rooms and \$60.00/night for old style rooms. As developments occur LTC Mehring will be informed so that information can be posted to the Web site. Chico is an excellent facility with excellent food and great family entertainment. The registration fee is anticipated to be \$30.00. LTC Mehring asked for photographs of Chico that could be included on the Web page.

President Hronek reported that we will have another speaker from NAGUS at the conference as last year's NAGUS speaker was so well received.

Discussion was had on ways to boost attendance at the conference. It was decided that starting in January, 2001 weekly meetings will commence to work on ideas to increase attendance. One idea discussed was the possibility of chartering a bus from Helena to Chico. The Army challenged the Air side for attendance numbers at the 2001 conference.

OLD BUSINESS

Committee Appointments. President Hronek reviewed the membership committee assignments. Assignments for all committees have been posted on the Web site. President Hronek indicated that the Bylaws and Judiciary committees have been combined.

National Conference The next National Conference will be in Indianapolis, Indiana. It will not be held over labor day but rather will be in August before Labor Day.

NEW BUSINESS

2001 Legislative Plan: Cmsgt Roger Larson gave the report. Steve Hagen and Roger Larsen have developed a legislative plan for next legislative session. This is published on the Web site under ALegislative Voice@.

We are trying to be proactive. Cmsgt Larsen is the lobbyist for both the enlisted and officers Associations. Cmsgt presented a talking paper which is also on the Web site. Then number 1 issue to the TAG is the Challenge Program. It is an expensive program. We will be making a request for increased funding over the last biennium.

We are also going to try to keep the momentum going created by the fire season. The Guard and the state were lucky that there were no injuries during the fires of 2000. Issues such as workers compensation coverage, pay and similar issues need to be addressed before another similar type state emergency. We also need a complete overhaul of the State's active duty regulations. The Scholarship program is going to ask for \$350,000.00 (\$100,000.00 more than last biennium). We want this to be made a line item in the State budget so we don't have to re-fight this battle every two years. We are still in the process of refining these issues and looking at viable solutions to propose. Other issues will arise as time goes on.

We are sponsoring a military legislative session social meeting on January 10, 2001 starting at 1700

hours at Jorgensens, in Helena. We normally sponsor this legislative session social with the enlisted association. Each organization normally provides \$500.00. A discussion was held that we should look into alternative funding for this event. Maj. Oehmcke moved that the Association provide up to \$500.00 for this session social meeting. 1LT Larry Gardner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Cmsgt Larsen stated that he will forward updates on these matters to LTC Mehring for posting on the Web site.

President Hronek stated that last legislative session each Association gave \$1500.00 (total \$3000.00) to Roger Hagen. After the session each Association gave him \$750.00. His request for the 2001 session is \$2000.00 from each Association, for a total of \$4000.00. \$1500.00 has been budgeted for this. An increase in this line item of the budget is necessary if this is to be approved. President Hronek emphasized that we get a lot of bang for our buck from Roger Hagen=s efforts. LTC Jackson moved to approve an increase in the budget for these legislative efforts to \$2000.00. Major Swanson seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.

State Dues: President Hronek stated that he would like the directors to think about a bylaw change to increase dues. A dues increase would have to be approved by the membership. Even if a dues increase was approved at the annual conference in 2001, the budget would not benefit from this until 2002. President Hronek stated that he wanted the Board to take action on this issue by January, 2001. President Hronek stated that he would like a committee recommendation at that time. The Association needs to continue to support our legislative work and continue with the stipends. A \$5.00 dues increase would net about \$2000.00 per year. In light of the report on likely declining insurance revenues along with increasing costs, a dues increase needs to be carefully considered. Also, we need to pursue corporate sponsorship as another source of revenue for the Association. The Association needs to pursue these options to remain viable.

President Hronek also stated that we also need to concentrate on increasing our membership. If we increase our membership, this will also increase our dues/revenues.

These financial matters will be reviewed in January, 2001 along with a proposed budget for adoption. LTC Mehring will continue to look into these, especially the corporate sponsorship.

Membership Drive 2001. President Hronek wants to push this early this year. Fliers are already out now and more will be posted in January. Posters will be used to assist in reminding people. The goal is to get fliers out prior to the November drill. The November/December mailing will be kept fairly small and will emphasize dues. This will be followed up with a larger mailing later.

LTC Hronek reported that some members have expressed an interest in paying dues by credit card. We can offer this option as well as the ability to allow members to pay by credit card on the Web site over a secure link. This requires setting up a commercial account to process this. These electronic payments will also cost the Association 3% of the transaction. There would also be start up costs of about \$100.00 for a printer and terminal necessary to accomplish this. A discussion was held if doing all this is really worth the cost. It was suggested that members be polled to see what the demand is. The matter was tabled.

Last year=s membership drive resulted in a 100% enrollment on the Air side and 73% on the Army side. President Hronek stated that we need to push membership even harder this year. We need to stress the benefits of membership and the benefits that members receive as a result of being in the Association. We also need to continue to encourage senior leadership to be proactive in supporting NAGUS and the State Association.

New Award. President Hronek proposed establishing an award to an Army/Air non-board member who has been proactive in supporting the Association over the year. To be eligible the person would have to be an active member in the Association. President Hronek will work with LTC Oelkers to develop criteria on this. They will report back to the board at the next meeting with a recommendation for possible approval. This award, if approved, would be presented at the State conference.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be January 10, 2001 by at 1430 hours at Fort Harrison, Montana, building P-517 (Logistics building).

ADJOURN: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1730 hours.

J. Peter Hronek
LTC MT ANG
President