

G	government
S	superannuitants
A	association

Wellington Branch Annual General Meeting 2021 Draft Minutes

The 100th Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at Petone Working Men's Club, 47 Udy Street, Petone on Wednesday 26 May 2021 at 11am.

Welcome

The Chair, Michael Smith, welcomed members to the 100th AGM of the Wellington Branch of the Government Superannuitants Association. He also extended his warm welcomed to Tony Hamilton, the President of GSA, as the guest speaker. Tony would later provide an update on Association matters.

Deceased Members

Members stood for a minute for respect and reflection remembering members of the Association who had died in the past year.

Present

Michael Smith (Chair), Tony Hamilton (GSA President), Jirayu Brennan (Secretary), and 35 members and spouses.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Alan Peck, Michael and Mary Munro, Dallas Elvy, Bill Robertson and Kathryn Whittfield.

The Chair moved that these apologies be accepted.

Christabel Gibson/Kay Monks

Minutes of the AGM 2020

The minutes of the 99th AGM were taken as read and confirmed as correct.

Peter Chambers/Ray Woolhouse

Matter arising from the Minutes.

It was noted that GSA now had a representative on the Government Superannuation Appeals Board. Currently, there is no GSA nominee on the Government Superannuation Fund Authority (GSFA) Board. Tony Hamilton, GSA President advised that since the last AGM in November 2020, and following advice from the Hon. Grant Robertson, the GSA Board has made a nomination to the Treasury for consideration as a GSA representative on the GSFA Board. Any new appointment to the GSFA Board will be considered when a vacancy occurs.

Annual Report

The annual report was distributed in the April newsletter. The Chair acknowledged the Wellington branch was in good shape with a productive committee that worked well together. He noted that the branch had been fortunate to have a strong committee. The branch operation was based on subcommittees of Finance, Policy, Recruitment, Honour and Social.

It was moved **THAT** the annual report as printed be adopted.

Chair/Suzanne Holgate

Financial Report

The Wellington branch financial report for the year ending 31 March 2021 was published in the 2021 April newsletter. Peter Chambers was invited to speak to the report.

The financial report was up to date as of 31 March 2021. At the last AGM in November 2020, the 31 March 2020 published financial report was 6 months out of date due to Covid 19 lockdown and the branch being unable to hold the 2020 AGM in May.

The branch had a deficit of \$5,770 by the year ending 31 March 2021. Two causal factors were firstly the membership subscriptions went down due to an inevitable reduction in membership. However, the membership subscription increased from 1 April 2021. Secondly, it was the GSA centennial year. The branch encouraged more members to celebrate this occasion by subsidising members to attend the Branch Centennial celebration and AGM on 26 November 2020 at Silverstream Retreat, Lower Hutt. The event was well attended with more than eighty members present and with excellent feedback from members attending the celebration. These two factors together with the purchase of a new laptop and a cell phone resulted in expenditure causing the deficit in the last financial year.

In addition, the branch subsidised a smaller amount for members who attended one other governance meeting in the Wairarapa.

Despite the deficit, the branch's finances remain in a healthy position. By the end of next financial year, the branch expects to be in a positive financial position.

The branch is also a custodian for two other funds. One is the Railways Social Club (RSC), and the other the SuperTravel Fund (ST).

Further clarification was sought in relation to an increase in 'Remuneration' of approximately \$2,300 from 2020 to 2021 and an increase in 'Equipment' of approximately \$3,100 from 2020 to 2021. In the case of 'Remuneration' noted in the 2020 financial report, a secretary was not employed for a few months and the new Secretary was paid at an increased hourly rate. No clear explanation had been provided at the last AGM. The increase in 'Equipment' was due to the purchase of a new laptop for the branch and the new telephone system. It was suggested that the explanations should be noted in the financial report.

A member queried the budget outcome for this financial year. The branch has budgeted for a surplus of \$2,277 for the year ending 31 March 2022.

It was moved **THAT** the annual accounts for the year ending 31 March 2021 be accepted.

Peter Chambers/Ian Clunies-Ross

Peter Chambers was thanked for the presentation of the 2020-2021 financial report.

Financial Reviewer

The Chair nominated Kevin Duggan to be appointed as Financial Reviewer for the Wellington Branch of GSA for the year ending 31 March 2022.

It was moved and seconded that Kevin Duggan be appointed Financial Reviewer for the Wellington Branch of the GSA for the year ending 31 March 2022.

Chair/Ian Clunies-Ross

Election of Branch Committee

It was moved and seconded that Michael Smith be elected as Chairman for the year ending 31 March 2022.

The Chairman was appointed unopposed and by acclamation.

Suzanne Holgate/Paul Franken

Deputy Chairman: There was no nomination for Deputy Chairman.

Branch Committee Members:

Eight nominations had been received. The Chairman asked those nominated to stand to make themselves known to members. They are Ian Clunies-Ross, Kevin Duggan, Suzanne Holgate, Kay Monks, Alan Peck (not present), Elizabeth Smaal, Bryan Whisker and Ray Woolhouse.

It was moved and seconded that the eight members nominated for the Wellington Branch Committee be appointed en bloc.

Paul Pryce/Val Watson

The Chair invited those present to consider serving on the branch committee. It was also suggested that at the first committee meeting the branch committee should nominate one of its members to act as Deputy Chair.

Peter Chambers has stepped down from the branch committee. The Chair acknowledged and thanked Peter for his contribution to the branch. He had served on the Wellington branch committee for some years and had also served on the GSA Board in the past.

General Business

Members present who were not at the 2020 AGM and who had not received a centennial tote bag were invited to collect one. Copies of the 'Safeguarding Super' book were available at \$40 per copy. Order forms for the book were also available but that would incur the cost of courier postage.

Guest Speaker: Tony Hamilton, President of GSA.

The Chair invited Tony Hamilton, the President of GSA to speak to members. Tony was in the 3rd year of his presidency. He has a background in education and was a school principal before his retirement.

Tony thanked past and present Chairs and committees of the Wellington branch. GSA operations depended significantly on the volunteer. GSA had a small number of paid staff and

mostly relied on the members who volunteered to run the business. GSA continued to rely on the branch committees to operate.

His personal view is that GSA should continue to be run by the branch committees as long as the organisation exists. He wanted to ensure that annuities were still being paid to members and not taken away in the next decades. It was predicted that the fund would be depleted in 2080. If operated well, the fund could go beyond this prediction. It was essential that GSA continue to regenerate new committee members particularly in the bigger branches, with younger members involved at branch level. Succession planning was important. Becoming a committee member was not a particularly onerous task. GSA was established as an Incorporated Society and set up to have a body, the Board, to govern the organisation. Without a local committee to keep local activities going, it would be impossible to put forward members for election to the Board. It is important to have active local committee members operate at branch levels.

Succession planning is also an issue at Board level. At last year's Council meeting, two branches were unable to attend due to Covid 19 precautions. Council was unable to hold an election for the Board. Two Board members, Rob Brangwin and Mike Smith, have advised that they will stand down from the Board at Council in 2021. The Board will need to seek new members through the branch committees.

The Board was currently working on a paper regarding who/what criteria to look for when appointing to the Board. To achieve balance/diversity both graphically and by gender, involvement at branch committee level and having an understanding and interest in the issues facing GSA are all important. Diversity on the Board is essential.

The Board is also looking at the GSA Constitution with a view to making changes some of which will in particular cover issues that arose as a result of Covid – 19. These planned rule changes are:

- 1 With the impact of Covid 19, GSA needed to be able to suspend a rule to allow for virtual meetings. The changed rule will allow for on-line meetings in the future.
- 2 Due to health concerns, two of the branches, Horowhenua/Kapiti and Otago, did not send their delegates to the Council meeting and so were unable to register their votes. To prevent this reoccurring, the rule will be amended to allow proxy voting. Some conditions including getting the approval from the Board prior to the Council to allow proxy voting, will be put in place to avoid the 2020 situation.
- 3 There was no automatic right for a branch Chair to be a delegate to attend the Council. Currently the rule is being reworded to cover this area.
- 4 Currently subscription changes are not mentioned in the rule. A rule will be introduced to enable the subscription to be looked at each year at the Council meeting. However, the rule will not suggest any increase would have to happen every year.

- 5 An amalgamation policy will be introduced as a result of some difficulties with branches in 2020. The constitution allowed branches to amalgamate but there is no current process. Having a policy and process for amalgamation has proved to be helpful and the Board was able to follow through its process with a couple of branches. These branches eventually, with the amalgamation process identified in the Constitution, were able to regenerate and solve problems.
- 6 The branch health check survey was to be sent out from the Board. It is usually sent out to branches every year but not in 2020 due to the Covid 19 lockdown.

The President provided an update on the COLA petition presented to Parliament in 2018. The Government is supportive but the necessary funding did not appear in the government's budget for 2021. Tony advised that he had met with Grant Robertson, the Ministry of Finance, on a couple of occasions. He was optimistic that the funding would be actioned eventually as the Hon. Grant Robertson understood the issue for GSA and he was more than supportive. However, the funding was not provided for in the current government budget. A message received from the Office of Grant Robertson stated this was not a definite "No" and that there were two more budgets during the term of the current government to again give consideration to this matter. The Board will continue lobbying other Cabinet Ministers to push the issue.

The Board operates on a sub-committee system. The Employment subcommittee is to ensure that all legal requirements are met for staff working for GSA such as health and safety in the workplace. The subcommittee needs to keep working on improving this area, particularly in relation to police checks as part of a job application process.

The Board had carried out a major work from 2017-2018 regarding the future of GSA. A number of recommendations were presented in a paper that will be reported at the Council meeting this year.

GSA exists and operates under the Incorporated Societies Act. A Bill, currently before Parliament, sets out changes to rules for governing societies. The Bill is currently in front of Parliament and has had its 3rd reading. It was open for submissions which close on Friday 28 May 2021. Bill Robertson had written a submission in 2017 regarding members 'approving' the financial report being 'presented' to members. The Bill indicates that the Incorporate Society was not to provide its members with 'financial benefits'. This raises a question over members being subsidised the cost of meals. The Board will need to consider if this will be an issue in the future. The Bill is also not clear on how GSA would fit into the legislation regarding auditing and clarification will be needed. There was no certain date when the legislation would be back at Parliament.

In the Annuity News, there was an article about 'assignment' of one's annuity. It was essential that members understand how assignment works. Members can assign up to 50% of their annuity to anyone at all and to more than one person. When a member agrees to an assignment, Datacom recalculates the annuity. Once an assignment has been made it cannot be reversed. Assigning an annuity can be a way for a member to maximise the benefit before

his or her death. Members considering assignment, **must** discuss their situation with Datacom to understand fully how this worked. GSA does not provide any financial advice to members.

Tony also commented on the work done by the Appeals Board to rectify members' problems in recent years. There have been cases where the cost of representing cases has been supported by the GSA and successful results achieved. The work of the Appeals Board is confidential and the GSA only becomes involved when a GSA member requests assistance. However, it was Tony's personal view that since the outcome of these cases, Datacom and GSFA have changed the way they operate.

The Chair thanked Tony Hamilton for his detailed and helpful update and closed the 2021 AGM at 12.02pm.

Confirmed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Smith', written in a cursive style.

Michael Smith
Wellington Branch Chair
26 May 2021.