



**THE NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF ARKANSAS**

P.O. BOX 663

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72115

**MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD**

**SUBJECT:** Minutes of NGAA Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting  
05 April 2022

**Officers Present:** (Either in person or by Zoom call) COL (ret) Damon Cluck (Exec Dir), MAJ Shalin Gieson (President), MAJ Trey Marable (1<sup>st</sup> Vice President), MAJ Krystle Browning (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President), LTC Sharetta Glover, COL Joel Lynch, MAJ Chris Purchase, LTC Matt Leimburg, LTC Noyal Brasfield, CPT LaPortia Jackson, 1LT Brad Barcafer, MAJ Mario Butler, CPT Daniel Berke, CPT Dalton Shannon, MAJ Ted Sharp, CPT Brandon Mazander, MAJ Mitch Goenner, 1LT Derrick Fletcher, SSGT Melody Daniel, MAJ Jason Kulaga, 1LT Brandon Garrett, 2LT Ashlyn Hendrickson, CAPT Kimberly Hunter, 1LT Wayne Merritt, LTC Will Phillips, and MAJ (Ret) Fred Lee.

**Others Present:** Elizabeth Jara (Staff), Robin Brady (Staff)

1. The National Guard Association of Arkansas (NGAA) Board of Directors convened a quarterly meeting 05 April 2022 after a quorum was confirmed to be in attendance. MAJ Gieson called the meeting to order.
2. Board Members were given copies of the following before the meeting. These documents are also attached to the minutes.
  - a. April Meeting Agenda
  - b. 09 November 2021 meeting minutes (not attached to these minutes, accessible on NGAA website or in person at NGAA)
  - c. Financial Report on NGAA State Conference 18-20 Feb 2022.
  - d. Proposed 2022-23 Budget.

**Old Business**

3. The 09 November 2021 NGAA Board of Directors meeting minutes were previously approved by the Executive Committee. There was no discussion.
4. **Insurance Report:** COL Cluck reported that there are approximately 8,400 in the Guard and around 3,600 are participating in the State Sponsored Life Insurance (SSLI) program. That is about 40% participating. The PHA's and Student Flights are the primary way we

see everyone. 5-10% of the people coming through the PHA's have had a policy that has lapsed due to change in pay status or other reasons and after 6 months of non-payment, they are terminated. During the unit visits that we have already done, 40% have enrolled for a new policy or upgraded their policy. That is an increase in revenue for NGAA of \$25,000 to \$30,000. This is why we are pushing unit visits. Cluck asked if anyone had questions about the insurance report. The report is for information purposes only.

5. **Conference Recap:** Elizabeth Jara reported that the NGAA State Conference in February was very successful. She sent out a survey to members and corporate sponsors to get feedback regarding the conference. 51 members responded. 242 military and spouses attended. 60% of those responded were Army NG and 40% were Air NG. The Top Golf event on Friday was great for comradery. The Friday night event needs to be better as far as visiting exhibitors. The corporate sponsor survey was good. Everyone got to network with other leadership. They liked the exhibit space. The hospitality suites were a plus. The corporate sponsor dinner held at Crystal Bridges was great and everyone scored it a 5 on a scale 1-5.

**Conference Budget Review and 2022-23 Budget:** COL Cluck discussed fees charged for the conference. The conference is not a money-making event. He asked for questions about the conference budget. We made money on the Top Golf event. We used that to pay for the Gold Star families' expenses and lodging. The Foundation reimbursed the Association \$2,500 for that. Cluck hit the highlights of the proposed budget so it can be discussed and hopefully approved. We are behind on membership. We have about 90 more people that need to pay dues. One reason we are off is because we have sold 105 lifetime memberships. NGAUS rebate has gone up because of the digital lifetime memberships. Insurance commissions are expected to be higher. We expect increased commissions with Colonial Life and TransAmerica. We are in an insurance pool with 15 other states. For the first time, this year we will not receive an Experience Refund because the pool did not have a profit due to claims. Cluck discussed the Foundation Support Agreement. We are moving offices around in the NGAA Building so we can lease out the former insurance office to one of our corporate members, Trident University for \$12,000 to \$14,000 per year. We are still negotiating the lease. Cluck asked for questions about the sublease. We would like to use this money for upgrades to the building, for repairs and remodeling. Trident wants the bigger space for classroom space and would like to offer services to guardsmen such as resume prep and other services.

We got an A&P grant from the Springdale Chamber of Commerce in the amount of \$5,000. COL Cluck asked for any questions on revenue sources on the budget.

For the 2023 budget, projecting revenues are \$289,230. Cluck discussed differences in budgeted and actual expenses. Two employees left this year and leave was paid out. That is why we were over. We eliminated the Office Manager position and Tim McRae is our new Benefits Coordinator.

COL Cluck discussed that he has previously resigned as Executive Director for the NGAA effective 01 July 2022, and we need to hire a new ED. He discussed the fact that he was not being paid a salary in his position until about July of 2021 because the Association did not have the money. Since then he has been working about 20 hours of week at a salary of about \$400 weekly. To hire a new ED you've got to appoint a committee to put out the advertisements and do the interviewing. The Association needs to approve the ED salary in advance. COL Cluck noted he has increased this budget item to allow the Association to pay a new ED a salary of \$65,000. We are combining the positions of office manager, ED, and Elizabeth's position as Development Director. A question was raised if we hire a new ED from another state, does that mean Elizabeth's position will go away? Cluck stated that if that happened, the Association would have to come up with another \$20,000. Elizabeth stated that no other state has a Director of Development. When Elizabeth previously applied for the ED position she approached the executive board about creating the position of Director of Development. When she started in her position, the first year corporate sponsorship was about \$25,000, then \$48,500 last year, and its \$100,000 this year. Ordinarily, that's the ED's job. COL Cluck stated that if you look across the 54 states, every state has a State Sponsored Life Insurance program but they are not all equal. Of the 54, 26 of them self-administer their life insurance programs like Arkansas does. Those other 28 sometime in the past gave away or contracted away their program. In most of those states, the Association gets 5% of the premium. They get 0% profit sharing. Their participation rates are 15-20%. Of the 26 that self-administer like we do, all of the 100% states are in that category. The insurance funds an office staff for you. Having an office staff lets you do events and have other things going on. We have been getting by and not paying competitive salaries. We have got to get competitive and we need a full-time ED. COL Cluck asked for any questions. LTC Sharetta Glover commented that we know now what we need to do because of COL Cluck and what he has done by digging into the budget and reevaluate it.

COL Cluck continued with proposed budget items. Building insurance was going up significantly so we rebid that and saved money on that. We have workers compensation insurance. We carry E&O insurance on the Board. We carry cyber insurance to pay in case of a breach of our server and we pay for a crime policy in case of employee theft. We spent more than we budgeted for corporate travel but it paid off. He went over insurance travel and how that is applied. COL Cluck asked for questions. He then

discussed conference budget for next year and NGAUS conference. He did not include a line to cover expenses for company grade officers this year like we did last year although he thinks it is a great idea to do this. There was discussion on the TAG paying to send people. There was confusion with this at the last NGAUS conference. Promotion Activity has been used for comradery calls. Proposed budget shows a loss. The Association has actually benefitted financially from not having conferences the past two years. We are in a little better financial shape than we were. COL Cluck discussed the strategic fund account and why we don't need to have as big a reserve now. He recommends that we reduce that strategic fund by \$50,000 and transfer that money to our set aside account. That will make up for the deficit in this proposed budget. An experience refund is expected next year and will probably be \$50,000-\$100,000. Elizabeth expects to exceed our number in corporate sponsorships for next year.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed 2022-23 budget. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

COL Cluck asked for a motion to approve the salary for the next ED at \$65,000 per year. A motion was made and seconded. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

COL Cluck asked for permission from the Board to negotiate the lease for office space at the front of the building. A motion was made and seconded. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Elizabeth Jara talked about digital life membership. We are at 90% membership. So reps, please check the spreadsheet for accuracy and let us know if there is someone on your sheet that is not in your unit. We have been at 100% membership for 17 years so we need to continue that. COL Cluck talked about numbers mattering when we go to our legislators.

Elizabeth Jara went over corporate sponsorship numbers. We are at \$96,500 right now and \$104,500 is projected when everything is in.

## **New Business**

6. Elizabeth Jara reported on site visits in Jonesboro for next year's conference. Friday event will be a fundraising event. This year it was for our Gold Star families and there was a lot of support for that. This next year we will be working with Michigan. Their ED is putting together a program he calls 54 by 24. This is to provide a service dog for a veteran in every state. Michigan is hosting NGAUS in 2024 so they would like to see a service dog in every state by that year. Elizabeth discussed OPD options. Suggestions

are welcome. Elizabeth and COL Brian Shipman have been brainstorming on leadership option ideas. She discussed comradery options. Ben Moore of Edward Jones is coming back to sponsor the hospitality suite. The ice sculpture and taco bar were great. Scott Mann was very well received. Elizabeth is concerned about competing with the state of Tennessee for corporate sponsors since the conferences are the same weekend. What we have in Arkansas that is special to us is that we've got the Winston P. Wilson shooting match. There are sponsors that target that kind of audience and they are going to allow us to handle the exhibits at those events and we will sponsor the international dinner night. Our corporate sponsorships are going to be revamped this year. We are going to need to pull in more from our corporate sponsors to cover costs. Support the posts on social media concerning our corporate sponsors so they will know their investment is worth it and they are getting noticed and are appreciated. Elizabeth reported that we will have a Rock & Roll theme for NGAUS so wear your favorite band t-shirt. Elizabeth displayed the new pin design going on the Rock & Roll theme featuring a Razorback hog.

Elizabeth stated we want to do more for the members. We would like to do more comradery calls. We need to build friendships between each other. We got positive feedback from the comradery call we did in Fort Smith. They were grateful for the opportunity to just hang out. We are looking forward to going in the other areas.

We are serving the state of Arkansas but we also feel better when we are doing community service. There are the Dragonboat Races in June at Lake Maumelle. NGAA will have a 20-man team. It is for the benefit of the Child Protection Center which provides support for children who have been taken out of their homes for various reasons. It gives us a chance to give back to the community.

In October, there is the Army 10 Miler. We would like to try to do a guard family day and ask our corporate sponsor Nabholz to feed us. They have been wanting an opportunity to do this.

COL Cluck reported on food distributions with the Enlisted Association and Veterans Villages. We have had four events and built 200 boxes and fed 2,800 families last year. Those events make a huge impact on our younger guardsmen. He encouraged everyone to participate in these events when help is needed.

MAJ Gieson asked if there was any other business for discussion or questions. A motion was made to adjourn and seconded. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.