

MINUTES OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR GEODETIC SURVEYING

Date 11 March 2026

Time 4:07 pm EDT

Called to order by Dave Zilkoski

In Attendance	Dave Zilkoski	President
	Karen Meckel	Secretary
	Dan Martin	Treasurer
	Muge Albayrak	President-Elect
	Kevin Algren	Immediate Past President
	Rachel Alexander	3 rd Year Director/Vice President
	Jay Doody	2 nd Year Director
	John Hamilton	1 st Year Director
	Jacob Heck	NSPS Liaison

Absent	Tom Meyer	Reporter
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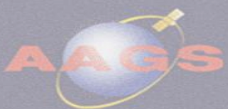
Guests	Mikael Lilje	FIG Presidential Nominee
	Dan Colling	
	Tony Cavell	
	Dave Doyle	
	Larry Hothem	
	Wendy Lathrop	
	Bob Burtch	

Approval of Agenda

Board unanimously approved the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from February 2026 Board meeting read and approved by unanimous consent.



MINUTES OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR GEODETIC SURVEYING

Guest Speaker Mikael Lilje

Mikael Lilje introduced himself and gave some background about himself and his goals for FIG (International Federation of Surveyors). The intro can be found at the end of the meeting minutes.

Mikael opened the floor for ideas and thoughts that AAGS members would like to share with him as FIG president.

John Hamilton made a motion that AAGS support Mikael's candidacy for FIG president. Kevin Algren seconded. Motion passed.

"Good coordinate starts with good coordination"

John Hamilton asked who the other presidential candidate is.

Mikael replied that it is another European man named Michael who is from Greece and has just started his term as FIG Vice President. Mikael believes that this is his first role within FIG.

Secretary's note: Michalis Kalogiannakis is the other candidate for FIG prez 2027.

Larry Hothem asked if the election will be during the Cape Town Congress.

Voting is done when the Congress is in session in Africa, but voting can be done remotely as well since it is electronic.

Larry stated that he will be attending the Congress and asked about the standards activity. He asked that Mikael comment about the standards network group.

The standards network is active and chaired by David Martin. David is trying to have meetings during working weeks and the Congresses to understand what is happening within the standards networks throughout the Commission*.

Mikael has not spoken with David yet.

Dave Z addressed Mikael about his mention of webinars and pointed out that AAGS is doing some YouTube videos aimed at explaining geodetic concepts, lasting an hour or so, and exploring doing shorter presentations as well. Dave suggested that FIG offer some short YouTube videos from around the world if that is not already in the works.

Dave asked what others in the international community are trying to do to build capacity and educate surveyors. He stated that he watches international webinars and seminars that are on the site now and enjoys them, but there is a need for something tailored to a more general audience besides PhD level participants.

Mikael responded that there are some podcasts, but not on a regular basis and that FIG needs to step up with this type of outreach. That FIG should do something, and we can learn from each other. He mentioned that Tim Burtch in



MINUTES OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR GEODETIC SURVEYING

NSPS is trying to do something with podcasts, and thanked Dave for bringing up the subject.

Wendy Lathrop stated that she is in favor of these little sessions and would like their topics to be more than just technical in nature. She pointed out that there is a dearth of incoming people to NSPS and every state organization. She thinks that FIG could be more involved and asked how to entice a wider variety of people since surveying is so diverse. She mentioned that unlike the AAGS group present, she is not a geodesist, but is involved with boundary, floodplain, and environmental work. The underlying thread is getting people's interest and educating the public about the importance of geodesy and surveying and all the related things that efforts in those fields support in people's lives.

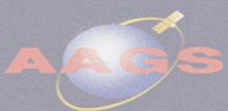
Mikael responded that the technical side of things is not his only interest and that with FIG's ten commissions and the number of task forces there are so many subjects available. He stated that personally, he is interested in work ethics and the legal frameworks regarding artificial intelligence as opposed to only looking at the AI technique, using it as an example of the many subjects that FIG could elaborate on. He thanked Wendy for her observation.

Tony Cavell observed that the part that is missing in most of the seminars being offered is the answers to two questions of what and why: what is geodesy? Why do we care? Tony stated that if people knew the answers to those questions, then their interest could be tickled. He mentioned that it is easy for us to expand on what we find favorable and fun, but we need to consider what the audience needs to spark its interest. He referred to Wendy's comment, saying that we need what is known in theatrical terms as a hook for the not-yet-interested person.

Mikael agreed with Tony. He brought up the United Nations focus on geodesy and the geodetic infrastructure,** asking what happens if that infrastructure is not available. He asked how society will look without it, using the example as one of the many different aspects of geodesy outside of the hardcore scientific side.

Dave Doyle followed up on what Dave Z addressed regarding YouTube videos on geodesy. He stated that he and Dave Z have already made several very low-key videos that have been well-received. Dave D wondered if it would be feasible to have them subtitled or translated to different languages if the subject matter is appropriate to FIG's goals. He mentioned that he and Dave Z are updating some of the videos to include more contemporary aspects in geodesy that were not included in the earlier works.

Mikael found the suggestion an interesting one for how to reach out to a wider audience. He stated that English is the official language of FIG, but that the organization lacks member associations in the Americas, pointing out Latin America where the language barrier might be an issue. Mikael said that FIG



MINUTES OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR GEODETIC SURVEYING

probably needs to have more Spanish and that French is prevalent in areas of West Africa, so expanding the language might be an avenue for reaching out.

Dave D offered to send Mikael a link in the next couple of days to see if the idea is worth more discussion.

Dave Z asked if there were any more questions or comments. There being none, he offered one last question. He brought up the decades-old subject of geodetic certification that has been in the AAGS works. His question addressed whether something like the certification project would be appropriate for FIG to initiate on an international basis to bring foundational knowledge of geodesy to participants and asked if FIG has anything similar in place.

Mikael stated that FIG does not have anything that specific in place but does offer continuing professional development credits through its events and said that he believed that Australia has a system for continuing development. Mikael stated that something like the certification effort would need a longer discussion to understand how FIG would be able to undertake such a role.

Dan Martin pointed out that U.S. surveyors concentrate on boundary and topographic surveys. While that was not problematic in the past, surveyors are now using geodetic systems. He stated that he believes that the tendency is to use the systems as a tool without fundamentally understanding that tool. The objective of the certification program is to provide the foundational knowledge that can enable surveyors to use their geodetic systems with some understanding of how they work. Dan observed that surveyors probably did not learn coming through the ranks or in school about the geodetic side of surveying because of the emphasis on boundary.

Mikael answered that he is very proud of the FIG Reference Frames in Practice*** seminar given at conferences starting in 2011. He stated that this is a kind of workshop or seminar that gives some basic knowledge about reference frames. He thinks that these are the kinds of things that could support the idea of getting some kind of certificate for completing a FIG seminar. Something to be considered.

Dave Z asked if it would be possible for Commission 5 to have meetings that allow Zoom or GoTo participants or observers. Kevin Algren responded that some of the commissions do that now. Kevin observed that AAGS has the incoming commission five chair and will have some say over this issue.

Larry Hothem explained how seminars at the FIG meetings were in the past and how the communications worked. He also pointed out that some of them had links for virtual attendance, that those who joined that way also received copies of the slides used in the presentations.

Discussion ensued with Kevin, Larry and Mikael contributing about allowing virtual attendance at seminars and the logistics of setting up and paying for them.



MINUTES OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR GEODETIC SURVEYING

After the discussion, Mikael thanked the AAGS group stating that he is happy to have these discussions because he learns so much and hears what the expectations are from member groups. He then signed off.

The board skipped officer reports and proceeded to committee reports.

Reports

President—MOU for SaLIS has been signed. Dave will send copy to board

Secretary—No report

Treasurer—No report.

Reporter—No report

President-Elect—No new YouTube videos yet. Dave Z said that Dru Smith is willing to do some YouTube presentations. Muge is considering shorter videos as well. Discussion ensued about doing some kind of presentation about new system and heights w/re FEMA maps/vertical transformations.

Wendy suggested that the Association of Floodplain Managers might be a good resource for figuring out what is going on or what to do about floodplain mapping issues.

Immediate Past President—No report

3rd Year Director/Vice President—No report

Publications—No report

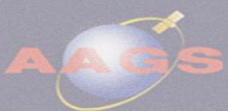
Education—still trying to assemble a group to review the final questions. Bob Burtch mentioned that Ferris State is thinking about dropping one of their two geodesy courses. Dave will send them a letter if Bob gets info to him.

Membership—No report

COGO—Report included at the end of this document.

NSPS Liaison—Jacob reported that scholarship selections are complete. Quarterly meeting of AAGS/NSPS/NGS coming up this Friday at 1p.m. The NSPS spring meeting and competition will be in April.

FIG—John Hamilton adds that we should try to participate as much as possible. John is going to IGS meeting in Santiago, Chile. Kevin is planning to attend FIG meeting in South Africa and Larry Hothem is attending as well. The board wants to send John to the FIG conference, but it is a possible conflict with IGS in Chile. John will see what he can arrange.



MINUTES OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR GEODETIC SURVEYING

Dave Z asked if there was anything more to discuss.

Kevin stated that for the graduate scholarships we reviewed some good candidates but were restricted to giving only one award. He also thinks that we should be more proactive in getting these grads on our committees at our meetings. He offered to draft a letter to send to the individuals to encourage them to get involved with the organization.

Dan Martin indicated that depending on market behavior AAGS can probably support a second scholarship. He also spoke about reimbursement for AAGS representation at conferences. Reimbursement is supported and the form to submit has been emailed. Dan is checking with Trish to find the official policy.

Karen asked Dan Colling of NGA about giving the board a presentation on NGA activities. Dan C responded that he had contacted Dave Z to talk about what he does as a geodetic surveyor. Dan is interested in the AAGS certification. Karen also asked about the new EGM model.

Dan C responded that they are talking about it, but lost one of the people working on it, so he does not have any knowledge of when it will be implemented.

In reference to his presentation, Dan C said that the next meeting on April 8 will work for him.

John Hamilton mentioned that he is eager to hear from NGA about what they are doing, that he does work on military bases and uses WGS84 and EGM08. John would like to see more participation from others at NGA in AAGS.

Dan responded that their group is a niche and does not reach out to others easily. However, he is very interested in the geodetic certification program because it can act as a comparison standard for his group, so there might be some participation.

Announcements—Dan Martin read for the good of the Order statement

Next Meeting—April 8, 2026. 4pm EDT

Meeting Adjourned

Dave adjourned the meeting at 5:30pm EDT



MINUTES OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR GEODETIC SURVEYING

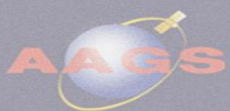
Notes

*For more information on FIG Commissions: <https://fig.net/organisation/comm/>

** For information on the U.N. on geodesy issues:
https://ggim.un.org/UNGGCE/documents/20240509-Global_Geodesy_Needs_Assessment.pdf

***For more information on 2026 FIG Reference Frames in Practice:
<https://www.fig.net/fig2026/rfip.htm>

For the good of the Order: For the Good of the Order, the AAGS Board gives the President and Treasurer the authority to carry out the day-to-day activities of the AAGS until the next Board Meeting



MINUTES OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR GEODETIC SURVEYING

Background and Intro by Mikael Lilje at March AAGS Board Meeting

Mikael is based in Sweden, working for the Swedish Mapping Cadastral Land Registration Authority as International Department head. Supports the Director-General with international commitments such as the UN, GDIM (World Bank) and many Nordic & European organizations. He spends much of his time developing aid projects in Africa and Eastern Europe.

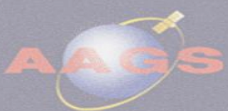
Mikael has been associated with FIG (International Federation of Surveyors) since 1998 when he was a secretary of FIG Commission 5. He has worked as group chair, commission chair, task force lead, and vice president over the years, filling most roles in the organization. He is happy to have been nominated as president for the 2027 – 2030 term.

Having had the position of Geodetic Infrastructure Department head at the Swedish Mapping Authority, Mikael was able to combine that with his FIG Commission 5 position. He has the full support of his employer for the potential new FIG position, enabling him to adjust his work duties as needed should he be elected FIG president.

As FIG president, Mikael wants to focus on sustainability & capacity development. FIG income depends on its conferences. The organization needs to work on its business model to achieve and continue to develop sustainability. Mikael has a strong interest in capacity development—how to develop the conferences, have more webinars and work more regionally. There have been regional efforts in the Americas and Africa. He would like to see what is working and what needs work for these regional conferences.

Mikael pointed out that FIG has a working week scheduled in Canada in 2029 and encouraged us to participate.

He wants to work more closely with member associations since they are the foundation for FIG. Trying to understand member association needs and expectations and how to support them should be a priority.



MINUTES OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR GEODETIC SURVEYING

COGO Report for March 11 Meeting

Submitted by Jay Doody 10 March 2026

1. COGO NSDI Assessment Update.

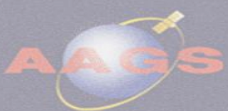
will finalize the 5 questions we want in the Assessment Survey by March 15. The survey will be ready to send out by April 15. Jay Doody will work with NSPS and AAGS to better publicize this survey to get a better response than the last time (118 responses).

2. NOP/NOS/NOAA FY2026 Budget update. NGS and CO-OPS are part of the frontline unit "Navigation, Observation and Position". This is part of the "National Ocean Service" in NOAA. NOP, NOS and NOAA can be tracked for approved budget amounts and FTE numbers.

In the summer of 2025, the White House submitted a budget for NOAA which slashed the budget by \$1.5 Billion and attempted to cement the 2,000 firings and other position losses at NOAA into the FY2026 budget.

Congress rejected the White House budget for NOP/NOS/NOAA. The Senate passed the FY2026 minibus appropriations bill (H.R. 6938) containing funding for NOAA and NASA on January 15, 2026, with a bipartisan 82-15 vote, following House passage on January 8, 2026. The bill was signed into law by the President on January 23, 2026, becoming Public Law No: 119-74. This legislation rejected deep cuts proposed by the administration, sustaining operations for both agencies through the fiscal year.

The final bill for FY2026 ensures that NOAA's core scientific functions are maintained at 2025 levels rather than the significantly reduced budget proposed by the executive branch. The FY2026 Minibus Budget Bill "Commerce, Justice, Science - Joint Explanatory Statement (CJS-JES) was published at the end of January 2026. It provides the final overall budget for NOAA, NOS and NOP for FY 2026. The approved budget serves as the template for NOAA to come up with a detailed budget and personnel count for the fiscal year.



MINUTES OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR GEODETIC SURVEYING

The FY 2025 NOP budget approved is \$183.703 million, down from \$188.692. The approved FY2025 NOP FTE count was 589 and the administration had proposed a loss of 111 FTE positions (which were likely the employees fired and left in the summer of 2025). Since there is only a loss of about 5% in the NOP budget, it appears that NOP may be in a position to fill a large number of lost positions.

In terms of lobbying to protect NGS and CO-OPS, the Budget for FY2026 has been legislatively approved and signed into law, however that is only for the budget.

It appears that it is up to the Secretary of Commerce and the NOAA Administrator to slot their positions to the budget. We must make sure to be lobbying to bring back the lost positions to conform with the budget approved. We will know more when NOAA prepares a detailed report on how the FY 2026 budget will be distributed to NOA and NOP.

