

NAR Trustee Working Session

May 2, 2024

Session started at 8:02 PM.

Present: John Hochheimer, President; Steve Kristal, Vice President; Mark Wise, Secretary; Andrew Bean; Don Carson; Becky Green; Emi Sears; Lynn Thomas; Jim Wilkerson.

Absent: Kevin Johnson, Treasurer; Jasper Barnett.

Others present: Chuck Neff, Section Activities Chair; Pat Gordzelik, Level 3 Coordinating Committee Chair.

Todd Schweim, NAR Communications Director, managed the technical aspects of the meeting and provided input as appropriate.

Friends of Amateur Rocketry (FAR) Discussion

John informed the Board that Tripoli is no longer insuring launches at the Friends of Amateur Rocketry's launch facility ("FAR Site"), which raised a question whether NAR, specifically our insurance, has any connection to FAR's activities.

John began the discussion by pointing out that NAR's insurance is tied to our safety codes, and activities at the FAR Site do not comply with the HPR Safety Code:

- The site is not compliant with the launch distance requirements in the HPR Safety Code.
 - While the FAR Site has bunkers that theoretically provide protection from a launch mishap, that is irrelevant to the NAR HPR Safety Code, which makes no mention of bunkers.
- Other activities at the FAR Site that are not permitted under the Safety Code include propellant mixing and the use of liquid fuels.

Pat Gordzelik is the NAR L3CC Chair and a licensed insurance agent, who also served on the Tripoli board for 12 years. He noted that FAR's safety culture is less stringent than that of the Experimental Sounding Rocketry Association, which TRA supports. He was particularly concerned that the FAR Site allows people inside the bunker who are not directly participating in the hazardous activities in the bunker. He sees FAR activities as "an accident waiting to happen." He expressed his concern that any NAR support of FAR could leave NAR vulnerable to a multimillion-dollar insurance claim.

John said that NAR needs to separate activities that members *participate* in under our insurance from *observing* activities not covered by NAR insurance. Merely observing is not a concern, in John's estimation.

Steve asked about liability at a joint TRA/NAR launch. Would NAR be sued after an incident involving a research motor? Pat said that the concern is that FAR has *no* insurance whatsoever.

Emi asked if the rocketeer responsible for a mishap could be sued personally. Pat replied that the lawyers will go after anyone they perceive to have money.

Jim suggested a statement that reminds our members that their NAR insurance only covers them for activities that are covered by our insurance (that is to say, activities that are compliant with applicable NAR Safety Codes).

John pointed out that FAR might not be the only site of concern. He gave the example of an incident involving a drone at a NAR launch, which would not be covered by our insurance.

Steve and Mark suggested that an article in the *Electronic Rocketeer* and a post on the NAR website post could inform our members of the issue. Jim suggested posting to our social media sites, as well. John will talk to Bob Blomster, our insurance agent, and work on an appropriate statement. Todd suggested updating the Insurance FAQ page on the NAR website and alerting members to the change.

Pat departed at 8:31.

Concerns with Local NAR Support of NASA Student Launch

John said there have been a couple of issues of concern with respect to Sections supporting NASA Student Launch teams during their scheduled launches. He gave the example of a college team showing up at a NAR launch with a rocket, but the Section does not allow the launch for safety or other reasons. This leaves the students angry at the local Section and the NAR, and the Section is angry with the NAR for putting them into a difficult situation. John emphasized that that not all members and Sections are equipped with the knowledge and experience to support these efforts. These groups are being incentivized to attempt cutting-edge things, but the sponsoring organizations are not communicating with NAR to let us know what's going on. John sees this as unfair to the college teams and local Sections both.

Jim suggested that Emi, Andrew, and Jasper collaborate on guidelines for college teams, especially how to reach out to NAR Sections and work with them successfully. Emi said that she would be happy to work on it, and she has a few ideas of her own. She added that there are two main "buckets" of students: Researchers, and students attempting high-power certifications. The needs of the two "buckets" are not the same. She said that some research groups should not be working with NAR or Tripoli because of the work they are doing and the attendant safety considerations. She suggested directing such groups to people who can help, such as college faculty. Jim remarked that that would be helpful in managing expectations. John added that students are not the only people showing up to certify, and that we need to broaden our view to include non-student rocketeers coming to a launch to certify and requiring assistance.

John said that the info we pull together and put out needs to be twofold – to the students and to the Sections (so that *they* know what's going on). John asked Becky to join Emi, Andrew, and Jasper on this project, based on her extensive experience with student groups. She agreed to do so.

Youth Protection

A member contacted NAR, needing insurance against sexual assault/sexual misconduct to secure a launch site. John said that the member became annoyed when they were informed that NAR did not carry such insurance and did not intend to obtain such insurance for reasons of cost ("Sexual Misconduct and Molestation Liability Insurance," as it is called, would increase NAR's insurance premium by at least 50%, per Bob Blomster) as well as the effort involved in implementing such a policy. John said that we need to have a group work on this as soon as possible to provide guidance to members and Sections.

Section Activities Chair Chuck Neff is concerned that it is just a matter of time before more and more jurisdictions start requiring this insurance in order to obtain and retain launch sites. John says that it is important to make the youth protection issue clear to Sections, and provide a list of do's and don'ts (no adult alone with a child, for example – even to retrieve a rocket) to prevent even the perception of a problem.

Steve is working on a guide and welcomes input.

Trustee Onboarding Packet

Don asked John if the guide for new Trustees was ready to release. John said it was fine, and to go ahead and send it out. John added that we should think of it as a living document and update it as necessary.

Communication Between Competition Communities

Don asked about communication between the NAR's FAI and NRC competition communities. Are they talking to each other? There has been some talk about discussion between the two groups. FAI participants communicate via e-mail only, while the NRC community has access to the NAR website. How do we bring new FAI participants, particularly Seniors, into the FAI e-mail loop? Steve said that he has a current list of FAI Seniors, but that the question is whether and how to promulgate it. (He added that this is not a problem for FAI Juniors.) Todd said that a post to the member forum would be helpful. Steve suggested that we add an FAI section to the competition page of the new NAR website when it goes live. He also suggested pulling people from both communities together at NARAM to discuss matters. Don and John both supported this idea.

The next planning session will take place on June 5, 2024 at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

Meeting adjourned at 10:07 PM.