AGA National Governing Board (NGB)
Meeting Minutes
June 17, 2020
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. ET
Virtual

NGB MEMBERS PRESENT
- Ernest A. Almonte, CGFM, CPA, CFE, National President, Boston Chapter
- Wendy Morton-Huddleston, CGFM, PMP, National President-Elect, Washington D.C. Chapter
- Andrew C. Lewis, CGFM, CPA, PMP, National Treasurer, Montgomery/P.G. Chapter
- Katherine J. Stickel, CGFM, National Treasurer-Elect, Nashville Chapter
- Michael S. Pearson, CGFM, CPA, Director (for Chapters), Idaho Centennial Chapter
- Donna M. Sandoval, CGFM, Director (for Chapters), Albuquerque Chapter
- Melinda J. DeCorte, CGFM, CPA, Director (for Chapters), Dallas Chapter
- Patrick A. Cowen, CPA, CISA, CIA, Director (for Chapters), Tallahassee Chapter
- Gina I. Smith-Moss, MSM, MBA, CICA, Director (for Chapters), Shenandoah Valley Chapter
- Joseph H. Connolly, CFE, CICA, Director (for Chapters), Northern New Jersey Chapter
- Michelle L. Yanok, CGFM, Director (for Chapters), Mid-Ohio Valley WV Chapter
- Gregory J. Sanial, CGFM, Director (for Chapters), West Michigan Chapter
- David A. LeBlanc, CGFM, CFS, Director (At-Large), Boston Chapter
- Gloria L. Jarmon, CGFM, CPA, Director (At-Large), Washington D.C. Chapter
- Kevin T. Greer, CGFM, CPA, CDFM, PMP, Corporate Partner Advisory Group Chair, Northern Virginia Chapter
- Sherri Voigt, CGFM, CPA, Professional Certification Board Chair, Southern Wisconsin Chapter
- Ann M. Ebberts, MS, PMP, Chief Executive Officer (non-voting member)

OTHER ATTENDEES
- Gerry Boaz, CGFM, CPA, CGMA, 2020-2021 National President-Elect, Nashville Chapter
- Doreen Shute, CGFM, CPA, 2020-2021 National Treasurer-Elect Montgomery/P.G. Chapter (partial attendance)
- Lynn Moaney, 2020-2021 Director (At-Large), Washington DC Chapter (partial attendance)
- Justin W. Poll, CGFM, Governance Committee Chair, Washington D.C. Chapter (partial attendance)

NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF PRESENT
- Susan Fritzlen, Chief Operating Officer
- Cristina Barbudo, MS, CPA, Director of Finance & Administration
- Dave Acerra, Executive Assistant to the CEO

The meeting commenced at 9:06 am ET.
Welcome – Ernie Almonte, National President

National President Ernie Almonte welcomed the group.

Mr. Almonte (Ernie) thanked everyone for joining the meeting and noted the benefits of seeing everyone on a virtual meetings platform while we are all required to be socially distant.

Ernie then reflected on what is going on in the world stating this is not a time to sit back, but a time to lead, which AGA has been doing. Ernie encouraged everyone on the NGB to use their time and skills to lead in their sphere of influences. AGA is already on the forefront of leading positive change through things like the Council for the Advancement of Women and the CEO letter for diversity and inclusion. Ernie thanked Ms. Morton-Hudleston (Wendy) and Ms. Ebberts (Ann) for the time they took to write the letter. He also thanked Ann and the AGA staff for keeping AGA moving forward, mentioning the effort to learn and lead on how to make PDT a success virtually. Ernie also thanked Mr. Kevin Greer (Kevin) and CPAG for their support for a virtual PDT.

Ernie asked for a motion to approve today’s meeting agenda. Mr. Pearson (Michael) made the motion and it was seconded by Ms. Stickel (Kathy). The motion passed

Ernie asked for a motion to approve the February 11, 2020 minutes. Kathy made the motion and it was seconded by Ms. Sandoval (Donna). The motion then passed

President’s Report – Ernie Almonte, National President

Ernie noted that he already gave his thoughts when he welcomed everyone to the meeting. He also noted that he was really thrilled with the leadership and volunteerism demonstrated by the NGB.

CEO Report, Ann M. Ebberts, CEO

Ann reported that AGA staff started teleworking in mid-March. Some staff have started coming into the office a bit and have been working hard throughout the lockdown. Ann and Susan have been working on a plan for reopening the office, including stocking necessary cleaning supplies and other PPE.

Ann reported that for the foreseeable future, all expenses require Susan’s or her approval. She also reported that she and Susan have been taking advantage of free webinars to gain visibility as to how associations are leveraging technology and revising budgets. One of the suggestions was to take a hard look at programs and services and determine what can/should be done differently, or should continue, when we return to “normal”? Are there any programs that are not money makers, or not adding expected value, that can be canceled completely? After PDT, Ann, Susan and the senior staff will develop and propose a revised FY21 budget.

Ann proceeded to give a few highlights of recent (and some upcoming) educational events, specifically:

- June 11 PIO/CFO Summit: The CPAG Performance Committee served as the technical advisors for this program.
  - There were 450 active participants, 10 sponsors and was not a complex virtual event.
  - This simple webinar provided a test run to learn how more complicated virtual events can be hosted.
• **June 12 Enterprise Risk Management Workshop:** AGA once again teamed with the Association for Federal Enterprise Risk Management (AFERM) for this popular workshop.
  
  o There were 200 participants (116 paid and the rest were sponsors)
  o The workshop featured breakout sessions with 14 breakout “rooms” that each sponsor’s subject matter expert facilitated
  o A lot of positive feedback was received from the participants.

• **June 25 – Upcoming Robotics Process Automation (RPA) Workshop:** Registration and sponsorship are strong. There will be a series of presentations and then participants get into breakout rooms to meet and interact with other people across government. The format is like the ERM Workshop.

• **July 20-22 -- Virtual PDT2020:** AGA staff is working hard to get ready for the first ever fully virtual PDT.
  
  o The PDT program of 100 sessions was reduced to 48 to fit into three concurrent workstreams over three days.
  o A lot of good sessions had to be cut, but many are applicable for the Internal Controls & Fraud and Prevention event planned for September 23-24 as well as for future webinars.
  o Seventeen sponsors and six small businesses have confirmed support. Some PDT sponsors pushed their sponsorship to 2021 PDT in Nashville.
  o We reduced registration and sponsorship fees by 40%.
  o As of June 16, we have 1,056 registrants and 922 of those are paid -- well over our breakeven point. Registration continues to grow. We have more non-members than members signed up for PDT, so there are lots of “new member targets”.
  o There is also a great deal of planning and filming being done to recognize chapter and individual leaders across government, as well as the ceremonial gavel exchange.

• **September 23-24 -- Internal Controls & Fraud and Prevention Event:** Given the challenges with the venue’s social distancing requirements, this will be a virtual event. Ann commented that a decision will need to be made about when and how the September NGB is to be conducted.

• **Nov 18 Technology and Transformation Summit (TTS)** – The Financial Systems Summit, a free for member event, is usually held in January, but due to the upcoming presidential election, AGA was unable to find a location. Jerome Bruce found a venue that could be used in November instead. The event name has been changed to the Technology and Transformation Summit (TTS) to reflect the variety of technologies that impact AGA’s broad functional community. There will also be an Innovation Challenge competition again this year. This will be a free event for members, providing eight CPEs.

Ernie brought up the joint letter of support sent out to all members regarding intolerance for social and racial injustice and highlighting AGA’s diversity and inclusion policy. AGA has received a lot of feedback, with some commenting that AGA could have gone further, but most were very supportive and appreciative. Ernie then asked the NGB members to think about how AGA can play a larger role and do more.
DM 20-09, Approval of National Board Appointments

DM 20-09 was introduced to approve member appointments to the following AGA Boards for the 2020-2021 Program Year.

- Financial Management Standards Board
- Journal Editorial Board
- Professional Ethics Board
- Professional Certification Board
- Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) Board

A motion was made by Mr. Pearson and seconded by Mr. Lewis. The motion passed unanimously. For reference, all Decision Memoranda are located on the NGB page on AGA’s website https://www.agacgfm.org/My-AGA/Board-Committee-Pages/NGB-Documents.aspx

DM 20-10, Approval of Audit Committee Appointments

The original DM 20-10 that was put forward for a vote by the NGB included Finance & Budget Committee (FBC) members. Mr. LeBlanc noted that given the membership of FBC is decided by the President and Committee chair, the NGB is not required to vote on the FBC members. Mr. LeBlanc also noted that there was a problem with the Audit Committee appointment as the NGB does not appoint a chair to the Audit Committee. The Committee members appoint their own chair. Mr. LeBlanc recommended that the vote on DM 20-10 be tabled until the necessary changes can be made.

Mr. Almonte asked for a motion to table the vote on DM 20-10 until it is corrected. A motion was made by Ms. Stickel and seconded by Ms. Smith-Moss. The motion passed.

DM 20-11, Approval of National Committee Appointments

DM 20-11 was introduced to approve the following AGA National Committee Appointments for the 2020-2021 Program Year.

- **Accountability Committee**: Donna M. Sandoval, CGFM to be reappointed chair for a one-year term
- **Awards Committee**: Raelynn A. North, CGFM to be appointed chair for a one-year term
- **Governance Committee**: James R. Arnette Jr., CGFM, CISA to be appointed chair for a one-year term
- **Bylaws & Procedures Committee**: William J. Bell, CGFM to be reappointed chair for a one-year term
- **Higher Education Committee**: Rachelle B. Cabading, CGFM, CFE, to be appointed chair for a one-year term; Riley Shaull, CGFM, CPA, to be appointed vice chair for a one-year term

Mr. Almonte asked for a motion to approve DM 20-11. Mr. LeBlanc noted that the NGB does not vote on committee members, only on the chairs. DM 20-11 was edited in real time to reflect the changes noted by Mr. LeBlanc. A corrected DM 20-11 was introduced to approve National Committee Chair Appointments for the 2020-2021 Program Year.

Mr. Almonte requested a motion to approve the corrected version of DM 20-11. A motion was made by Ms. DeCorte and seconded by Ms. Smith-Moss. The motion passed unanimously.
Finance and Budget Committee Report, Andrew C. Lewis, National Treasurer

Ernie thanked Mr. Lewis for the great job he has done as Treasurer. Mr. Lewis (Andrew) mentioned that the last Finance and Budget Committee meeting occurred two days ago and wrapped up a very good program year, adding that moving the compliance review items to monthly meetings has been very successful in monitoring internal controls. It also saved some funds as it eliminated the need for a second in-person meeting of the FBC. The audit is completed, and a draft of the audit report is being reviewed. The next step will be to send to the Audit Committee and set a call with the audit firm for the official acceptance of the statements. The year ended with $173,000 in profit and there was no need to use the reserves as proposed in the budget. AGA applied and was accepted into the PPP loan program, receiving $420,383. AGA has 24 weeks to use the funds and apply for forgiveness of the loan, which would make it a grant to AGA. Ms. Barbudo (Cristina) is carefully monitoring AGA’s compliance responsibilities. Andrew noted that AGA is in a very strong position. There is over one year’s worth of expenses in reserves. Although this year’s PDT may not be a revenue windfall, it will still have a positive impact on the budget. He also noted that the budget is very conservative, and he does not expect many revisions after PDT.

Cristina commented that the PPP loan will make a huge difference for AGA. Because the period for using the money was extended from 8 to 24 weeks, all the funds will be eligible for forgiveness.

Kathy and Cristina coordinated the schedule for FBC meetings for the coming year, with the first call scheduled for July 30th to review the preliminary financial numbers from PDT and determine any changes needed to the budget. Kathy is planning to keep the agenda similar to Andrew’s program year, including the timing of the compliance review items.

Membership Renewals – Strategy Discussion, Susan Fritzlen, COO

Susan commented on the whirlwind with membership because the pandemic hit in the middle of renewals. The messaging has been challenging to craft because AGA wants to be sensitive and supportive to its members. A lot of thought is given to every message that is sent out, as well as to how renewals are handled. On March 4th, a chapter retention campaign was launched called “Membership Madness.” On March 18th, a message was sent out that this campaign was sidelined and that the focus needed to be on how AGA can help its members. The message was “we are here for you” and “how can we help you.” Ann sent a letter to AGA’s community updating them on what was happening with AGA’s events and the plan moving forward. The grace period for renewing membership was extended an additional 30 days. A lot of positive feedback was received from this action.

Another new value-added resource created was the development of the COVID-19 page on the website with lots of good information, from many sources. AGA also “pushed” this resource to all the chapter websites that AGA National office hosts for chapters (about 70). With Ms. Morton-Huddleston’s assistance, AGA hosted a free COVID-19 webinar, providing much needed information and CPE. The webinar received a lot of positive feedback.

In June AGA “Benefits Month” was launched. This is an opportunity to highlight members and their quotes about why they value being a member of AGA. This campaign is being pushed through social media, Leadership Matters and Topics. Also, in June membership started segmenting Topics between those who have renewed
and those who have not. On June 26th there will be a free webinar on the multi-generational office and attendance is at a record high. A message will be distributed June 29th to those members who have yet to renew, letting them know that AGA staff are standing ready to take their questions and renewal payments over the phone before the due date of June 30th. All of this was highlighted in the June issue of Membership Matters.

In reviewing membership renewal numbers, it became obvious that some chapters will be hit very hard if members do not renew. Membership reached out to the chapter leaders with the highest risk to make sure they are encouraging their members to renew. Some said they were aware and are working through it. In some cases, the lack of renewals was because there was no one in the office to process them, but they are working on it. For others it was because they were focused on work and appreciated the reminder.

Susan reported that 3,260 members have not yet renewed which is higher than the number from last year at the same time, 2,654. New memberships are also significantly down compared to last year, with the downward trend coinciding with the start of the pandemic.

Wendy thanked Susan for her comprehensive report on membership benefits and outreach. In response to Wendy’s question about engagement of nonmembers who are registered for PDT, Susan responded that staff already have plans for engaging these potential members. There are many nonmembers who sign up regularly for the paid webinars and they are being engaged too. Ernie suggested putting a membership value slide into every webinar presentation. Susan said this is already being done.

Mr. Greer (Kevin) asked how membership is trending on the corporate side and Susan responded that it is the same situation and that she is still waiting on many payments. Several said that payment was in the mail. Ann offered that for the virtual summits and workshops, sponsors were offered opportunities to showcase their firms in a virtual solutions hall. Sponsors are able to create short videos talking about their companies and post topic-related intellectual capital for attendees to access.

Ernie stated that he appreciated the strategic and innovative ideas that AGA is implementing and asked the NGB to share any ideas they have to offer.

Ms. DeCorte commented that at the Dallas Chapter they moved to an entirely virtual platform because of COVID-19. This has helped in part because the Dallas Metroplex is so big, and many members live over an hour away from any event they may hold. Because there was very little cost to holding the webinar, the Dallas Chapter donated the proceeds to two local food bank, which they included in their promotion of the event. The feedback and results were positive. This event not only demonstrated the value the chapter brings to members, but also to the entire community.

Ann commented that one of the things that will be missed by going to a virtual PDT is the ability to raise money for the Community Service Fund that matches donations that chapters make to their community – usually supported by silent auctions and in-person donations. One idea is to take some of this year’s PDT proceeds (last year we raised approx. $30K) to fund it. Each year AGA National office matches the donations made by the Chapters to their local charitable organizations. Wendy noted that at last year’s PDT in New Orleans there was a white board by the silent auction table with good spirited fundraising challenges for Chapters. She suggested looking for ways to do that again because it is a good way to engage members.

Susan mentioned that she and Ann had discussed doing a member survey this summer to see if members’ needs have changed and to look for new ways to add value. The overall purpose is to get the pulse of the members.
General discussions on innovative ideas for our AGA organization and delivery of services to our members

Ernie said this has been a good reflection point to see what happens in a year that does not go exactly as planned. AGA was forced into some new innovative things because of the pandemic, but AGA needs to continue to innovate to future-proof itself. He said that as a board the NGB needs to take some time to reflect on how the Association can add more value to its members and community. Ernie asked the NGB for ideas on what AGA can do to add more value, be more innovative and pivot in a needed new direction.

Ann added that a lot of the testing facilities where CGFM exams are taken were closed because of COVID-19. AGA was offered the option of having the exams conducted virtually. After Ms. Silver and her team scrutinized every aspect to make sure it was secure, AGA proceeded to offer virtual exams. As a result, more people are taking exams because they can do it from the convenience of home and at a time that works best for their schedules. Prior to the lockdown this is something that AGA would probably not even have considered offering to candidates. Ann sees no reason to move away from this new testing model when life returns to “normal.”

Wendy commented that when she listened to the latest “Accountability Talks” podcast the Washington DC Chapter President and President-Elect talked about the enormous support for the GoToWebinar platform they have been getting from AGA national. They also said there was so much focus on setting up and troubleshooting their event that they realized afterwards they forgot to record it for future playback.

Ms. Sandoval commented that Ms. DeCorte had suggested to her that smaller chapters should get together and share the cost of a webinar subscription. Mr. Boaz suggested producing some 5 or 10 minute YouTube videos on specific topics that can be found by doing a simple internet search. Ann commented that AGA has 51 podcasts now and will consider YouTube as well.

Susan commented that some of the CPAG committees invite individuals to give technical presentations during their monthly meetings. CPAG has started opening these presentations to all members. The “tech topics” are held from 8:30-9:00 ET and they focus on the application of emerging technologies. The presentations are posted to the member resource area on the website. Ann commented that this is a member benefit AND the corporate sponsor also gets good visibility.

Board Assessment Process/Timeline, Justin Poll, Governance Chair

Mr. Poll started by thanking everyone for participating in the annual Board assessment via the BoardSource survey instrument. Justin reviewed the history of the assessment process and some of the things that have come out of it, and then reviewed the timeline for this year’s assessment process. He thanked the NGB for their “100% participation”.

AGA Name Change – Update, Kevin Greer, CPAG Chair

Ernie noted that changing AGA’s name has been discussed a few times at past meetings. He also noted that one of the things the NGB wanted to do was to reach out to CPAG and Kevin to get ideas from the corporate sponsors about what they thought about the name change, what it should be, the branding impact, etc.
Kevin reported that the entire CPAG leadership met a few weeks ago and they spent a lot of time talking about what AGA’s future could look like. The group unanimously agreed that they wanted AGA to be an inclusive organization, and that the direction financial accounting is going is tied to technology and they are almost inseparable. Keeping the “AGA” as a name but not have it “stand for” anything was discussed, but others thought it was important to include accountability and government somewhere in a tag line. One idea that they came up was the “Association for Government Accountability.” The idea of tagline next to “AGA” about what the direction of the Association is or could be was also discussed. Kevin opened it up for NGB discussion.

There was mixed support for the timing of a name change –i.e. at PDT or later in the year. All those who offered opinions concurred that:

- the name change and tag line should be inclusive of a broad spectrum of members
- keeping “AGA” as a recognizable name in the accounting/FM field
- there is support for consulting marketing/branding experts

Wendy commented that Ms. Phyllis Anderson, Managing Director with GAO would be happy to work with the committee because her organization has gone through this process, and will provide her contact information. Ernie added that changing the name will not be that big of a step because much of the groundwork in socializing a possible name change has already been done. Kevin will move forward with a small group to focus on this effort.

Ernie welcomed incoming members to the NGB, specifically Gerry Boaz, 2020-2021 National President-Elect, Doreen Shute, 2020-2021 National Treasurer-Elect and Lynn Moaney, 2020-2021 Director (At-Large).

Wendy said that because the Internal Controls, Fraud and Prevention training event in September will be 100% virtual, and out of concern for everyone’s health and wellness, she would like to go on the record and officially make the September 22nd NGB meeting also virtual. Wendy supports having the COVID-19 webinar series move forward as a quarterly series. She would like the next webinar to be in August or September and asked the NGB to send her any possible speaker recommendations.

AGA’s Council for the Advancement of Women, Wendy Morton-Huddleston, National President-Elect

Wendy reviewed the background and purpose of the Council. The Council had their first kickoff meeting on May 21st and have since met to strategize on the council’s strategic framework. The Council has five strategic priorities, specifically leadership, pipeline, professional development, promotion of equity, and measurable reporting. Welcome letters have been sent out to eight hand-selected women. Allies will also be an important part of the Council and will be integrating male sponsors to help round out the formation of this group. Serving on the Council is a three-year commitment. During PDT on Wednesday, July 22nd there will be a panel session titled “The Power of Being You.” The Council is also seeking a young professional/millennial to join.

Closing Remarks, Ernest A. Almonte, National President

Ernie opened up the floor for questions/comments. In response to Ms. Jarmon’s question regarding the July NGB meeting, Mr. Almonte stated it will be virtual, and will be held on July 18th. Mr. Lewis asked if scholarships that are normally offered to cover hotel expenses will be changed to a virtual registration option. Ms. Fritzlen said that this had not been discussed, but it could be talked about. A question was asked about session-specific registrations, and as of now there are no plans to support it.
Ann thanked Ernie for his leadership this past year. Ernie thanked the NGB for coming to the meeting and for giving their time and talents to AGA.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m. ET.