

ASGS
National Office Funds Diversion
An Overview of the Actions of the Executive Committee

History and Legal Actions

As described in Article IV of the ASGS bylaws the Executive Committee shall exercise the full power of the Board of Directors when the Board is not in session. With this authority the former and current Executive Committees took several actions regarding the alleged misdirection of Society funds and the subsequent closing of the National Office. Since these events took place as one Committee was finishing their term and the next was about to begin, all of the initial actions were taken only after a vote of both sets of officers. In every instance the Executive Committee(s) were able to reach unanimous consensus before taking any action.

Treasurer Hodgson's report to the Fall ²⁰⁰² 2003 Board of Directors meeting gives a detailed accounting of the history and events that would eventually lead to embezzlement charges being filed against the former Manager of ASGS National Office. On May 19th 2002 the Treasurer formally notified the standing and incoming Executive Committees of these accounting irregularities. A copy of this notification is included in the treasurer's report. The standing Executive Committee was President: Gary Coyne, President-Elect: Edwin Powell, Secretary: Michael Souza, Treasurer: James Hodgson, and Executive Secretary: Gordon Smith. The incoming Executive Committee would be President: Edwin Powell, President-Elect: Michael Souza, Treasurer: James Hodgson, Secretary: Kenneth Owens, and Executive Secretary: David Daenzer. Former Treasurer Sally Prasch and Bookkeeper Amy Collins were also formally notified. Both Executive Committees unanimously voted to notify legal authorities in High Point, North Carolina, the jurisdiction of the National Office. High Point police found the initial evidence sufficient to proceed and assigned Detective Vuncannon to the case. Treasurer Hodgson began transferring copies of his records to Detective Vuncannon, who also began working with the Wachovia Bank Security Officer. Wachovia is the bank where the un-official ASGS account had been established. Wachovia's records were subpoenaed. Upon review of all records obtained the High Point Police arrested the ASGS National Office Manager, Mrs. Dawn Hodgkins, on June 19, 2002. She was charged with five counts of felony ³ embezzlement. President Powell and President-Elect Souza were present during the arrest and were allowed to remove ASGS property. At this time, President Powell officially notified Mrs. Hodgkins of the Society's intent to not renew her contract as National Office Manager. This was a written notification.

The District Attorney's Office ¹⁶ must present their charges in court. Initial court dates of August 7th and October 19th have been postponed by the prosecutor. The District Attorney and the Victim/Witness Assistant assigned to this case consider these delays within the norm and no reason for concern.

Contingency Plans and Actions of the Executive Committee

The Detective in the case and an attorney the Executive Committee consulted with both stressed the need to keep all of this information contained until formal legal action had been taken. With no indication of how quickly the legal proceedings might move, the Executive Committees worked on contingency plans to handle the imminent

Symposium in Point Clear Alabama. These included a schedule to work the registration desk and how to best inform the Board of Directors and Members of the ASGS should legal action take place immediately before the Symposium. With no legal action occurring before the symposium the Executive Committee took the following actions in Alabama;

1. That the current ASGS bookkeeper, Mrs. Amy Collins of, Bookkeeping Plus would be hired as Interim Office Manager immediately after the close of the current office. The terms of this engagement are on a month-to-month basis with specifically no stated or implied promise of future engagement
2. That David G Daenzer will act as the Society's official contact point regarding all legal proceedings.
3. That David G Daenzer will serve as chair of an ad hoc committee to define the Society's needs regarding national office services and abilities, and pursue bids to supply such.

Discussion of the makeup of this ad hoc committee followed. The desire to represent several geographic areas and encompass expertise in different aspects of the Society's business steered this discussion. Final committee selection was the responsibility of President Powell.

After the Symposium the Executive committee focused on the pending legal action and transfer of the National Office. Details of changing phone numbers, addresses, e-mail addresses etc. were discussed and assigned to various members.

Details of how and when to notify the Board and general membership were worked in great detail. It was decided that the Board of Directors and specifically involved committee chairs would be notified immediately after legal action was taken. Formal notification of the general membership and a posting to the electronic message boards would follow within days. A schedule was produced, agreed to and followed. Notification letters were drafted, discussed, revised and finally unanimously approved by the Executive Committee. The notification documents for the electronic discussion pages were also discussed and worked at length. Concerns that inflammatory and potentially libelous statements might be posted by Society Members shaped the notification documents. The tasks of printing, posting, and mailing the various notifications were assigned, scheduled and executed per schedule. Board members and key committee chairs were also contacted by phone by a current or former Executive Committee member. The primary goal of all of this was to rally support and quench any counterproductive and potentially damaging rumors or public speculation.

While the severity of this situation is great the Executive Committees have struggled to put emotions aside and act in the best interest of the Society. We were pleased with the Society's courteous and professional response to this news and hope that this same spirit will guide our actions as we move forward.

Respectfully Submitted
Kenneth E Owens
National Secretary