

2023 CWOA NATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

NORFOLK, VA / MAY 18 - 20, 2023



MAY 18TH, 2023

General Session of the CWOA National Meeting

Attending: Christian Westerdahl (President), Mike Little (Executive Director), Aniela Szymanski (Chief Policy Officer), Tina Flack (Executive Assistant), Justus Marks (Treasurer), Rodney Clark (Secretary), William Iozzino, Gilbert Correa, Brandon Hines, Lance Jorgenson, Jason Strauch, James Pulse, Jim Petrik, Mark Cortor, Jeff Timberlake, Darien Moya, Ian Gable, Jaime Balduenza, Stephanye Aldridge, Carl Seale, Rob Resendes, William Reetz, Matthew Moss, Mary Davenport, Brandi Ingram, Jenn Thompson, John Harling, Dean Johnston, Josh Mendez, Jim Koon, Dale Harrison, Will Stevenson, Chris Corbett, Joel Smith, Deryl Ingle, & Caitlin Fleming

- Call to order – Pres. Westerdahl
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Reading of the Crossing the Bar
- Invocation – Carle Seale
- Rules of Order for the national Meeting
- Approval of the 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes
 - James Pulse made a motion to delay the approval of the 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes, motion was seconded by William Iozzino. President called for a vote; motion passed.
- Report from the Ballot Committee – ELC3 Jaime Balduenza – Committee Chair (due to recusal)
 - Mark Cortor made a motion to accept the Ballot Committee’s report, motion was seconded by James Pulse
 - Discussion followed regarding the execution of the ballots for the Election of Offices. There was voiced concern regarding the delay in and acceptance of ballots after the original posted date. The concern focused on the current bylaws and the legality of the voting from the membership. Due to delays in publishing the Newsletter, many did not receive the ballots in time to meet the original deadline. However, the resulting election with the extension enabled the largest voting pool in recent history with nearly 71% of the membership of the organization participating in this year’s election.
 - Pres. Westerdahl called for a vote, the motion passed with two negative and two abstentions.
- Report from the Scholarship Committee – ELC4(Ret.) Rodney Clark – Committee Chair
 - Nearly 300 applicants for the three Scholarships. Committee reported on the winners of the winners:
 - Colona Scholarship: Ms. Marina Elizabeth Santini
 - Keller Scholarship: Jessica Marie Fortin, Allyson Katheryn Link, & James Thomas Garcia
 - Columbia Southern Scholarship: CWO Mark Dewein
 - James Pulse made a motion to accept the Scholarship Committee’s report, William Iozzino seconded the motion. President called for a vote; motion passed.
- Report from the 100th Anniversary Committee – CWO Rob Resendes – Committee Chair
 - William Iozzino made a motion to accept the 100th Anniversary Committee’s report, seconded by John Harling. President called for a vote; motion passed.
- Membership Report – Adam Cain – Committee Chair
 - There is a date correction that needs to still be made to the report. Discussed the establishment of the Professional Development Group thanking CWO’s Jeff Timberlake and Jaime Balduenza for their assistance at the CWOPD. James Pulse made a motion to accept the Membership report, Mark Cortor seconded the motion. President called for a vote motion passed.
- Long Range Committee Report – Mark Cortor – Committee Chair
 - Due to his level of participation, DM William Reetz requested to be removed from the report.
 - James Pulse made a motion to approve the Long-Range Committee’s report, seconded by John Harling. President called for a vote; motion passed.

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General Session of the CWOA National Meeting: (Continued)

- Treasurer's Report – CWO Justus Marks – National Treasurer
 - Report from the Annual Meeting current record, discussion of reimbursement and revenue information, current state of pending scholarship payouts, the Death Gratuity Program, and official sale of the barge.
 - James Pulse made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report, seconded by Rob Resendes. President called for a vote, motion passed.
- President's Report – CWO Christian Westerdahl – National President
 - President reported on the greater improvement in recruiting efforts primarily with the efforts and influence of the staff at CWOPD. Additional thanks and recognition to our Executive Director who has had the opportunity to be present with the students in the recent classes. The focus of the CWOA over the next 12 months will be the strengthening of the individual chapters throughout the association.
 - CWO Rob Resendes made a motion to accept the President's report, seconded by CWO Darien Moya. President called for a vote; motion passed.
 - Carl Seal noted that the President is a "Has-Been."
- Executive Director's Report – Mr. Mike Little – National Executive Director
 - The Association is focused again on the "Pay our Coast Guard Act which was adopted by the Coast Guard Appropriations Act. This essential legislation ensures that CG Members (AD, RES, & Ret), receive their pay in parity to the DoD's Pay our Military program. Reiterated that we, as an Association, are focused on the legislative measures and issues that most affect the entire population of Enlisted, Officers, Civilian, and Retirees throughout the USCG.
 - Announced and expressed gratitude for the addition of the Executive Assistance that was recently hired by the Association. Her inclusion in planning, organizing, calendaring, and many other areas administratively have provided needed hours to the Executive Director's position and facilitated his abilities to focus energies in promoting and growing the organization and its influence not only with it's membership but also in the various additional missions that the Association supports.
 - Discussed the potential pending sale of the CWOA Barge and subsequent move of records and historical items from the barge to our new offices alongside the National Chief Petty Officer Association's offices.
 - Discussed the new primary missions for the Association and areas of focus:
 - By-Law Improvements
 - Corporate Inclusion
 - Corporate Sponsorships
 - Creation of a "5-Year Strategy Plan"
 - Provided the Audit Committee's Report with Mr. Gene Ferniz.
 - Discussed the potential need for an audit to ensure that the transitioning Treasurer and incumbent have a clean and accurate starting point for the association.
 - William Iozzino made a motion to forgo a paid audit and proceed with a self-audit of FY 2023 as recommended by Gene Ferniz, so the treasurer may be properly relieved. Motion was seconded by CWO Darien Moya.
 - * In discussion the establishment of an Audit Team committed to performing the associated internal audit. Members assigned to and agreeing to that team consisted of James Pulse, John Harling, and Darien Moya.
 - President called for a vote on the motion, motion passed.
- By-Laws Committee Report – CWO Mike Goglia (Low Country Chapter)
 - Discussed the proposed changes to the membership of the Executive Committee (EC).
 - Mark Cortor made a motion to accept the By-Law Committee's Report, motion was seconded by Carl Seale.

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General Session of the CWOA National Meeting (Continued)

--Due to the nature and requirements within the CWOA's By-laws, President Westerdahl recessed the General Session and convened the Executive Session of the Annual Meeting. Those highlights are present in the Executive Session Minutes (sepcor.)

- James Pulse made a motion to recess for the day, seconded by CWO Stephanye Aldridge. President called for a vote, motion passed, and the General Session was in recess until 0900 May 19th, 2023.

MAY 19TH, 2023

General Session of the CWOA National Meeting

- 0900 General Session was called to order – President Christian Westerdahl
- Chapter Support Services – Executive Director Mike Little
 - Discussed availability of Google Services including Meet, Docs, email, and others that are available for chapter uses.
 - Officers for Chapter Elections and the information is not being passed to National. Please do that so that National can update our information with the most current and correct information and track the ongoing changes.
 - Chapter reports need to be filed electronically.
 - Allows for accountability of the organization so we can assist you in managing the individual Chapter's numbers, information, and track the Chapter's history.
 - Facilitates National's ability to assist chapters with issues that they may be experiencing.
 - Chapter Taxes:
 - It is imperative that we have ALL Chapters in compliance with the IRS's Standards.
 - Delinquency of filing the Chapter's 990 forms is critical to be able to cover the chapters under the Association's tax Code.
 - * Currently only 8 of the 25 chapters are complying. Meaning that 17 chapters of the Association are not in compliance with the IRS or Association By-Laws and policies.
 - Group Exemptions are imperative to ensure the Association as a whole, compliant with the IRS.
 - Recommendations for the appointment of the Executive Board to function as the Tax Representative for each Chapter. This appointment would facilitate the circulation and filing of the appropriate 990's.
 - This will be a discussion point within the Executive Committee to get it accomplished as soon as possible.
 - Creation of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Chapters processes/procedures for these types of activities that are critical to the Association or other elements that facilitate continued Chapter and Association progress.

9:50 am – President called for a recess of the General Session and the meeting went into Executive Session.

10:25 am – President reconvened the General Session.

- Parliamentarian Report – Maj. Aniela Szymanski
 - Advocacy for legislation to pass in support of ongoing Veteran's issues (Pay, Families, Medical, etc.) not only for Association members but addressing issues that benefit the US Coast Guard as a whole.
 - Validation of resources to augment recruiting efforts, retention, and what the future of the Coast Guard as an organization is.

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General Session of the CWOA National Meeting (Continued)

- Parliamentary Report – Maj. Aniela Szymanski – (Continued)
 - Working towards gaining an audience with the Commandant of the USCG to discuss the programs that the CWOA can and is working towards that can benefit the Service.
 - Discussion regarding the Major Richard Star Act – H.R. 1282
 - What can we do as an AD CWO that can get greater influence with the Commandant?
 - * Specialty Managers
 - * Being more visible withing the Commands that have influence as an advocate to be the bridge between the Officer Corps and the Enlisted Membership of the CG. “Never be the Unicorn!”
 - Discussion regarding what the Association is advocating for with regards to CG Housing issues, particularly when CG members are housed at DoD facilities.
 - Get Involved! Stay Involved! And Be and influence for change.
- HSWL Services Availabilities – CWO Mary Davenport
 - CG Support Availabilities:
 - Medical Systems Support
 - Financial Specialists
 - Health Coordination
 - Just-in-Time Services
 - In-Transition Assistance Program
- CWO Assignment Officer – CWO Bryan Kaseman
- CWO Specialty Managers – CWO Chris Ruleman
- CWO Professional Development – CWO Jaime Baldueza
- CWO Justus Marks made a motion to recess the General Session for the day, seconded by CWO William Stevenson. President called for a vote; motion passed. The General Session was placed in recess at 1516 and will reconvene at 0900 on May 20th, 2023.

MAY 20TH, 2023

General Session of the CWOA National Meeting (Continued)

9:00 am – President called the General Session to order.

- Carl Seale made a motion to accept the Minutes from the 2022 General Meeting , seconded by Bill Reetz. President called for a vote; motion passed.

9:10 am – President placed the General Session in recess and changed to the Executive Session.

9:50 am – President reconvened the General Session.

- Chapter Reports: Representatives / Proxys presented the individual Chapters Activities and state of the CWOA for their areas.
 - Chapter Formation of the CWOA of the Caribbean Chapter in 2022.
- Board of Control for the CG Mutual Assistance Program – CWO Darien Moya
 - CGMA is the Official Relief Society of the Coast Guard (AD, Families, Civilian Employees, etc.).
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield (Silver Sponsor) – FLTCM (Fleet Master Chief) Paul Kingsbuty, USN (Ret.)
- LAB Realty (Gold Sponsor) – CAPT. Brett & Liz Korade w/ Saba (Therapy Dog in training)
- The Millitary Coalition – CWO4 Jack Duteil USA (Ret.)
- Columbia Southern University – Randal Dennis, USCG (Ret.)

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General Session of the CWOA National Meeting (Continued)

- Good of the Order – President Christian Westerdahl.
 - Working towards the completion of an SOP for the Board of Directors that will contain information regarding issues that affect the Association and particularly an Executive Committee Boot Camp for newly elected members of the Executive Committee. This SOP will familiarize day-to-day activities and business within the CWOA.
 - William Iozzino – Discussion as to who/whom should be proxies for each chapter and who should/shouldn't be sitting in those positions. This will be congruent with the SOP being developed. Things that should be included are: Chapter Support Committee being established.
 - James Pulse – Focused look at the registration process for membership who will be in attendance at the Annual Meeting. Ensuring the registration process manages with greater efficiency those who are attending the meeting.
 - Ian Gable – Discussed the apparent disparity for expectations of the CWO Workforce, based on the Leadership Management listed in the PY 2023 Boards and Panels discussion. Information regarding OER processes and what is occurring in the USCG with regards to CWOs.
- Rob Resendes made a motion to adjourn the General Meeting until its reconvening in 2024, seconded by Rodney Clark. President called for a vote; motion passed.

General Session of the CWOA National Meeting was dismissed until 2024.

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Executive Session of the CWOA National Meeting

- President called to order the Executive Session of the CWOA National Meeting
- Distinguished Members (DM) Right to Vote. – President Christian Westerdahl
 - Addressed the information regarding the inclusion that DMs would also be included in votes where present as members of the Executive Committee (EC).
 - James Pulse made a motion that DMs as permitted members of the EC not be approved for voting rights in all sections of the Bylaws, seconded by Will Iozzino.
 - * Why?: Is there a need for 26 members as DMs when in the Quarterly Business of the EC? Is it important enough to have DMs present?
 - * Major Business was being conducted during some of the quarterly meetings. However, this was normally only being completed during the Annual Meeting.
 - * The DMs Changes are not included in anything other than the Annual Meeting.
 - * Mark Cortor Called to question, seconded by Lance Jorgenson. President called for a vote on the original motion. One Nay vote, Aye's carried the motion; motion passed.
- Nominations and Elections:
 - James Pulse made a motion not to approve the bylaws change of the nominations and elections of officers as currently presented, seconded by William Iozzino.
 - Primary issue was the delay in election processes that did not follow to the letter of the law as outlined in the CWOA bylaws.
 - Historical numbers of votes were received this year with the extension of dates. Nearly 73% of the Association voted in this year's election with only 3% of it voting prior to the extension.
 - President acknowledged the issue and made suggestion to the Bylaw committee to review and make correction to the current verbiage to meet the need of the organization and not be a hard/fast date.
 - William Iozzino Called to question the discussion. President called for a vote; Aye's carried the vote, and the discussion was ended.
 - President called for a vote on the original motion; motion failed.
 - CWO Jeff Timberlake made a motion to approve the Nomination and Election of Officers as currently presented by the Bylaws Committee, seconded by CWO Will Stevenson. President called for a vote; motion passed.
- Notice of Meetings of the Association:
 - Reading of the changes – James Pulse made a motion to accept this recommendation and to submit to membership for a vote, seconded by Mark Cortor.
 - Easy to allow for having these meetings available for the knowledge of the general membership.
 - William Iozzino made a motion to amend the motion to include section b of the current changes, seconded by John Harling.
 - President called for a vote with the amended section b included; motion passed.
- Calling Special Meetings of the Association:
 - William Iozzino made a motion not to accept the bylaws as written, seconded by James Pulse.
 - 10% of the Association or at least 10% of the membership to bring an issue before the CWOA President.
 - Distinguishing the issue of what constitutes Major Changes (Bylaws, Issues of majority of the BOD)
 - President Called for a vote; motion failed.

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Executive Session of the CWOA National Meeting (Continued)

- Calling Special Meetings of the Association: (Continued)
 - Jeff Timberlake motioned to approve the changes as currently written, seconded by Ian Gable
 - Who is involved in a Special Meeting
 - * The Association then has to determine whether the topic is for the General Membership or the Executive Committee.
 - President called for a vote: 7 Nay votes; motion passed.
- Presentation of the 2024 Budget Proposal – CWO Justus Marks, National Treasurer
 - Read through the proposed budget for the CWOA for 2024.
 - James Pulse made a motion to approve and accept the 2024 Annual Budget as presented, seconded by Mark Cortor.
 - James pulse motioned to form a committee to reevaluate the CWOA's Death Gratuity.
 - President called for a vote; motion passed – Formation of the Death Gratuity Assessment Committee with James Pulse, William Iozzino, and Gilberto Correa.

Executive Session put into recess.

MAY 19TH, 2023

Executive Session of the CWOA National Meeting (Continued)

9:50 am – President reconvened the Executive Session:

- CWO Rob Resendes motioned to add \$6000 to the budget for coverage of the delinquent Chapter's 990s, seconded by CWO Jim Koon.
 - President Called for a vote; motion passed unanimously.

10:00 am – President placed the Executive session in recess.

MAY 20TH, 2023

Executive Session of the CWOA National Meeting (Continued)

9:13 – reconvened the Executive Session.

- James Pulse motioned to approve \$500 per Officer for their office and nature of work for the Association, seconded by Mark Cortor.
 - Mark Cortor – Board of Directors is poorly represented this year as a result of personal and professional issues. This needs to be addressed and corrected for next year.
 - Justus Marks – Discussed the reasoning behind some of the BOD's absence this year.
 - President called for a vote; motion passed.
- James Pulse made a motion that the EC create a proposal for a creation of Standing Rule #5 – Definition of a Special Meeting can be a General Session Special Meeting, EC Special Meeting, or a BOD Special meeting where Association Business must be acted on immediately or with resolution no later than 60 days, seconded by Mark Cortor.
 - Defining the criteria for a Special Meeting
 - Regular Meetings vs. Special Meetings
 - President called for a vote; one nay, one abstention; aye's carry; motion passed.

Executive Session of the CWOA National Meeting - Concluded