



Department Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2024



The meeting of The Department Executive Committee meeting was held on February 17, 2024, at The American Legion Department of South Carolina Department Headquarters.

Dept Cmdr Jim Kvam
Dept Adjutant Michael Strauss
NEC Joe Lysaght
Alt NEC James Holland
Imm PDC Jim Jarvis
Dept 1st Vice Cmdr Bruce Donegan
Dept 2nd Vice Cmdr Jim Rabon
Dept 3rd Vice Cmdr Jack Lonergan
Dept 4th Vice Cmdr Russ Cantrell
D-3 Cmdr Kevin Brown
D-4 Cmdr Lou Morse
D-5 Cmdr Bonita Wells
D-6 Cmdr Bill Simpson
D-9 Cmdr John Comins
D-10 Cmdr Doug Dilleshaw
D-11 Cmdr Peter St. Onge

D-13 Cmdr Rick Gibson
D-14 Cmdr Michael Brandt
D-15 Cmdr Richard Dorman
D-16 Cmdr Courtney Peoples
D-17 Cmdr Jerome Childs
D-20 Cmdr David Mills
Dept Sgt-at-Arms Kevin Joy
PDC John Britt
PDC Bob Scherer
PDC Jim Hawk

Absent:

Dept J/A Cody Mitchell
Dept Asst J/A Stephen Lewis
Dept Chaplain Richard Mullinax
Dept Historian Matt Gooden
D-1 Cmdr Darlene Walton
D-2 Cmdr John Coy

D-7 Cmdr John Galloway
D-8 Cmdr Mark Cannito
D-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy
D-19 Cmdr Charlie Strickland

Also Present:

M. May, Dept Exec. Director

Dept Finance Chairman Tom Yarborough

Department Commander, Jim Kvam, opened the meeting and called Vice Cmdr Cantrell for the invocation. Commander Kvam read Resolution 288, led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble to The American Legion and called on Adjutant Strauss for the roll call. Adjutant Strauss called the roll and announced that a quorum was in place.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: The next thing on the agenda is the minutes. With the minutes being passed out and you've had a chance to read them, are there any corrections for the December 2, 2023, minutes? Anybody know of any corrections to those minutes? **I entertain a motion to accept the minutes as they were sent out?**

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: I make a motion to accept the minutes.

D-6 Cmdr Simpson: Second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I have a motion on the floor to accept the 12/2/23 minutes, any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye? Opposed? The ayes have it.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Also, passed out today, you have the minutes from the February 1st meeting that we had. Again, I know you just got them, but you've had a chance to look over them and all that. Are there any corrections or any additions to those minutes? I entertain a motion to accept the minutes as presented today.

D-9 Cmdr Comins: I make a motion to accept.

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: Second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I have a motion on the floor and duly seconded. Any other discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye? Any opposed? The ayes have it.

We're going to have the finance officer come up forward and give his brief.

Finance Chairman Yarborough: Good morning, my name's Tom Yarborough, and I'm the chairman of the finance committee, Post 182. The other members of the finance committee are Nick Diener, Post 6, and John Benjamin from Post 53. The first thing is, in the packet you've got the results of the profit and loss statement Budget vs Actual, for 2023 provided for your information. Since we don't have the profit and loss statement yet since we're only one month in, we'll probably look at that quarterly. We're required to report to you on the status of the Reserve Fund. As of December 31st, the Department Reserve Fund is \$311,273.71. Included in that is a CD from United Community Bank of \$245,000.00 with accrued interest of \$7,316.31 and savings account of \$58,957.41.

Article II, Section 1 b of the Constitution and Bylaws, requires that \$2.00 per member be deposited to the Department Reserve Fund every year. That is dictated by the Constitution and Bylaws and that has been done. That amount of that deposit was \$36,172.00. **The finance committee recommends an additional amount of \$139,000.00 being taken from the Continuing Fund Balance to be added to the Department Reserve Fund. That fund will be initially placed in the existing savings account then be used to purchase a CD.** Now, when I say Continuing Fund Balance, that's my definition, it's the difference...it's the cumulative difference between the amount of monies received and the amount of monies expended.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Entertain a motion to transfer \$139,000.00 to the Continuing Fund Balance, taken from there to the Department Reserve Fund.

Imm PDC Jarvis: I make a motion to accept the recommendation of the finance committee to transfer the money.

D-6 Cmdr Simpson: Second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion, duly seconded. Any discussion on the transfer of the funds? Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, signify by saying aye? Opposed? The ayes have it.

Finance Chairman Yarborough: Thank you, Commander, There's another item I want to share with the DEC. There was a request via a letter to the Department Commander, which was postmarked October 16th of last year and that letter was delivered to the finance committee. And the request was to instate a \$500.00 stipend, and that was the term that was used in that letter, which was available at one time. The understanding of the committee was that that was a reimbursement primarily for the District. Commanders. We were concerned about it being extended to other members of the organization including those in the leadership, other than the Commander who is provided with a vehicle and then also committee members who travel significant distances to have meetings up here for whatever reason. The other thing that was a concern to the committee is that these individuals could potentially be considered, if we put that in place, the people could potentially be considered employees. The IRS has got more aggressive on that because of things that are included in the Affordable Care Act to designate people "at will" employees. There was also concern that if we had something like that and say it was established at, let's say, \$500.00, then a person could may have used all of the funds in the first four months of the year and then found it necessary for whatever reason, to resign that position. And then when somebody else takes it, there would be no funds for that person for the remaining year. Based on this and other concerns, the finance committee unanimously agreed to the DEC that this be implemented, and we therefore will not be making a recommendation to the DEC on its implementation. I just wanted to share that with you.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Thank you. Entertain a motion to accept the finance report as given.

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: I make a motion to accept the finance report.

Imm PDC Jarvis: I second that motion.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, we have a motion on the floor and duly seconded to accept the finance report as given. Any discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye? All opposed? Alright, now that I've got my bifocals back in the right order, I kind of looked over it because it was in the line of my bifocals, old business. So I'm going to call on Imm PDC, Jim Jarvis, to give us an update on the VEAC, if you would please. Commander?

Imm PDC Jarvis: Hey, I just want to give you an update, everything's on track in Columbia for the VEAC. One of the things that I sent out at a later date, I think it was about a month ago. Last, I guess it was July, I had an opportunity to talk to the new Director of the VA Regional. And I expressed the opinion about somehow having medical personnel at the VEAC. Well, they made it happen, I guess. Because we're going to have C&P (Compensation & Pension) Exam, they're contracted, but we're supposed to have two units of that C&P Exam at this VEAC. Now, it could make it.... this could be a game changer. It's a....they'll be decided if they're eligible to go to this or go to the C&P Exam. Then the RO's will take care of that, but that's the whole purpose of it. They'll have a couple vans there outside. I had to give them four classroom for equipment and stuff like that. So, please get that word out so that could change things and help out a lot. I would expect the possibility of increasing the amount of rated or new ratings being issued at that time. Of course, everybody coming in isn't going to be able to do it, some of them are in the process, just the right spot and have the right documentation to let this happen. But that's going to happen on that Thursday, Friday and Saturday in March. We're still looking for volunteers. On the 20th is a big day because that's setting everything up and it's.....so if you have any volunteers or anybody's expressed an interest to volunteer, please have them contact

Darlene Walton via email. And she keeps track of that, and we have kind of a “watch bill”. Anybody have any questions on the VEAC?

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Thanks Cmdr. At the last finance meeting, we had a discussion, and we were looking at different things. And you’ll see on the agenda we’re talking about a dues increase for Post 172, and only Post 172, the holding post. We felt it would be a good incentive if we raise the dues, I believe \$5.00 to \$60.00 for a year vs \$55.00, it would be a better incentive to have them transfer to a local post and get the monies back into ya’lls Districts and the local posts. So, I think that’s one of the main driving factors of this was to do that. I will say, I’m extremely happy and kind of taking a little bit of the Adjutant’s thunder, but looking at the last report, our 172 is at 102%. Which, I haven’t seen that in a long time. So you know, that is really, really kind of very, very good that you can see your holding post, and think about it, these individuals that are there, that are on that post, basically are paying money for a magazine. They do hear a little bit about some of the stuff that’s going on but it’s great to hear that they’re renewing. So it would be super to get them into the posts and get them into the Districts. So I would entertain a notion that we raise the 172 dues \$5.00 to \$60.00 a year.

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: I make a motion to raise the dues.

Vice Cmdr Lonergan: I second that notion (laughter).

Dept Cmdr Kvam: By the way, that **is** for Post 172. Now, any discussion?

D-10 Cmdr Dilleshaw: I want to ask, where will the money come from to raise the dues from \$55.00 to \$60.00?

Dept Cmdr Kvam: The Legionnaire, whoever is in the holding post. If you were in the holding post, you would be paying \$60.00 vs. \$55.00. Any other questions?

NEC Lysaght: I would ask that you get a ruling from the JA as to whether we can increase the dues of just one? Because we’ve got 160 posts, and we are we going after 172?

Dept Adj Strauss: It is the Headquarters Post, so this body is the authority over....I have the administrative...over the....

NEC Lysaght: So you can single out any post and raise their dues (inaudible).

Dept Adj Strauss: The Headquarters Post IS the Headquarters Post.

NEC Lysaght: I still think it would be advisable to get an opinion from the Judge Advocate, just to be sure.

D-20 Cmdr Mills: I understand where you’re coming from.

Imm PDC Jarvis: When we raised their dues to \$55.00 the Judge Advocate was all on board with that.

Vice Cmdr Lonergan: I look at that list everyday within ten miles of my post. I have 69 names on that list right now. Out of those 69 names, nine of them are eligible to transfer and get credit for this year. But there’s a lot of people on there that are 20/30 years, if we raise their dues,

does that stand a chance of us losing some of those 20/30 year guys? Yeh, I understand if everybody else is raising, well, not everybody else. Some posts are out there right now right now for that \$5.00 increase, which stands a chance of them losing some of those people. But I just, I don't know, I kind of have mixed emotions on that.

Dept Adj Strauss: I'd like to chime in. This was brought up at the finance meeting and the finance committee did make a recommendation that we did raise it. And one of the reasons behind that is if the holding post is lower than...when we did a survey awhile back of each individual post, the post average was about a certain rate. So we wanted the holding post to be higher than the average of a local post to kind of give the person...Like, I'll give you a for instance. If Jack was recruiting off that list, if it was higher on the 172 post, it would be an incentive to move into the local post at a lower rate. So if the 172 post dues are lower than the local post, then they're more than likely to stay in 172, which we don't want. We really want them to be going into the local post, and that's where they're going to be active, that's where their, you know, dues are going to be effective. So that's kind of the rationale behind raising the dues is to kind of encourage.... if it's at \$60.00, most of the averages are going to be around \$50.00 to \$55.00 for a local post. Some of them are \$90.00 but you know, we're not going to raise them up that much. But, you know, the average is \$50.00 to \$55.00 for a post. And so, it being at \$60.00 will give them an incentive to try to come into the, you know, to the local post. That's...that's the rationale behind raising it. Anytime you raise dues, you're probably going to lose some portions of members, I mean, that's just the nature of the game...so.

Imm PDC Hawk: For the new people, this is nothing new. (Inaudible. Feedback from online meeting computers interfering with recorder) 55 Departments do the same thing, so this is thing new. We won't intercede in a post. If Camden Post 17 wants to raise their dues to \$150.00, that's Camden Post. The only time we will intercede as a Department is getting the form back in so we send it to National on what your dues are for the upcoming membership year so they can print the renewal notices. So, I mean, this is nothing new, it's a bona fide thing. We've got a Charter for Headquarters Post that belongs to Department. Good questions from everybody (inaudible) not understanding this. But this is nothing new, we haven't raised the Headquarters' dues for ten years.

D-4 Cmdr Morse: Question, if we don't raise the dues \$5.00, then we're going to lose the \$5.00 to National, right?

Exec Dir May: Commander? So, when they raise the dues, they will be \$39.00. So we currently get \$15.50 a member and then National gets \$18.50 a member, so they will raise raise their dues up to \$23.50. So we'll just end up paying \$23.50.

D-4 Cmdr Morse. Ok, So we don't lose the \$5.00, it goes to National.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Any other discussion? Alright, hearing none, all those in favor of raising the dues for Post 172, the holding post, signify by saying aye? Opposed? The ayes have it. Now, one thing that I want to reiterate, all of you. All of you. And you that are online. This is *only* Post 172, ok? Because as soon as we're done and save the minutes and get out of this meeting, it's going to get out to the whole dang state that we're raising the dues for the Department. No, make sure you tell the Commanders and get it down to the lowest level. It's only Post 172, the holding post. This is just like the old adage, I could tell Commander Holland something and by the time we got around all the over there to Commander Comins, it's not the same story that I told him over here. It's post 172 and 172 only, I can't reiterate that

enough, you just have got to let them know that's what it is. Because I can tell you that in a week, we're going to get all kinds of phone calls on why are we raising the dues, so please do that. I'm going to turn it over again, not that I can see it, to Membership and Post Activities to Adjutant Strauss.

Dept Adj Strauss: Alright, Commander Walton couldn't be here today, so I'll be doing the membership report for her. We are still about 400 members, on the SC level, about 400 ahead of where we were last year, so keep up the good work. We've got a couple District Commanders that are close to 85%, that's how you get in the green zone on the Big Board. So I strongly encourage you to kind of work those posts and just pick up the phone, do a little check up on the posts and see if they can help you to. It doesn't take much to get you back where we need to be. Everybody should try to be at 85% right now, we're pushing for 90% mark which is March 13th. I'm very, very happy, nationwide we're up a few thousand over where we were last year. So this will be the first time at National across they're stopping the slide it looks like, so far. But we can't let up just because we're ahead. We've got to keep on pushing and make sure that we keep that momentum going. It's really, really a good sign. We have been doing a lot the membership, trying to work on these delinquent posts. We met with...went down to Latta and went down to Bennettsville to meet with Clio. Everything kind of worked out pretty good there. Latta, we had four people show up, we sent letters to everybody in the post, just kind of talked about the future of the post and where it's going to be. They kind of gave us some reassurances that they're going to be there at 15, even though they're at zero. The zero mark is a very big concern for us. You know, when we see a zero, that means there's no activity in the post at all, so that's why we called the meeting. Also, Clio was at zero, and they're now at 17, that personal touch did work pretty good. You can see we have nine posts on our delinquent post report. Based on conversations with the team, it's recommended to this body, that Bowman and Mt. Croghan-Ruby, that their Charters be pulled. And the other ones we'll look at somewhere down the road and we'll see where they stand based on our conversations. Haven't checked a lot of the boxes off on the other posts where we need to go visit them and see if revitalization is in order. I've got a pretty strong feeling that we can revitalize a couple of those posts in that area but of course you've got to have help from other other side too. If we try to revitalize, it can't be everybody from the Department there and nobody from the Post. We at least have to have a couple people to process dues and stuff like that. They just, you know, can't go into a mailbox and sitting there with no one picking it up. They're not working the programs and stuff like that. Do we have a motion to cancel the Charters of Bowman Post 64 and Mt. Croghan-Ruby 134? We've had discussions with the District Commanders, we've actually had revitalizations in both towns in the last two years and try to help them out. And both of those posts have not done very well, let's just put it that way. **Do we have a motion to remove the Charters from Post 134, Mt Croghan-Ruby and Bowman Post 64?**

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: I make that motion.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, we've got a motion. Do I have a second?

Vice Cmdr Lonergan: I second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, we have a motion on the floor, duly seconded, is there any more discussion?

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: Was everything done to help these posts?

Dept Adj Strauss: That's right. That's why the other posts are not being recommended because we have not done everything that we needed to do. With those two particular posts, the Commander and I and I know Commander Jarvis has partaken, Jack Lonergan has gone down with us. We hate, honestly, for posts to fail. We want to do everything that we can to help a post get where they need to be. We'll help them with printing 172 rosters, printing letters, we'll do anything that we can, we don't want to fail. But I mean, if it just comes down to it that we don't have that one guy or gal to take that post forward, it's just very difficult to, you know...for other members get frustrated because they're just sending their dues in and no one's processing their dues, or you know. They're calling us saying, you know, hey, you know, how come I haven't gotten a card yet, you know. Well, it's hard for us to answer that. We don't want the integrity of our organization left in the hands of people that don't give a you know what, you know. So the answer is yes.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Any other discussion?

D-17 Cmdr Childs: Can't those two posts merge together?

Dept Cmdr Kvam: They're not close to each other.

D-17 Cmdr Childs: They're not close?

D-6 Cmdr Simpson: One of those posts is in my District. And I was just wondering, when would this take effect?

Dept Adj Strauss: So, as of today, if this body votes to approve that, we will do the necessary paperwork, send that to National. The next meeting (NEC) will be in May so it's the second week of May, the NEC will meet, that subject will come up, if they vote to do it, you will see them removed from your District on the membership report and move down to the bottom with Beaufort who lost their Charter early this year.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Any other discussion? Hearing none, all in favor of the motion signify by saying aye? Opposed? The ayes have it. I will say just one more thing though, on the membership, I have to put it in there. Adjutant Strauss alluded to it, in the National listing, SC has hit the top ten, we're in top ten (applause). I received a text from SE National Vice Cmdr, Aucoin from LA, he congratulated South Carolina and Virginia for both being in the top ten. Everybody needs, and get it down to your post, pat yourself on the back. Because it's great that we're in the top ten. Let's stay there because we're really, really close. We're doing super, so thank ya'll very much. At this time, I'd like to turn the podium over to our Chairman of our Constitution and Bylaws committee, William Simpson.

Dept Const & Bylaws Chairman Simpson: Good morning. First of all, before we get into the Constitution and Bylaws meeting here, I want to reiterate something. And the reason I'm doing this is because it affects some of the amendments that were submitted. If you see in your package, the very first page. This is the new format that has to be done for submitting an amendment, and everything. And we discussed this way back when when it first come out and I believe everyone in this room was aware of it and I'm hoping that it all got passed down to the posts and everything. But, sometimes things just slip through the cracks. But anyway, you'll see what I'm talking about here in a minute.

Now, the first one is Amendment 12 & 13, we combined the two of them. And the current, you can read it as I read it, (Article V, Bylaws, section 1) The standing committees of this Department shall be composed of members of The American Legion. That all subcommittees shall be comprised of not more than three (3) members except for the following 1, Baseball, (one member per league plus a director) 2. Oratorical 3, and lined out is Foreign Relations, (~~restricted to members of the Congress who are members of The American Legion~~) 4. Membership. 5. Fast Pitch Softball, one member per league, plus a Director

The Proposed is (Article V, Bylaws, Section 1) The standing committees of this Department shall be composed of members of The American Legion. That all subcommittees be comprised of not more than (3) members except for the following. 1. Baseball, (one member per league, plus a director). 2. Oratorical 3. Membership 4. Lady Fastpitch Softball (one member per league plus a director). This was brought before the committee and our committee has approved this? Do you want to do this one at a time, Commander?

Dept Cmdr Kvam: You're combining them.

Dept Const & Bylaws Chairman Simpson: I did 12, now 13. Law & Order, all that was lined out. And then number 2, Military Affairs Sub-committee, three (3) members, and lined out was Foreign Relations. The explanation, and I think I just read that. Jim, let me borrow your glasses (laughter) Explanation: Foreign Relations committee was a custom committee for legislators like Strom Thurmond and WJ Bryan Dorn. It is increasingly difficult to get a member of The American Legion in Congress. Combining Law and Order with Law Cadet means finding less volunteers to serve on the committee and the dues are similar. All the remaining sections in Article V will remain in the document. So proposed, Law Cadet and Law and Order will be one committee. **I offer a motion to accept the amendment and move it forward to the convention.**

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I have a motion to move forward with this amendment.

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: I second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion on the floor, and duly seconded on the combination of these amendments to send it to the floor of the convention. Any more discussion? All in favor, signify by saying aye? Opposed? The ayes have it.

Dept Const & Bylaws Chairman Simpson: Alright, # 14. Internal Affairs Commission. (Bylaws Article V, a.)

I'm hoping you're reading it. We're crossing out in the first paragraph ~~recommended approval/disapproval~~, those wordings. And then in # 3 that whole # 3 is deleted.

And the proposed, and I will read this. That the Internal Affairs Commission shall be divided into the following sub-committees including the General Chairperson. 1) Constitution and Bylaws & **Resolutions** Committee, three (3) members. This committee shall annually review the Department Constitution and Bylaws and originate and recommend such changes as are deemed necessary. The Committee shall consider all proposed Constitution and Bylaws changes and proposed resolutions referred to it and report its findings, status changes, additions and its **recommendations** to the Department Convention or **Department Executive Committee**. 2). Membership. That didn't change from what's in there already. Explanation: It combines Constitution and Bylaws and the resolutions committee. The experience of the

Constitution and Bylaws committee would help the body keep the positions of the American Legion stronger. This would also reduce the number of volunteers needed. **The committee approves it and I offer a motion to approve this and take it to the convention.**

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I need a second.

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: I second it.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion on the floor, any discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye? Opposed? Ayes have it.

Dept Const & Bylaws Chairman Simpson: Ok, thank you. Alright, 15, 16, 17 & 18. It goes back to what I was saying at the beginning. These were rejected by my committee due to the fact it is not in proper form, didn't follow instructions like everyone had knowledge of doing so we rejected amendments 15, 16, 17 & 18. **And if I can, I offer a motion to accept this and bring it before it to the committee.**

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I have a motion on the floor. Do I have a second?

Imm PDC Jarvis: Second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Ok I have a second. Any discussion?

NEC Lysaght: I've got several inquiries from posts receiving rejections. Their concern is the wording in the instructions. It says the current wording *may be* struck through. It doesn't have to be, it says *may be* struck through. Everything else on the Amendments are in the procedure. I just need to give them an answer.

Dept Const & Bylaws Chairman Simpson: Ok. (Chairman Simpson confers with Adjutant Strauss) I see what you're saying, Commander Lysaght. But, if you'll see on the top of the form, "This form and format must be used....." So we overlooked *may be* but its...

NEC Lysaght: My question is not about the form and the way it has to be used. My question that I got from the post was the words used to instruct you what to do. And it says, *may be*. It doesn't say you shall, or you should. It says, *may be*. And so, you know, I think one of them actually did it. A couple of them did it.

Dept Const & Bylaws Chairman Simpson: No. They underlined the proposed, but they didn't strike out the current wording.

NEC Lysaght: It looked like they bold printed and did what they were supposed to do on the proposed wording but the current wording, you know they stuck to the *may be* and strike through it.

Dept Const & Bylaws Chairman Simpson: Well, as Chairman, I believe when you see on the instructions that the form must be used and you see *may be* lined through, it's lined through, so I would...I would take it as it needed to be lined through. So, to answer your question... its...it needs to be lined through.

NEC Lysaght: So the answer to my question, is the committee, interpreted....

Dept Const & Bylaws Chairman Simpson: Yeh.

NEC Lysaght: The instructions?

Dept Const & Bylaws Chairman Simpson: Yes, it should be lined through, yes.

NEC Lysaght: It should be but that's not what it says.

Dept Const & Bylaws Chairman Simpson: I know.

NEC Lysaght: It says, *may be*.

Dept Const & Bylaws Chairman Simpson: But, reading this, you should see that it should be lined through.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: A motion on the floor and seconded. Any other discussion? All in favor, signify by saying aye? Opposed? One opposed. Ayes have it.

Dept Const & Bylaws Chairman Simpson: That's all I have for right now. I believe we have a Resolution.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I call on John Britt to talk about the Resolution that was submitted.

Resolutions Chairman Britt: Good morning. We had one Resolution that was submitted. I talked with Mike and my committee. It was not properly formatted; it came in on time. Mike actually went through and made a rough draft of what it should look like. It was mailed back to them, they never responded back. The time passed so at our committee meeting we voted to reject it because they had not met the timeline.

Resolutions Chairman Britt: I make the motion that this will be accepted.

Dept Adj Strauss: I think you meant a motion to reject? Accept the committee's recommendation to reject.

Resolutions Chairman Thank you, Mike.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I need a motion to accept the rejection as the committee's recommendation for this Resolution.

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: So move.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Second?

D-9 Cmdr Comins: I second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, any further discussion? All in favor, signify by saying aye? Opposed? The ayes have it. Alright, Mike, we have some administrative updates? Keep them short?

Dept Adj Strauss: So you'll see this one that has the SC Report for 2023 in your little packet there. Talking a little bit about legislation. On legion.org/action there is a...that's the site that everybody can go to and talk about legislative issues. There's six currently on there for us, so I do recommend that.... the first time that you go, it's going to take a little bit of going because you have to fill in stuff, but you can hit the "Remember me". And each day that you go back you can send that email again. You can only do it within 24 hours but at legion.org/action, once you sign in and save your thing, you can go back there every day. And it automatically fills out everything, it sends it to the Senators or Congressmen that it needs to go to, and it is really good for us. On the back you can see we're in the top 13 nationwide in contacting or Senators and Congressmen. That's just the national data that they keep through that page, that we are contacting our Senators. We have over 1300 people that have signed up to do that. So keep...this is something that people forget about a lot. But I learned at the Adjutant's meeting we had online last Wednesday that they are going to actually start implementing state by state for state legislation where we can also sign in for issues that pertain to us and we'll be able to do the same thing, hit one button and it will go to the legislators in SC that we want to hear from us. So that's going to be a huge, huge tool for us, guys. Because right now we're kind of going through the internet and saying which person, you know...that's going to be great. And it's going to be a huge tool for us to contact our Senators and local people. So I just wanted to kind of make you aware of that. Keep up the good work. That makes us look really good when we're 13th in the nation, considering the size of the.... we had over a thousand contacts in 2023 for our Congressmen up in Washington, DC. That's big for a very small state like us. So that's nothing to shake your stick at.

Vice Cmdr Lonergan: I don't know how the rest of you are doing but I go in probably once a week with grassroots and send to my Senators. And mine are Ralph Norman and Lindsay Graham and Tim Scott. But I've noticed that Ralph Norman and Lindsay Graham send me something back, even though it's a canned statement, they send me something back. But I never, to this day, gotten anything back from Tim Scott.

Dept Adj Strauss: I haven't either. You know, I have different Senators and Congressmen than you and there's some that I don't get anything back from them either.

Vice Cmdr Lonergan: You don't have different Senators than I do, you have a different Congressman that I do.

Dept Adj Strauss: Correct, I have Joe Wilson and usually he sends all his at once. If I send something one month I'll get 47 emails for the whole month, so, anybody else?

NEC Lysaght: I'd like to remind everybody that when the PACT Act was being considered in Congress, the State of SC submitted over 34,000 emails in one day, pushing it through. And the National, in Session, recognized SC as being one of the driving forces behind getting that Act approved. And regarding the response back, I also get them back. But I do get one from Scott, so if you're not getting a response, send an email directed to the office manager. You're not going to get an individual answer, but you should be getting a response back.

Dept Adj Strauss: I'm going to make you aware of something that has just passed from the State House, for those veterans with service connections rated at 100% permanent and total. Previously you had to wait one year before filing for state property tax exemption, the bill was just signed by the...once it's signed in by the Governor, it passed both the House and the

Senate, that it won't be a year wait anymore, it will be immediately. So if you have 100%, you can file it and it goes in effect immediately. So that's a good win for us. Appreciate the people that have been bugging the people, you know, our Congressmen and Senators about that. We also have been working on, I know James Rabon, and I know Commander Coy, who's not here today, have done some work at the State House for Tort Reform. Tort Reform bills sound pretty boring, but for a lot of the posts, especially on the coast, are getting...and there was a guy from Aiken there as a matter of fact. They came to the meetings. The posts are having trouble with insurance. So, they're lumping all alcohol establishments, the insurance companies right now are lumping all alcohol establishments as one. So, like your car insurance for instance, if you have an accident with your car, then you're kind of expecting the rates are going to go up. That's not the way it is with alcohol. Its same for this party post that's open 24/7, as it is for an American Legion Post that's only open until 10:00 serving meals, you know. So, we're trying to get it if you have a lot of liability issues at your post or business, sort of speak. This is a...goes on for a lot of people. And so we've been trying to push that through, to get that Tort reform. Basically, there's a lot of lawyers and a lot of... a lot of insurance people on the state house. So it's very, very difficult. That's why it's important to have a show when we ask for it. To all people, that we need to be there, if we need to be there. Because when they see that show of force of people showing up, especially with that hat on. People will say, you know, you know, you got to stick out. You know, if we're in a group, you know, there's loggers, you know, we saw all kinds of people in there. That, you know, the logging trucks, every time they get in an accident, they're getting sued. Because they're log trucks, and they're a company, you know. So, those types of reforms need to happen. And, you know, the insurances for our coastal communities are going through the roof, so, keep up the good work, legislatively, is basically what I'm saying. If we ask for it, just keep up the good work.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, is that it. Mike?

Dept Adj Strauss: I believe so.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright. Good of the Legion? I know that we passed out this morning. I want to go kind of through it quickly. It is a very rough, still a rough agenda for the National Commander's visit, which is the 3rd to the 5th of March, 7th, March, 3rd to the 7th of March, that's why this is a rough agenda. Sunday, we got the Riders meeting and then we're getting to the hotel. We're going to be staying at the Springhill Suites, here in Columbia. Monday, you'll see we have a Legion polo Dress, we think it's going to be more informal like on most of the dress codes, with Commander Seehafer. And we're going to be seeing like, Orangeburg, and then we're going to go down to Meggett, and they have a new building that they're working on. Part of it's going to be part with the VA and then with the Legion. And then back, we're going and visit the Victory House in Walterboro and kind of then head back up here to Columbia. We don't have a lot of other scheduled so we can have somewhat of a coming in from travel late in the afternoon, a little tour. Kind of loaded him up on Tuesday. Tuesday, we're going to go to the Navy Nuclear Power Training Commander. And they are really, really bending over backwards to do this tour down there.

Several unidentified members speaking simultaneously.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: What did I skip? I'm not going to read this through. Ya'll are big enough people; you can read it. I'm just giving a synopsis of what's going on. We are going to Harleyville to see Doug Woods, and I'm not sure what he has planned. But I tell you what, he can plan some pretty good stuff there, right Bill? Then we're going to the Nuke School, and they

are going all out. We're going to be able to have lunch, they have scheduled about 20 to 24 students that are there at Nuclear Power, both enlisted and officer to have somewhat of a working lunch with the National Commander. And they're going to have the opportunity to talk about how the barracks are, what all the facilities are, and kind of giving him a thing on the military quality of life there in the Power School. And then we're going to stop at Post 241 and then Post 147 has graciously agreed to host a meet and greet that night. And as you can see, we're getting back really kind of late on Tuesday. And then the big one, of course, and the one that we need to push a lot is on Wednesday. We meet at Post 6 at 9:00 in the morning. The National Commander will be there meeting all of us that are there and hand out awards that we have. So it's a chance to talk to the National Commander again. Then he departs to go over to the State House. I think that's still on schedule for Wednesday that he's going to address the joint session of the House and the Senate. And then we're going to make a tour of the Fisher House, I'm waiting on them to answer me back. Thursday, we're just kind of looking at a down day for him and see what we can do on Thursday, and all of that, just to kind of do it. If you have some suggestions, you know, as long as it kind of fits in the schedule, let us know. Let Mike, myself know, and we'll see what we can do. And if we have to move anything around. That's a real rough schedule, it's pretty much what we're trying to do when the National Commander is here, that's what that is. But remember, 3 to 7 March is when the National Commander is here. Anything else for the good of the Legion?

D-4 Cmdr Morse: My Post, Nichols Post 82, lost everything in the floods, and it's taken quite a bit, they've finally gotten a post, they got the library, that their ladies had donated to the city Now they've gotten that building back, but they have no colors. They have no Legion flag or anything. If anybody has anything they can donate, it would really be appreciated.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Ok, Alright. Anything else?

D-20 Cmdr Mills: One thing, please clean up your trash so Maggie doesn't have to do it from all your treats.

D-17 Cmdr Childs: I brought food in there for everyone, help yourself.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, thank you. I think I've talked long enough so my closing remarks are, thank ya'll for coming.

Dept Cmdr Kvam called on Vice Commander Cantrell for the closing prayer and closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

Michael D. Strauss
Department Adjutant

MS/mm