
REPORT FROM GCSAA DELEGATES MEETING

LAWRENCE, KANSAS • SEPTEMBER 25 & 26, 1993

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A special meeting of GCSAA affiliated voting delegates was held in Lawrence, Kansas on September 25 & 26, 1993. Sixty-three chapter voting delegates attended the meeting (out of 113 chapters) and were joined by the GCSAA officers and directors and members of the Resource Committee appointed by GCSAA president Randy Nichols.

An update on GCSAA bylaw changes to be voted on in Dallas was given, and delegates were informed about futures initiatives.

As the WGCSA delegate, it is my duty to share results of that meeting with members of our chapter. What follows here is a summary of eleven hours of discussion. At the end I will give you my personal assessment of the meeting.

The first order of business was a "State of the Association" address from Nichols. His main focus was information about the resignation of two key employees, one board member, and the elimination of yet another upper management position. The famed "Arthur Anderson" study was also discussed at length.

The business study by the Anderson group was brought about by a threatened lawsuit, from a member of the Association, that demanded access to payroll records of key GCSAA employees.

The Anderson study applauded the reputation and the financial status of the GCSAA, and reported a talented staff at headquarters. It found some problems with employee morale and evidence of ineffective communication in all of the departments.

By now you know that past president William R. Roberts resigned his position from the GCSAA board of directors for reasons directly tied to the implementation of recommendations of the Arthur Anderson study.

Bill's June 6, 1993 letter of resignation from the board has never been communicated to the membership, by the way.

The Arthur Anderson study recommended the restructure of GCSAA by creating new positions, consolidating others and eliminating the one previously noted.

The director of communications and chief legal counsel position was eliminated. Robert Ochs held the position, and the change relieved him of all duties. The study recommended the creation of a deputy chief executive officer position which was offered to long time GCSAA employee Diana Green, with some restrictions. Diana has since resigned.

Executive director John Schilling resigned from GCSAA to form his own company—St. Andrews Consulting—in the business of trade show management. It was reported that Schilling and GCSAA parted on excellent terms. Interestingly, both Green and Ochs have gone to work for St. Andrews.

Positions created by the study were: chief financial officer, human resources manager and deputy chief executive officer. A position of director of information will be filled from

within. There would be the creation of a new conference and show department. The communications and publications department would be combined. An outside law firm has been interviewed to serve as legal counsel in the absence of internal representation previously offered by Robert Ochs.

Delegates were offered an opportunity to ask questions of the board. Of obvious and immediate concern was the replacement of executive director Schilling. No timetable or search parameters were announced at this meeting, but the naming of a successor was recognized as being extremely important. The employment notice was to have been placed in a "National Organization of Association Executive Directors" trade publication or employment referral.

In May of 1993 a resource committee was established to review the bylaws of the GCSAA. This committee consisted of GCSA board members Nichols, Baidy and Williams. Members at large were Tom Benefield, Frank Dobie, Frank Lamphier, Sanford Queen, Roger Stewart, Robert Tillema, Tom Witt and Randy Zidik.

Board member Bruce Williams explained to the delegates present that there would be a rehashing of some of the bylaw changes proposed last year in Anaheim. It was the feeling of the resource committee that some of the issues, if written in a different format, may have passed and deserved a second look. Some of the defeated bylaw amendments carried a majority of the votes cast but not by the two-thirds necessary for enactment.

Some of the issues reviewed and amended would update the language in the Articles of Incorporation and the Preamble of the bylaws. The discussion centered on the word "greenkeeping". A clear majority favored a more timely, modern wording without forgetting our heritage. There was a proposal that served notice of penalty for submitting false or inaccurate information on your membership or dues statements. The executive committee would now serve as trustees in the administration of the benevolence fund, if passed.

It was proposed that the board of directors of the association would be able to establish the standing rules of membership in an effort to create other membership classes. Several new classifications were proposed here. The board would have the right to establish dues for all classes except AA, A, B and C.

There was a proposed change to the voting on any dues increase that would use the majority vote of members present to a majority of votes as cast by the voting delegates and proxies and individuals present at the annual meeting. The C classification would separate assistant golf course superintendents from Class B superintendents. Class D would be a classification reserved for golf course employees. Class E would be a classification for educators or extension officers.

A new classification F was created for the increased interest of club/golf/association officials. Honorary members would carry lifetime appointments until revoked by the board of directors. Retired membership dues were established to be half the rate of his previous classification. The results of chapter delegate voting would be published in *NEWSLINE* as soon as the results could be forwarded for publication.

It was proposed that the position of secretary/treasurer shall be elected by the membership and that the office of vice president shall consist of one or more nominees. Discussion of the amount of bonding by a surety company for the secretary/treasurer was considered. A bylaws change to officially change the title of executive director to that of chief executive officer was put back on the table for consideration.

There was a bylaw proposal that would require a two-thirds majority vote of the board to pass indebtedness to any current or future board. Consideration was given to publishing the vote of all board members and making issues public. This was set aside with the feeling that it might restrict openness and free thinking. Finally, a proposal to limit the powers of the GCSAA president was considered.

The discussion of the bylaws and other issues took all of five hours. All proposed changes will now be forwarded to the bylaws committee for review and final language before being sent to Dallas to be voted on.

In related matters that would bear directly on our chapter, a proposed chapter dues proposal came to light. What is hoped for here is the development of a stronger networking of chapter from across the country. The following reasons for chapter dues were given:

1. Communications. An increase in the participation of GCSAA within chapters. This would allow for input on the direction of the GCSAA.
2. Formation of an information sharing network.
3. Assistance to local chapters with regulatory issues.
4. Administrative expertise of the GCSAA.
5. Public relations help with local, state and national matters.
6. Assistance in financial matters.
7. Assistance with chapter education events.
8. Accountability as an association of professionals.

A lengthy discussion centered on this proposal. It wasn't the costs of running the program that captivated our attention as much as what service would be available or what would be beneficial now and in the future. It is GCSAA's position that it benefits all golf course superintendents, whether they are presently members or not, by representing them in Washington D.C. on regulatory issues. It is the feeling at GCSAA that the chapter liaison program failed and thus the new emphasis on chapter initiatives.

The final two hours of the Sunday meeting were spent on development of long range plans. It was here that a proposed bylaw limiting presidential powers was discussed. Requests for minutes and voting records of the board were made and discussed. Delegates voted almost unanimously to turn them back as being counter productive to the decision making process. A primary reason was that the minutes seldom reflect the length, content or emotion of the discussion prior to the vote at hand.

Our international agenda was discussed. Problems with the staffing of the Pacific Rim office have created some problems for the people there who want to use the Lawrence office. Currently, they are considering hiring local help

in the staffing of the Pacific office. The Pacific Rim conference and show has been merged with another trade show. GCSAA board members are in the process of renegotiating a short term contract that will make this show profitable. We were informed that this show lost money in its first year of existence, and is being fully underwritten by dues paid by our international members. GCSAA has come to realize the strong demand for educational materials for this and other parts of the world. We were told that Golf Course Management magazine is being printed now in Japanese and Spanish.

FAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS

1. Open meeting of delegates from all regions of the country.
2. Opportunity to propose, criticize present and future policies and to format future agendas.
3. Open meeting format allowed for compromise on the issues. This developed feeling of cooperation among chapters and delegates.
4. Eliminated the secret dealings and power plays of back room politics. Formed opinion that we were all on the same team pulling together. May not have agreed totally with other delegates, but that many ideas were not that far apart.
5. Made chapter representation meaningful, like in the Senate, where large and small have equal voting strength.
6. Delegates actually rejected the board's suggestion for open voting records on controversial subjects.

UNFAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS

1. GCSAA board lacked an agenda complete with goals. Seemed rudderless. At one point a delegate told them that they were elected and trusted. Just do the job!
2. Seemed to me that a few of the board members were there for the glory of the position. But now they had to produce and they were not prepared for or just underestimated the work and time commitment of the task ahead of them.
3. Board lacked definite proposals. The delegates were asked to supply detail on what we would like to see done. Usually a proposal has a foundation on which you build.
4. Meeting could have been dominated by most vocal chapter with a "special" agenda.
5. Took exception with president Nichols' statement that delegates are incapable of understanding everything that comes before the board. Sure, we do not have all the facts. But I am aware of others who feel that way about the board, and they DO have all the facts!

SUGGESTIONS

I would like to see a system that promotes and encourages the sharpest of golf course superintendents to make a run for the board. At times I had the feeling that a part-time board of nine superintendents is simply overwhelmed by the tasks, time commitments and job requirements. It might be time to expand the board in numbers, thus creating a regional body of representation. I am not ignorant of the 50 or more hours spent each week on GCSAA tasks.

I would really like to see board members that create and shape policy from the time of election until they exit as past president. I would like to see a president declare his goals and objectives as soon as he takes office instead of waiting until the final months of his presidency. Finally, I would like to see *NEWSLINE* publish letters a little more hard hitting than those dealing with the cost of a golf shirt. 🍷