

# Minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Ghana Transportation Professionals Forum in Washington, DC

Date and Time: Tuesday, January 12, 2016 from 7:00pm - 10:00pm

Venue: Independence A Room at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Washington DC.

## Meeting Highlights

**Website Update:** Sam Essien (webmaster) provided an overview and walked members through the new GTPF website. Website can be viewed at <http://www.ghanatransportationprofessionalsforum.org/>. Members had opportunity to provide input and comments. Planned updates for the website include linking to GTPF Facebook and LinkedIn pages. Sam as requested assistance from members with IT skills to help manage the website.

**Financial Statement:** Dr. Sam Labi (Out-going President) presented the financial statement to the group. Also informed members GTPF now has a Well Fargo account where members can deposit dues. The option of opening a PayPal account was also discussed.

**Newsletter:** Mary Kissi urged members to be more proactive and engaged in activities of the organization. One way she felt members could contribute is to send interesting articles, content and any relevant information they had about transportation activities in Ghana to Executives, so it could be included in the Newsletter. Members are also encouraged to send in job positions, especially entry level and internships that will be of value to the college students in the group.

**Membership Database:** Sam Labi and Senanu (Outgoing Vice President) led discussions on development of the central database of the members and their expertise. Simon Saddier, a project officer from Agence Francaise and Development who had presented at TRB on a project in Ghana that gathered data on vehicle routes in Ghana using GPS technology was present. He discussed initial challenges he had faced identifying skilled professionals and felt if the member expertise data base was available, he could have use it to identify subject matter experts on his project. Prof Noworsu at University of California also emphasized the importance of the database. He has had calls from consultants who wanted to initiate or work on projects in Ghana and needed information on the country and did not know where to start. There were varying positions of how database could be developed, but the general consensus that members here and those in Ghana could benefit from the database.

**Elections:** We took a break for members to have brief socialization and re- assembled for election of new executives. The President mentioned the need to have a change in the leadership for new infusion of ideas, people and moving the group forward. The current executive had been in charge for the last 3 years and had at least accomplished some goals that could be continued. This included the official registration of the group as a non-profit in the US and setting up of the website, and opening a new bank account. The outgoing Secretary Alexander Appea presided over the elections and voting and the following executive positions were filled by those present:

- President                      Dr. Senanu Ashiabor
- Vice President                Mary Kissi
- Secretary                        Mary Ankomah
- Treasurer                        Dr. Sam Ababio

- Webmaster Sam Essien.

**Graduate Student Award:** The out-going GTPF Executive set up an award for graduate students with the highest number of publications/presentations accepted by the TRB. This maiden edition of the award was won by Dr. Margaret Akofio-Sowah from Georgia Tech, a student of Dr. Adzo Amekudzi. Dr. Sam Labi presented here with the award, a plaque and token financial sum. We plan to continue this award as an incentive and encouragement to the younger transportation engineers among us.

**Ghana Conference:** Proposal to host a transportation related conference in Ghana. Engineer Magnus Quarshie (Past President of GhIE) and Dr. Sam Ababio led the discussions in this area. A committee was to be set up to coordinate with GhIE to plan the conference. Our colleague engineers came from Ghana, Messrs. Collins Donkor, Magnus Quarshie discussed how the collaboration between the GTPF and the Ghanaian Engineering community can be deepened and ways of future collaboration. The upcoming Conference planned to be held in Ghana will be such a good collaboration between the group here and our colleagues in Ghana.

**Feature Presentation:** Dr. Sam Ababio presented outline on the development of a Transportation Manual for Ghana, the challenges involved and how it can finally be brought into fruition. Sam requested for volunteers who are experts in the different fields in transportation engineering to contribute their input. Dr. Riverson who had prior experience working with the World Bank suggested submitting a proposal to the World Bank to fund the development of the Manual since detailed work and time input from experts is needed in that area.

**Other matters** discussed after the elections included:

- Managing content on the Facebook, LinkedIn, and GTPF website. Currently, information posted is not coordinated across platforms.
- Other issues discussed was the improvement of the newsletters, future collaboration with other sister groups like the Architects and Engineers Association based in New Jersey.

The meeting was adjourned for members to socialize and take group pictures.

### **Updates to the Meeting**

The newly elected Executive has been holding monthly meetings since the January Annual Meeting. A key item that came up was the position of External Relations Officer, created by past President that was not filled during the meeting in DC.

The President had initially invited Margaret Akofio-Sowah. During discussions it was decided since Dr. Ababio has very active developing various initiatives in Ghana, including engaging with the Ghana Institution of Engineers and also leading several trips with students from the US to build both a bridge and a school in Ghana, he will be better suited to work in the position of External Relations Coordinator.

Based on Article VII Section 5 of the GTPF constitution which allows “Any vacancy which may occur in an office shall be filled by appointment by the president pending ratification at the next group meeting.” The following changes were made to the 2016 Executive team positions: Dr. Ababio was re-assigned from

Treasure to the position of External Relations Officer, and Dr. Margaret Akofio-Sowah is assigned to fill the position of Treasurer. The updated executive team is as follows:

- President: Dr. Senanu Ashiabor
- Vice President Mary Kissi
- Secretary Mary Ankomah
- Treasurer Dr. Margaret Akofio-Sowah
- External Relations Coordinator: Dr. Sam Ababio
- Webmaster Sam Essien.