



**NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED  
FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION  
PUTNAM COUNTY—COOKEVILLE TENNESSEE**  
**\*\*Protecting Our Future\*\***

**Chapter 1956 Newsletter**

**July 2017**

**June Meeting Report**

Our June meeting was on the day before the first day of Summer. Now that it is here, enjoy the season. It was a good meeting with lots of member participation. Attendance was about the same, we still have some who are on the sick or injured list that we missed. We welcomed a new member to this meeting, he is James Baker who joined over the past month. We were very glad to have him and his wife, Mary in attendance. They live in the Crossville area.

I briefly mentioned the latest news to be announced from the national office, that being the recommendation that the current National President be allowed to run for a third term. I will have more to write on this elsewhere in this newsletter.

Other items discussed by me included the June webinars, the COLA update, and the new renewal process for existing members. I also covered the membership report and the treasurers report.

Dan Hilton mentioned several legislative items including; military combat zone pay, the financial fiduciary rule changes, re-organization legislation, and the proposed 2018 federal budget. Members need to be aware of issues that may have an impact on current or future benefits.

On a side note, we learned that our long-time server Jerry will not be working on Tuesday nights. He has done a very good job waiting on us and being friendly and welcoming to our group. I have called each month over the last few years and asked that he be our server. Over the years, we have had many regular servers that took good care of us at Shoney's. We will miss Jerry. I guess we will have to train someone new :-)

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting date will be on July 18th. Let me encourage you to make plans now and put on your calendars a reminder to attend and support our chapter. Meetings are helpful since I do not always have space in these newsletters to fully discuss all that is needed.

Keep in mind the meeting place and time will still be the same; Shoney's Restaurant on S Jefferson Ave. in Cookeville. Try to be there by 6:00pm if you plan to eat. We will start the business session at 6:45pm.

Please share these newsletters with your spouse

**Webinars.**

The next scheduled webinar will be: **Survivor Benefits—Plan For The Future.** It will be presented online available through the NARFE website on Thursday, July 27 at 1 p.m. CT. It is free to view for members, non-members pay \$39.95 but it comes with a free NARFE membership.

It will be recorded and made available to watch within a day or so after the live presentation.

**COLA News**

I shared the May report at the June meeting. I repeat here for those not able to be there. The May Consumer Price Index, CPI-W increased slightly in May by 0.07 percent. This makes for 6 months in a row an increase has been recorded. The percent towards a 2018 COLA is currently 1.51 percent. The June report will be published on July 14.

**Monthly Meetings?**

As most of you know our attendance has dropped off greatly over the years. I remember that we many times would have 30 or more in attendance. That has dropped to now, we struggle to have 10.

Mostly this is due to the fact that we have an ageing group of members who do not get out as much as before. Some of course have passed away and some have moved out of the area. And a few who would normally attend have other interests and obligations.

We have had discussions among our officers and others about what to do. So I would like us to consider at the next 2 meetings changing from a monthly meeting schedule to a quarterly meeting schedule. There are other chapters that do this and we would not be alone in it. So come prepared to give your thoughts on this.

**Chapter Officers**

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| President      | Ronnie Collins |
| Vice-President | Vacant         |
| Secretary      | Reba Collins   |
| Treasurer      | Myrna Estes    |

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**When you get your renewal notice, be sure to renew both your National and Chapter Dues.**

### News From Our National Office

Many of you may have received an email message that our national office is going to conduct a referendum during the August timeframe. It is on the subject of allowing the current National President to run for a third term as NARFE President. This member referendum has been approved by the National Executive Board (NEB) of NARFE upon the recommendation of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). For those of you not familiar with that committee, it was set up by the current national president to study ways to make improvements to NARFE much like the its predecessor, the Future of NARFE Committee.

The reason for the referendum is the fact that the NARFE national bylaws limit the National President to only 2 two year terms. The current National President, Richard Thissen is in his second term as President. He was last elected for the term of 2016-2018. As far as I know, the National President has always been limited to only 2 terms in order to insure that NARFE has new leadership every 2 or 4 years. Prior to serving as President, Thissen was the National Treasurer for a few years.

I am told that this referendum will be included in the August issue of the NARFE magazine, it may also be sent out by email to members who have current email addresses included on their NARFE member records. I have not seen the wording of this referendum and do not know all the details yet. Members will be asked to vote on it and return it.

The National Executive Board has stated that they do not have a recommendation on the merits of this, but are simply allowing members to vote upon the recommendation of the SPC. Also, I have read that Richard Thissen is not seeking a third term, but has agreed to serve if elected. Keep in mind that other candidates may also run for this office for the next term of 2018-2020. Others would not be blocked from seeking this position.

There is a lot of email chatter that I am seeing on this, some positive but mostly negative. My biggest concern that members will only see one side presented in news and information from the National Office. This will be the first time for members to vote on an issue directly since the One Member, One Vote method was approved. Prior to this approval, most of votes were held at the National Convention where members (delegates) would be able to discuss and debate the pros and cons of an issue and then vote. With this new process, I do not think there will be any way for any discussion to be held and members may only hear one side of this and any issues to be voted on. Stay tuned for details to come.

### My Initial Thoughts On The Referendum

As I have said, I am seeing a lot of emails on this upcoming referendum, and I am sure to see more. In the Open Letter that some of you may have received by email from Region X VP Bill Shackelford, it was stated that the reason the NEB for this referendum to allow the current president to have a third term was:

*"This will allow the current president to leverage important relationships built on Capitol Hill over the past six years as we navigate unprecedented threats to the earned pay & benefits of the federal community. Additionally, the third term would allow him to facilitate the transition of the new Executive Director of NARFE, in support of her vision for the future of our remarkable organization."*

The current president's term does not end until November 2018, that should be plenty of time to facilitate the transition of the new Executive Director, so I question that reasoning.

It was stated that the current president has built important relationships on Capitol Hill over the past 6 years. That seems to be incorrect. Richard Thissen first term as President began in November of 2014. Every NARFE National President serves as a lobbyist on Capitol Hill, so prior to November 2014 it was the previous president Joe Beaudoin. So as of now, Thissen has acted as lobbyist for less than 3 years.

There was a resolution presented at the 2016 NARFE National Convention to do away with term limits for the National President, that was voted on and turned down. NARFE has always had term limits in place for its officers and I think that is a good idea. Some have stated, the referendum is being used to skirt that vote back in 2016. Generally term limits are good for any organization, new leadership keeps the organization moving forward with fresh ideals. We have that for many other offices. Even though this change if passed would only be a one-time exception, I think by November 2018, NARFE will be ready for new leadership as president.

The NEB has approved up to \$35,000 to conduct this referendum. It may not cost that much, but that is money that could have been used to advance NARFE in other ways. I don't know how this will be presented in the August magazine, but I am sure that it will be a one-sided presentation and I don't think you will see any opposing views presented.

So when you receive the ballot and information, please consider carefully what your vote should be, and not vote solely on the SPC recommendation.

### NARFE IS ON THE WEB

Chapter 1956: [www.narfecookevilletn.org](http://www.narfecookevilletn.org)  
Tennessee Federation: [www.narfetn.org](http://www.narfetn.org)  
NARFE Headquarters: [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org)