

## **Ramkota, Pierre, SD**

### **February 1, 2018**

Meeting was called to order at 1400 hours. Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Josh Wermers. President Wermers asked for a deviation from the agenda so that David Burr and his other representatives could talk about the updates on life insurance.

#### **LIFE INSURANCE**

David Burr presented information on the State Sponsor Life Insurance. The current checking account balance is at \$159,163.00, and in December 2016 there was 357 people insured. In 2017 they got 8 new policies, but lost another 32 which puts them currently at 333 members insured. Of the 32 losses, 9 of them were retirees that had reached the age of 65 so it was an automatic disenrollment. The big change this last year is that American Equity stepped out of the program and AFBA 5 Star stepped in. Representatives from AFBA 5 Star spoke about the program and the benefits. This program automatically gives \$1000.00 of coverage to everyone in the National Guard. It's free and it generally pays within 24 hours. The transition from American Equity to AFBA 5 Star took effect on 1 January 2018. We elect people to the trustee board, and currently there are 2 NCO's and 3 Officers which can change every year. Nancy Ausland suggested we need to figure out a way to increase the number of members insured and use that money or give it back to the association. We will have further discussion on investment ideas.

SDNG SEL CSM James Hoekman spoke about some updates in the National Guard at the National and State level. He talked about the term National Guard 4.0 which means a heightened readiness, a better use of resources, and training. He also mentioned some good incentives that came out with the recruiters on bonuses for specific MOS's. Another change he spoke about was the focus on training. The training we do has to be directly related to readiness and lethality. Training now focuses on 3 different things; physical training (PRT), weapons qualification, and warrior tasks and battle drills.

CMSgt Jeanne Gacke also spoke and her focus was on the Blended Retirement System. We need to ensure our Soldiers complete the training and make an election by the end of 2018.

#### **ROLL**

Roll was taken and the following members were present: Josh Wermers, Andy Meyers, Nate Hedin, Nancy Ausland, Erin Blom, Kayleigh Cihak, Jackie Dunlavy, Shane Wilkinson, Ken Carlson proxy for Chris Portice, Braiden Smith proxy for Jennifer Siebenahler, Alon Sorenson proxy for Charles Fincher, Rick Vandenhoeck proxy for John Leffring, Chad Brooks, Chad Hartley, Alex Raber, Brian Voight, Katie French proxy for Briana Grage, Anna Simons, David Frock, and Robert Aiken. Enough were present for a quorum.

## **MINUTES**

The minutes from the Executive Council Meeting at Cadillac Jacks in Deadwood, SD were presented. Nancy Ausland gave a motion to accept the minutes as printed in the last edition of the Echo and seconded by Nate Hedin. Motion carried.

## **TREASURES REPORT**

The treasurer's report was presented by our new Treasurer, Erin Blom. Past President Nancy Ausland introduced her to the committee. Erin officially took over in October 2017 and is going back as far as May to identify and correct any discrepancies. She is working with Pat Jones to finish the taxes from the period ending in April 2017. We currently have a \$600 fine from the IRS because our books have been out of sorts for a few years. The Audit is not complete for the period ending in April 2017. We are currently up to date on our national dues. Working to get everything input into QuickBooks. Current balances as of 28 January 2018 are as follows: Wells Fargo Checking \$20,318.25; Wells Fargo CD \$31,694.54; Wells Fargo Savings \$1000.36 Dakota Bank CD \$15,000; Air Guard CD \$5,035.13. Bruce Anderson and Nancy Ausland suggested that we complete one audit at the State conference for calendar year 2017 and 2018. Nancy Ausland made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented and a second motion by Zona Hornstra. Motion carried.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Membership Report – Will Hangman presented the membership report and as of this report we have 2370 members paid from all levels. This is a pretty significant drop in comparison to the last four years (2014-2696, 2015-3185, 2016-3166, and 2017-2651). Our life membership has increased from 443 last year to 471 this year. The biggest concern is the amount of units that were between 0-10% paid membership, which everyone can view on <https://sdngea.com/unit-goals>. Committee Members at Large and Membership Chairman, Will Hangman, completed all data input for Army funds, and the Air funds were input and processed by their membership representatives. There are still large amounts of inaccuracies in the physical forms such as correct rank, email address, and unit of assignment which makes doing the audit difficult. This proves the necessity of units to ensure their personnel fill things out correctly. Report attached. Motion to accept the report. Approved. Further discussion on membership covered the use of Stripe for data input and how we can ensure better accuracy.

## **DEVIATION FROM THE AGENDA**

TAG Update Brief – The Adjutant General, Major General Timothy Reich, addressed the attendees at the executive council meeting. He thanked everyone for the opportunity and for everything that our association does. Next he talked about some of his current State and Federal business. State budget was one of his topics, and there is one agency bill in this year and its House Bill 1043 which is asking for \$500,000. Some of this funding is to go towards a new building out at the Army Aviation Support Facility. Other bills that he touched on were lowering the drinking age to 18 years old for military members (this bill was voted down on the floor). He also spoke about a bill that would not require military personnel to have to apply for a pistol permit. On the Federal side he spoke briefly about the potential for a furlough and how it impacts our readiness due to Soldiers being sent home from work and schools. Overall

Readiness is another key factor and we continue to add more and more training requirements in order to sustain our readiness. The General was asked about his thoughts on the recent Title 5 changes. A lot of the positions were driven by size of the different sections and compatibility with civilian employment. His biggest concern is the reduction in our availability of experienced Soldiers. The goal was 20% and right now we've filled 12.6% of those Title 5 positions. President Josh Wermers thanked Major General Reisch for his time and his comments.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Committee Member At Large – Area 1 Kayleigh Cihak works full time in the Education and Incentive office and was able to talk about the Enlisted Association during SRP support. Her position allows her to promote the benefits to other Soldiers. Area 1 ended this last year at 72% overall for membership. Over the course of the next year the Area 1 Committee Member at Large is going to work closely with her BN Reps to do some unit visits and to stress the importance of the association. Motion to accept the report. Approved.

Committee Member At Large – Area 2 Jackie Dunlavy stated that she contacted and worked directly with her BN Reps for the Central Units covered in Area 2. Membership dues were received from all units except one that recently returned from deployment. Inputting membership dues into the SDNGEA website was a new experience, but the training that Will Hangman provided helped ensure that dues were successfully input prior to 31Dec2017. Even though the unit's numbers improved there is still room for improvement. By providing the units with education about the SDNGEA prior to next year's membership, we should be able to accomplish an increase. Motion to accept the report. Approved.

Committee Member At Large – Area 3 Shane Wilkinson noted that it has been a tough year attaining memberships in Area 3. There was one unit in particular that had a Soldier who discouraged his Soldiers from paying their membership dues. The endless struggle of encouraging Soldiers to pay versus the illegality of making Soldiers pay seems to be growing across the state. There is a need for better speakers and presentations to emphasize the pros and cons of being a member of the Enlisted Association. Also, there should be more emphasis from senior enlisted. Motion to accept the report. Approved.

Membership has to come from the top down and from the bottom up. Senior NCOs should lead by example, but Junior Enlisted Soldiers can be just as influential. We need to continue to mentor and encourage involvement in the Enlisted Association.

Committee Member At Large – Area 4: No Report

Committee Member At Large – Area 5 Ken Carlson proxy for Chris Portice presented that due to deployments and other events this last year the membership has suffered on the Air Guard side. However, during the November Turkey Feed they were able to raise \$304 from a 50/50 raffle which they will use to help pay for sponsorships. Area 5 plans on sponsoring two individuals and the Rising 6 also plans on sponsoring two people to attend the State Conference in Deadwood. Motion to accept the report. Approved.

The Legislative Report was presented by Don List and he spoke about current Senate and House Bills regarding Military and Veterans Affairs issues. Authorize Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for the design, construction and equipping of a state veterans cemetery in Sioux Falls. There is an Act to provide a special motor vehicle license plate for certain women veterans. A revision on certain provisions regarding administration of benefits provided to veterans. The driver's license issued to a person who is a member of the Armed Forces will receive an extension from the expiration date either 90 days after the service member is discharged or 90 days after the service member returns to the state. Copy of the report was filed with the minutes of this meeting. (A copy of the report will be posted in the ECHO) Motion to accept the report. Approved.

No Resolutions to report at this time. President Josh Wermers asked for any suggestions to be submitted before the State Conference in April.

Publications – Next ECHO deadline is 15 February 2018. Send all information to Nancy Ausland as Sarah Callies is out on maternity leave at this time.

The State Conference Sponsorship Committee Report was presented by Bruce Anderson. Please send names and numbers to Bruce. The Association can sponsor 2 individuals.

Shelley Reeder encouraged everyone to get registered for the State Conference in April. The Enlisted Conference will be held in Deadwood, SD April 19-21, 2018 at the Deadwood Mountain Grand. She also touched base on the National Conference that could potentially be held in SD for 2020. Shelley has been working with the Rapid City Business Bureau and has received a final proposal from the Civic Center. She is also working with various hotels to get some of their prices lowered. Has contacted other states to determine what's needed and what is provided by EANGUS. Working to have a proposal ready to present at this year's National Conference. Chad Hartley emphasized once more on getting registration forms sent in for this year's State Conference.

Scholarship report was presented by Nate Hedin. As of now he has only received 2 applications. The deadline for State scholarships is 1 March 2018. All of the information is located on our website and on the EANGUS site. Encourage your dependents to apply.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Best Warrior Competition update was presented by Josh Wermers. In the past we've tried moving the event to coincide with the Annual State Enlisted Conference so that we can cheer on the competitors, present the winners with a plaque, and encourage senior enlisted to attend the conference. However, we've lost attendance due to those assisting with the competition and those competing. This year the event will be held 6-8 April 2018 which is 2 weeks before the State Conference and then the competitors will be asked if they would like to attend.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Museum update was given by Josh Wermers. They are proposing a lot of big changes on the board; build a new building in either Sioux Falls or Rapid City. Looking for new people to sit on the museum board. Membership is funded by every Soldier paying \$1 each year, but it seems as if membership has been way down. President Josh Wermers asked if anyone was interested in sitting on that board.

Our new Treasurer, Erin Blom, had a few new topics to discuss. For starters, the bond company that we are under contacted Erin to see if we wanted to possibly increase. Currently ours is \$25k which costs us \$187 per year. Other options available: \$50k would cost us \$257 per year and \$100k would cost us \$359 per year. Nancy Ausland made a motion to increase the bond to \$50k and Bob Aiken seconded the motion. Motion approved to increase the bond to \$50k for \$257 per year. Item number two was to discuss the updated expense voucher. Will try to include something for mileage and have the new voucher ready by April. Next item is that we currently have a discrepancy of \$1000. There are issues between membership and treasurer. We need to have a better checks and balance system on deposits. Membership committee will work on inputting memberships within the same month of receiving them. Last item is to make sure you fill out your expense vouchers clearly so a check can be mailed to you. Include room receipts and mileage at .20 per mile.

Corporate Sponsorship was presented by Josh Wermers to increase revenue and help support the conferences. Multiple organizations have shown interest in becoming a corporate sponsor, and we as an organization have to come up with the guidelines. One option: Platinum Member \$750 (\$500 goes to the association and \$250 to the Conference host) with 3 full page ad in the ECHO, a booth at the State Convention, a plaque, and recognition on the website. Gold Member \$500 (\$250 to the association and \$250 to the Conference host) with 3 half page ads in the ECHO, a booth at the State Convention, a plaque, and recognition on the website. Silver Member \$250 (\$150 to the association and \$100 to the Conference host) with 3 quarter page ads in the ECHO and recognition on the website. Discussed who will manage this program. Nate Hedin makes a motion to approve the Corporate Sponsorship Program and that the duties and responsibilities be added to the State Conference Liaison and Nancy Ausland seconded it. Motion carried.

There was an extensive discussion about the Association assisting with the cost of the State Conferences. In the past, the Enlisted Association has provided the host town with \$1000 as seed money, but there is a stipulation as to whether or not this money needs to be paid back at the end of the conference. This information needs to be updated in the conference SOP. Erin Blom noted that this is an approved expense that gets calculated into the budget.

Briana Grage has submitted her name as Junior Enlisted for National and Area Rep. If anyone else is interested please submit names to Josh Wermers.

Future State Conferences: 2018 – Deadwood, 2019 - Sioux Falls Co-Located with the Officers, 2020 – Huron. Future National Conferences: 2018 – Charleston, West Virginia, 2019 – De Moines, IA, and hopefully 2020 will be in Rapid City, SD.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The date and time of the next Executive Council Meeting will be at the Deadwood Mountain Grand in Deadwood, SD on 19 April 2018 at 1600 hours.

With nothing further to discuss, Shelley Reeder made a motion for adjournment and Josh Wermers seconded. The meeting adjourned at 1645 hours.