

Military Officers Association of America
El Paso Chapter



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
January 2021

A meeting of the El Paso Chapter of the Military Officers Association (MOAA) was held 30 January 2021 via conference call.

Attendance:

President: COL (RET) Mike Hester
Secretary: Col (RET) Steve Barrett
Treasurer: ROTC/JROTC: LTC (RET) Dave Powell
Chaplain/Surviving Spouse Liaison: Ms. Connie Sullivan
Legislative Liaison: CW2 (RET) Dave Garcia
Public Relations/Door Prizes: LTC (RET) Martha Caldwell
Membership Chairman: CPT (RET) Steve Mendoza
Marketing Manager: CPT (RET) David Thackston
Chapter Staff Emeritus: COL (RET) Lennie Enzel
Outreach Foundation Vice-President: LTC (RET) John Robbins

1. Administrative: The meeting was called to order at 0803. Chapter Chaplain Connie Sullivan provided the invocation.
2. President's Remarks: COL (RET) Mike Hester no significant remarks.
3. Old Business:
 - A. Secretary: Col (RET) Mike Hester provided minutes from the Jan 2021 BOD meeting which were approved as written.
 - B. Treasurer: LTC (RET) Dave Powell provided multiple inputs:
 1. He referred all to the financial reports he emailed to everyone and reported there is a significant error on the Balance Sheet that he is researching; he will review all transactions for this calendar year to identify the error with a goal of providing corrected data in the next reports.
 2. Since he now has online banking access (following the recent account transfers), he will begin using near real-time data for the monthly reports vice the previous process of reporting data using the previous month's statements.
 3. LTC (RET) Powell referred to the Profit and Loss Statement and highlighted the higher-than-normal printing costs which were due to printing the December Border Bulletin fully in color. Printing in black and white has cost approximately \$360 compared to the color costs this month of \$1,220.
 - C. Immediate Past President: No report, COL (RET) Forrest Smith was absent.
 - D. Membership: CPT (RET) Steve Mendoza provided multiple inputs:
 1. He expressed his full support for printing the Border Bulletin in color.

2. CPT (RET) Mendoza then stated he had seen an email from LTC (RET) Bill Moore indicating LTC (RET) Moore had given LTC (RET) Powell CDs generated by MAJ (RET) Ed Stone that reflected the duties associated with each of the BOD positions. CPT (RET) Mendoza indicated he was told “do the best you can” when he assumed his current position so he would like to see what duties are listed on these CDs. LTC (RET) Powell indicated he would look to see if he could locate those CDs and report back to the group. *(Note: Later in the call, LTC (RET) Powell reported he found the CDs and would review them and forward any applicable info he found.)*

E. Programs: No report, Col (RET) Bob Pitt was absent.

F. Legislative Liaison: CW2 (RET) Dave Garcia provided multiple comments as follows:

1. He will expand his engagement to include Texas 23rd Congressional District member-elect Tony Gonzalez and all local congressional leaders. He will do some in-depth research on the other leaders besides Congresswoman Escobar to identify their positions on key veteran topics and will plan to share that feedback in near future.
2. He has attempted to contact Congresswoman Escobar’s new Chief of Staff but has not heard back yet.
3. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY21 includes bills to approve additional presumptive illnesses and he encourages all to send letters to lawmakers supporting the inclusion of these illnesses. CW2 (RET) Garcia also reported the updated Widows Tax Exemption for SBP/DIC will be phased in starting in January 2021 with full implementation projected in 2023.
4. CW2 (RET) Garcia mentioned he had not seen the final COLA numbers released yet; COL (Ret) Barrett shared that the new COLA rate of 1.3% for 2021 had just been announced.
5. CPT (RET) Thackston asked Mr. Garcia if he had previously engaged with Texas State Senator Rodriguez (since Cesar Blanco will replace him representing District 29). CW2 (RET) Garcia indicated he had previously been primarily focused on federal representatives and not necessarily state leaders. COL (RET) Enzel shared that when she was serving as the Legislative role, she always had to include state and local legislative information for the Chapter to qualify as a 5-star Chapter so she believes CW2 (RET) Garcia should include state and local legislative reports as well as national updates. Mr. Garcia said local and state issues will be new ground and he wants to ensure he remains focused on the 3 primary legislators who have not been doing a good job of supporting key veteran issues. He will research state and local issues so he can speak with facts and he will make this a 2021 focus item. CPT (RET) Thackston offered to provide contact info for Representative-elect Tony Gonzalez; he will forward the info to CW2 (RET) Garcia. Finally, LTC (RET) Robbins recommended the Chapter website be expanded to include more local and state issues as well.

G. Publications/Webmaster: No report, COL (RET) Bill Oseles was absent.

H. Public Relations: LTC (RET) Martha Caldwell had no report since all luncheons have been cancelled until further notice.

I. JROTC/ROTC: LTC (RET) Dave Powell

J. Auxiliary/Surviving Spouse Liaison: Ms. Sullivan reported she continues to make calls to members to make sure they are doing okay. Many BOD members expressed their appreciation to Ms. Sullivan for her calls. Ms. Sullivan closed her comments by wishing a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

K. Door Prizes: LTC (RET) Caldwell reported no change in status due to the COVID-related cancellation of luncheons.

L. Marketing: CPT (RET) Dave Thackston had nothing significant to report.

M. EP MOAA Outreach Foundation Update: LTC (RET) Robbins provided the following updates:

1. Giving Day was actually not a disappointment and we raised more money than last year.

4. New Business:

A. COVID-19 and VA Medical Updates: COL (RET) Enzel reported the VA continues to have its bi-weekly conference call and encourage all to listen in. With local numbers rising again, the VA has returned to Phase 1 Operations so they are targeting a 25% face-to-face threshold until further notice. COL (RET) Enzel further reported that WBAMC and VA staff continue to have positive cases. A mobile ICU has been set up in the parking lot outside WBAMC; the hospital also has a Respiratory tent set up now alongside the COVID Screening tent. Additionally, WBAMC is using VA spaces for non-COVID patients. COL (RET) Enzel closed by addressing vaccine questions and advised all that vaccine distribution plans are being developed.

B. Printing/advertising update: BOD agreed that we should look into possible new bids for printing and advertising rates. Bill Oseles will take the lead however he needs reinforcement.

5. President's Closing Remarks: COL (RET) Hester lost contact so there were no closing comments.

6. Chapter Chaplain Connie Sullivan provided the Benediction.

7. The meeting adjourned at 0943.

Respectfully submitted by:

Col (RET) Mike Hester, Secretary

MIKE HESTER
COL, USA, Retired
MOAA President, El Paso Chapter