

Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the National Association of Rocketry

July 21, 22, 25, 2016

The meeting was called to order before NARAM-58, Thursday, July 21, 2016 at the Lamplighter Inn North in Springfield, Missouri, at 7:40 PM. Trustees present: Ted Cochran, president; John Hochheimer, vice president; Tom Ha, treasurer; Ryan Coleman, Ed LaCroix, John Lyngdal, Mark Wise. Members absent: Joyce Guzik, Vince Huegele.

John H. moved to approve minutes from February 2016 BOT meeting. John L. seconded. Approved unanimously.

The meeting was called into executive session. The topics of discussion were related to NAR Headquarters, insurance claims, and plaques to be awarded at NARAM.

Executive session ended at 7:51 PM, and the regular meeting continued.

Member Concerns

Jack Kane, Standards and Testing co-chair, submitted a letter regarding altimeter testing and calibration. The Board elected to defer discussion until the S&T portion of the agenda.

Membership

Ted C. noted that membership was about 6510 as of the date of the meeting, and had exceeded 6650 over the past few months, which is higher than expected. He has observed a trend that NAR gets a lot of new Leader members from TARC and SLI, which appears to create a membership bump in the September-October time frame. This looks to be a steady trend over the last eight years of year-over-year growth.

National Events

NARCON 2016 appears to have broken even financially, based on the fact that the event director has not requested any reimbursement. Ed L. reported that the host sections for NARAM-57 made about \$400.

John H. reported that NSL was “awesome.”

The Board discussed whether cash awards at NARAM in lieu of trophies or medals were a good idea and should continue. John H. suggested we pre-question some individuals who were at NARAM-57 to get a general sense of member opinion before deciding whether to bring it up at the town hall.

Ted C. said that NARAM-58 was going well so far, and that John Buckley has done an excellent job of pulling people together to run the event. Getting six sections to cooperate to put on a national event is no small task, and John has done it well.

NARCON 2017: Trip Barber is the event director. A hotel has been contracted and a website has been set up.

Pat McCarthy has indicated that he would like to host NARCON 2019 in Florida. Board members discussed the possibility of holding NARCON in Seattle in 2018, but agreed that we would need to take care that any arrangements with the Museum of Flight would be mutually beneficial for NAR and MoF.

NSL 2017: We have a strong lead for a host and site in the Southwest.

NARAM-59: We have no bids yet. John H. believes that NARAM-59 should be on the East Coast, to balance the number of events that have been held in the Midwest and West over the past few years.

Ed L. expressed the need to perform preventive maintenance on the NAR's range gear after NARAM. Ed will take over the "quartermaster" duties from John H. John suggested being careful with the gear that gets shipped to the host section well in advance of NARAM, since equipment (especially the PA system) is susceptible to damage if pressed into service before NARAM.

Ed L. would also like to update the National Events Handbook, based on his work with NARAM-57. Some discussion ensued as to what would be required. The current version is on the website, but is considerably outdated.

Headquarters

Ted C. called Marie Stumpe at 8:07 PM. We discussed the mechanics of handling family membership renewals, whether we need to publicize HQ's ability to look up member numbers and HPR certs, and the number of requests for reprinted membership cards (usually three or four per cycle).

Contests and Records/FAI

Ted C. observed that the report seemed "a little moot," as NAR competition is about to change drastically.

The U.S. team will travel to the World Spacemodeling Championships in Ukraine later this summer.

Standards and Testing

Dan Wolf is carefully testing altimeters, and has prepared an R&D report on the subject. His work will serve the NAR's purposes with respect to the testing of altimeters, so that the standing S&T committee can concentrate on motor testing.

Board members discussed the question of temperature compensation of altimeter readings, and whether the NAR needs to designate a standard thermometer. Ed L. volunteered to examine the issue.

John L. expressed concern over excessive delays in initial motor testing, which have left motor manufacturers with not-yet-certified motors that they cannot legally sell. The board discussed approaches for resolving the problem.

The meeting recessed at 9:10 PM.

The meeting resumed at 0830 Friday, with the same members present.

Technology

Server Switch: Many people went without NAR e-mail for a week, but all accounts are now functioning. We now have more control over our website and e-mail hosting.

Section Renewals/Site Database for Insurance: It took five iterations to get all sections successfully renewed. Renewal information is automatically pushed to Bob Blomster, who then faxes or e-mails insurance certificates to sections. Personal insurance certificates are now available through the Members Only section of the NAR website. The process will largely be the same next year, but we will want a way for sections to confirm that their launch sites haven't changed.

National Events Microsites and Registration Sites: HARA used the registration and national event microsite for NSL. They reported that it worked well. Ryan C. thanked Tom H. for setting up PayPal registration links to the NAR PayPal account. This saves the NAR money.

NARTS: Ryan is still working with NARTS to get them to transition to the webstore. NARTS needs volunteer time to input the data and vet the site before switching over. All items are in the site, with prices.

Technical Bibliography: We are making progress. NARAM 58 R&D reports will go to Ryan for inclusion in the collection after oral presentations during NARAM.

NAR Magazine Archives: The volunteers for the archive project have all been busy, so progress is a bit slow, but continuing.

RCP System: The system worked as expected. Fewer members voted on RCPs this year (approximately 50 instead of the usual 100 or so), but Ryan doesn't believe this was due to any technical issue.

Board of Trustee Voting: Voting went well.

Grant Award Applications: Many came in electronically this year. Joyce Guzik had no problem collecting them and distributing them to the judges.

Actions: We need to find more volunteers to continue scanning back issues of *Sport Rocketry*. The current scans have all been OCR'd. According to Ryan and Tom, the optical character recognition works quite well.

Member Submitted Blogs: Ryan reports that they are ready to use. He envisions the blog as a site for materials that doesn't belong in the magazine, for launch reports that no one else will read, plans, and technical documents. It *will* be moderated.

Competition Rules Discussion Forum: The necessary plugins aren't compatible with the most recent version of Wordpress. Jon Bolden is working on it, and reports making good progress. It should be ready at or after NARAM. Ed L. hopes that the competition committee members will moderate the forum. Ed observed that the review of the new competition rule book will replace the coming RCP cycle, and that the board will have approval authority over rule changes, per the NAR's bylaws.

Pending/Backlog of Items to Work on/Priorities: We can always use more volunteers. Some committees have a stronger web presence than others. Ted C. suggested that the next microsite priority could be emphasizing a web presence for new sections, particularly TARC and SLI sections. This might also be the time to re-do Contest Manager to make it compatible with the "new" Pink Book and new contest

format, and put it on the website. The QR code for “Join the NAR” is up on the NAR website, and sections can start using it in their brochures. Ted expressed the Board’s thanks to Ryan for all of his work.

Section Activities

In his report to the board, Section Activities Committee chair Randy Boadway suggested a one-time monetary benefit to sections to recognize meeting targets for Bronze, Silver, or Gold status. The board’s consensus was that the sections qualifying for recognition were unlikely to need the money.

Tom H. suggested a monetary incentive to help a section reach the Bronze level, rather to stay there or to move on to Silver or Gold. John H. pointed out that we’ve never turned down a section grant application, so an incentive may not even be necessary.

The board elected to defer any decision on the Section Recognition program to a later date.

The section grant program continues to work well. Randy Gilbert has administered 20 grants this year.

Education/TARC

The board discussed the recommendations in the Education Committee report. Vince Huegele is doubtful about the usefulness of NAR participation in the National Science Teachers Association conference, and suggested we discuss whether any future participation is worth the expense.

Nine teachers have completed the narTcert qualification.

The 4-H and CAP partnerships yielded 12 and 7 TARC teams, respectively. Vince sees a slow improvement in rocketry awareness in CAP.

TARC enrollment posted the strongest numbers since the program’s first year, with 789 teams registered.

There were 20 first-time NAR volunteers for the TARC finals this year. Trip sees this as a good sign for the future.

Museum of Flight

Pat Fitzpatrick would like the NAR to support MoF outreach more than we are currently doing. The board agreed that we could provide something extra because of the MoF partnership, but that we will draw a distinction between MoF-sponsored events and traditional section outreach.

John H. pointed out that all NAR gets from the partnership is an exhibit, which we partially paid for, and that the partnership is essentially one-way.

Financial Review

Tom H. is continuing to transition NAR’s accounts to Collins Federal Credit Union in Iowa.

Tom reported a continuing problem of deposits coming in with no information as to the reason for the deposit. This necessitates too much extra work on his part as he tracks down the deposits.

John H. asked about ways to reduce our liability exposure in the face of a potential “bad actor” writing bad committee checks. Tom explained the safeguards he has in place, namely to keep the number of authorized check writers low, and not keep excessive amounts of money in the checking accounts.

As an additional safeguard, Tom suggested a caveat in the next edition of the National Events Handbook, letting people know that *they*, not NAR, are liable for any contracts they sign.

Tom’s summary: NAR is in good financial shape and is gaining members. We are still spending money, but not as much or as rapidly as we would like.

The meeting recessed for lunch at 12 noon.

The meeting resumed at 1:15 PM.

Special Committee to Reinvigorate Competition

Ed L. presented the proposals of the committee. Extensive discussion ensued over the events selected for the Spacemodeling Qualifier Series (SQS), sanctioning competitions, and a replacement for the Pink Book. Ted C. expressed his thanks to the committee members present (Ed LaCroix and Scott Alexander) for their continuing work.

The board discussed how to modify the RCP process to reflect submitters’ concerns and provide a chance to edit an RCP after the comment period had closed but before submitting the RCP to a vote. We want the author of the RCP to have the opportunity to adjust the RCP to clarify its intent or improve its chances of passage.

John H. talked about the possibility of the members’ RCP votes being advisory (but not binding) to the Contest Board, who would make the final decision.

Actions/Motions

John L. moved that Board agrees to present the new contest rule book at NARCON 2017, and enthusiastically commends the committee for its work to date. John H seconded. Passed unanimously.

John H. moved that the rule enacted at NARAM-57 limiting team size to three members be rescinded. Tom H. seconded. Passed unanimously.

Meeting recessed at 3:53 PM, to resume after the Monday evening NAR Town Hall.

The board reconvened Monday evening at 8:05 PM. Members present: John Hochheimer, Tom Ha, Ed LaCroix, John Lyngdal, Ryan Coleman, Mark Wise, Carol Marple.

The incumbent members welcomed newly-elected trustee Carol Marple.

John L. nominated John Hochheimer for president, Ryan Coleman for vice president, Joyce Guzik for secretary, and Tom Ha for treasurer. Carol M. seconded. Passed unanimously.

John H. proposed appointing John L., Ryan C., and John H. to the Executive committee. Met w/unanimous approval of board.

John H. set goals for his tenure, including maintaining momentum on national events, continuing to make the NAR as stable as possible, ensure stability in core services, increase the NAR's presence on social media, and start planning for the next generation of NAR leadership.

John H. will take over any trustee liaison positions previously held by Ted Cochran.

Ryan C. will replace John H. as National Events chair. Carol M. expressed an interest in assisting.

Mark W. moved to adjourn. Tom H. seconded. Passed unanimously.

The Board meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM.

The Board will reconvene before NARCON in Chantilly, Virginia on February 23, 2017.