



Department Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 1, 2023



The meeting of The Department Executive Committee meeting was held on October 1, 2023, at the Columbia Marriott, 1200 Hampton St, Columbia, SC 29201.

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-1 Cmdr Darlene Walton
D-3 Cmdr Kevin Brown
D-4 Cmdr Lou Morse
D-5 Cmdr Bonita Wells
D-6 Cmdr Bill Simpson
D-7 Cmdr John Galloway
D-8 Cmdr Mark Cannito
D-9 Cmdr John Comins
D-10 Cmdr Doug Dilleshaw

D-11 Cmdr Peter St. Onge
D-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis
D-13 Cmdr Rick Gibson
D-14 Cmdr Michael Brandt
D-17 Cmdr Jerome Childs
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy
D-20 Cmdr David Mills
Dept Sgt-at-Arms Kevin Joy
Dept Asst Sgt-at-Arms Brian Colip
Dept Chaplain Richard Mullinax
PDC John Britt
PDC Bob Scherer
PDC Jim Hawk

Absent:

Dept J/A Cody Mitchell
Dept Asst J/A Stephen Lewis
Dept Historian Matt Gooden
D-2 Cmdr John Coy

D-16 Cmdr Courtney Peeples
D-15 Cmdr Richard Dorman
D-19 Cmdr Mark Thompson

Also Present:

Nick Diener, Dept Finance Cmte Mbr
M. May, Dept Exec. Director

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I remind you again to keep your phone in airplane mode. No, we're not going to take off and go anywhere, we're going to take off and go home. Or have them on vibrate or shut them off completely. Some people leave them out in their cars, that's ok, they can call you out there. Glad to see ya'll could make it to the DEC meeting this morning. We do have quite a few things to kind of go over if you look over the agenda. But as we were talking yesterday in Post Commander training and all that, we would like to this as expediently as possible. One of the reminders would be though, if you're going to address the group, would you please stand, identify yourself and talk loud enough or come up forward so that we can get it recorded for the minutes, so I appreciate that. Colors being in place, right hand salute, two. Uncover, I ask Chaplain Mullinax to offer invocation. Chaplain Mullinax gave 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.

Department Adjutant Strauss called the roll and told Commander Kvam that a quorum was present.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I call for a motion, please, to dispense with the reading of the previous Executive Committee Minutes.

D-6 Cmdr Simpson: So move.

D-5 Cmdr Wells: I second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Please stand so we can identify. **I have a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes, and duly seconded. Any discussion? All in favor, signify by saying aye, any nays? Ayes have it.**

Under old business, I call on the Membership Chairman, Darlene Walton, come up and give us a report?

Membership Chairman Walton: Good morning, everyone. Well, first of all, if you look on your list, the Gaffney property, can you give me an update on that Mike?

Dept Adj Strauss: We'll be doing that after.

Membership Chairman Walton: Ok, ok. First of all, I want to let ya'll know we had two mbrs within membership that received prizes that recruited more than three members this past year and so we need to let all of our people out there know that the more people they recruit, they are up for awards of a check from National if they do so. One thing I want to bring forward though, and I know this is not under old business in a way, is the fact that I send out a weekly report to you all. And the one report that report that really bothers me is the report that we're going to see today, because I'll be sending it out to you, of all the posts that we have that are less than 25%. A lot of them are at zero. District Commanders, I ask you to please get in touch with these posts and find out what's going on there. Also, I want to remind everybody that we will have a membership meeting on the 18th of October at 11:00 am at Hdqtrs. Would like to see you all there.. Anything else that you think needs to be brought up at this time.

Dept Adj Strauss: Awards?

Membership Chairman Walton: Ok, I will get to their names. The first one that got the special award was Stephen Puff from Little River. He got a check for \$150.00 for having brought in new members. Douglas Ammon, out of Murrells Inlet also got a check for \$150.00 for bringing in a great number of memberships. That's all I have.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Thank you, Darlene. You see how important it is, we all preach membership, membership, membership everywhere we go. But this is something that you can bring up as you're doing your different District meetings, there are incentives for doing the membership and signing people up, so use that as a good tool to help increase our membership. As as the Chairman said, it is a little disconcerting that have that many posts that have less than 25% and this October already, so. And by the way, it is the 1st of October, I had to look at my calendar to verify that, it's hard to believe it is the 1st of October already. Next thing on the agenda, we're going to have our agenda come up and talk about the Gaffney property update.

Dept Adj Strauss: Well, good morning, everybody. The Gaffney property update. As you recall, this committee had authorized an ad hoc committee, consisting of District Cmdr Comins, PDC Hawk and PDC Britt, to look into the Gaffney property. I'm here to give you an update that since then we've had an attorney do a quitclaim deed for us, we had an appraisal done on the property, \$15,500 was the appraised value. We do know that there are going to be costs associated with selling the property. **So, we're looking for this body to move forward with the sale of the property to authorize myself with the finance committee to negotiate a sale of the property of Gaffney (Post 201).**

D-9 Cmdr Comins: I make a motion that Adjutant and the Finance subcommittee proceed with the sale.

PDC Hawk: Second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I have a motion on the floor for the sale of the Gaffney property, and it's been duly seconded, is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, signify by saying aye? Any opposed? The ayes have it.

Dept Adj Strauss: Some of you also recall at the last Department Executive Committee meeting, we authorized the merger of Beaufort Post 9 and Post 207. That was authorized by the NEC at the National Convention in Charlotte. Also, they authorized the revocation of the Timmonsville Post 47 Charter, that's in John Galloway's District, you probably noticed that in your report.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, the next thing on your agenda, if we could please, we have in looking at the budgets and I would like past Adjutant Diener, also a member of the finance committee to come up and discuss the different budgets that we have and pass them out please?

Finance Mbr Diener: What we're handing out to you are copies of the various budgets. We are not going to vote on those today. We're passing them out and let you look at them and review them and voting on them at the next DEC meeting. We do have one snafu, in the packet that you received, the portion that would be the operating budget, that is the current finance statement and not the budget, but the Department will be emailing that out to you. But going through the budgets in order of what they were passed out, the Americanism budget. Pretty straight forward, it includes Baseball, Oratorical, Softball and Shooting Sports. Just two things to note on that, if you look down the baseball column going down through their expenses, about mid-way down to their website. That is a substantial increase on what we're talking about on their website, but that also includes the baseball program hiring somebody parttime to help do the input. For their website, as they've gotten fancier and all of the requirements, they have to put in all of the pitch counts. Right now, they are reliant on one person after all the games to get all the pitch counts in or their sick or anything else, pitch counts don't get in. And as you all know, BB, especially when it comes down to the tournaments, that could be a vital thing. So, what they're looking at doing is hiring a part time employee or part time person to help input those scores, so they have a backup there. The only other thing on the Americanism budget that you see is the Oratorical, if you look down at the bottom, at the net gain and loss, the Oratorical is still one of our biggest expenses with no income, but that's normal, ok.

D-8 Cmdr Cannito: If I follow net/gain across (inaudible).

Finance Mbr Diener: You're absolutely right. I did not notice that either. We need to update that, that figure's not right there.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: That's why we hand it out, so that ya'll can look at it and let us know. Thank you.

Finance Mbr Diener: Another set of eyes on these are always helpful. Alright, the next budget that you see in there is the Law Cadet budget, it's pretty straightforward, no significant changes from previous years. As it gets down to the bottom, it cuts it pretty close, but that program's not intended to make money, we're happy when it covers the expenses.

Next budget is the Legion Riders budget, again, nothing out of the ordinary, it's pretty straightforward from the previous budgets. I would like to point out about three-fourths of the way down that budget, where it says the Legacy Fund contribution for \$5,000.00, that is what the Riders put into the donation, contribution, above and beyond what comes in on the donations they receive from all the programs. The only reason I bring that up is we've been doing the \$5,000.00, any of ya'll involved with the Riders, that will work for next year, if you see down at the bottom for their total, unless they come up with some other income, they're not going to have enough money to continue making that \$5,000.00 donation.

D-8 Cmdr Cannito: I found another clerical error, if you go down to projected balance, get down to Legacy, (inaudible).

Finance Mbr Diener: Yes.

Dept Adj Strauss: I also noticed before I presented it, it does say Legacy Fund, we've been told the Riders are making that donation now to the Veterans and Children Foundation, so we're going to have to change that language on there also. Until someone just said Legacy Fund, that just popped into my head, that was their thing that they submitted, and I just didn't pick that up.

Finance Mbr Diener: We'll be reviewing these again, the Adj was still getting figures and getting things corrected coming in, just before we came down here. All right, that's all on that. For the SAL, this looks a little different from previous years. We're still working with them on it to try aligning their budget format to match up with what's in QuickBooks. But no significant changes there. The SAL, their income and expenses usually balance out. And the last one, although you can't see it, is the operating budget.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: It was emailed out.

Finance Mbr Diener: Ok. When you go through the operating budget there's going to be a couple of things you need to take into consideration. On the membership income, we've reduced that some from last year. Even though there will be a dues increase, one of the things that we're not sure of is if membership will go up or down, the effect it's going to have. So, we left that the same. We approached the operating budget the way we've done it in the past, in that for income items we were very conservative and used the low numbers for estimates, and for the expenses, if anything, we used too high of numbers just to be safe on it just so that covers and there will be no deficiencies.

One of the other items that I'd like ya'll to be aware of, there has been a significant increase on the National Commander's visit, we've had to raise that up from \$4700.00 to \$7500.00, and that's purely based on expenses that are coming out. And one of the things that I know that the Adjutant and Cmdr are working on is an alternate location so hopefully that will come to fruition, and we won't have all those expenses but we still need to put it in just to make sure.

One of the biggest items, and I don't know if you announced this already, but one of the biggest items is the change on the mortgage and interest expense. Because as of right now, the mortgage is paid off. (Applause). The budget line for mortgage and expenses will be a big ZERO! That's one I'm proud of and I know there are a lot of people in this room over the years that worked very very hard to get that done, and that's a feather in several finance committee's hats, Maggie, James, many other folks, if you look at where we were eight or nine years ago and where we're at now, it's pretty significant.

One of the other things was a major is the VEAC. In last year's budget we put \$20,000.00 set aside for that because we weren't sure what all the costs would be for that. Based on current knowledge, we were able to reduce that down to \$20,000.00. So hopefully if the support keeps coming in, we won't even need that, but we have something in there just to make sure.

We also had a new line that we had to add in because it's starting to become prevalent based on what's happened before, is \$2,000.00 for attorney fees, so we don't have get attorney fees passed every time we need to have something done with property. That's what that is.

Another significant change that we had in there was the maintenance, we reduced it down this year, down to \$10,000.00, but those buildings are getting old and some of the big items would come to fruition. Well, some came to fruition this year and we had to come back to you all to increase the line item for the maintenance as it is for this year. So, we went ahead and increased that for next year just so the money is there that the adjutant can use, when he gets an air conditioning unit that goes out in the middle of summer, there's not a lot of time for the Adjutant to go through the DEC to get additional funding, it needs to be taken care of then. That building's been around since 2006, there's going to be things starting to go wrong that need to be fixed. Quite frankly in the past because the budget was tight, there were a lot of things there were a lot of things that if they didn't absolutely need to be fixed, that we didn't fix but they're reaching the point they've got to be done.

The last item that I have for all this is you will notice when you get it that there is an increase in the employee expenditures. And it's an increase of about \$30,000 in total. But there's three things, I'm sorry, about \$25,000, but

there's three things included in that increase and again, this goes, when you increase the salaries, lots of other things, the taxes, retirement, and everything else also increase. So, there's three things that make up that increase. One is we are recommending that you approve a 2.7% Cost of living increase (COLA) for the employees. Social Security right now, they're expected as of this week when I looked at it, they're expected to go to 3.2% now, so we're still a little low on the 2.7%. We also added funds to bring in a third employee. There are funds now in the budget to hire a new employee, but it's been like \$30,000, and you're not going to get anybody for \$30,000. So, we increased that and recommended you increase that up to \$45,000 to get a third employee in to start getting trained and getting some back up there. That doesn't mean that's what they have to hire them at, it's just the allowance for it.

The last thing in there that we're asking the DEC to approve is to change the 401K contribution for the employees. Since 2004, the 401K retirement contribution has been \$50 per pay period, is all employees get. And that is way, way below what the industry standard is. And like I said it's been around 2004 it's been at \$50. What we're asking is to change the policy to where it is a 100% match of the employee contribution up to 5% of their salary. That matches what the national average is. The total of all three employees if they did their maximum contribution, that works out to a \$5000 potential increase, so it's not a lot. But it gets it to where we're basing it on salaries, and we don't need to be adjusting. As salaries adjust and increase, that will automatically increase. And secondly, with everything we've gone through, I'm a little biased on this. They've sacrificed and put in a lot of hours, and we need to have some programs in there to support them. The bottom line is for the budget, with all those things, we will still be projecting a surplus for 2024 of a little over \$100,000, ok. So that's a significant change since on this year's budget we projected a shortfall of about \$3,000. So that's the change and mortgage going away and the Rifle Raffle continuing to be successful, has made a big difference, ok? Any questions?

Imm PDC Jarvis: Is there any...is the finance committee looking at a dues increase?

Finance Mbr Diener: No, sir. It's not something that we've considered.

Imm PDC Jarvis: It's not your recommendation then? Your recommendation is no increase?

Finance Mbr Diener: No, our recommendation is no dues increase, it's going to be tough enough on membership with the National increase.

Imm PDC Jarvis: That's something that I think today need to make that decision so that we're putting the word out to the posts that's something important, an important part of it.

Finance Mbr Diener: Well, and my...my opinion on this without a lot of previous discussion on it, I would see it difficult to go out and let the posts see a budget that shows a \$100,000 surplus and tell them that we're going to raise their dues. I don't know that I want to be the one that has to take the phone calls on that.

Dept Adj Strauss: The finance committee has not voted on it yet.

Finance Mbr Diener: Yeh, we have not voted that. We haven't.

Dept Adj Strauss: I don't anticipate asking for one and I think he's right, I don't think they're going to recommend that. But for purposes of this, we have to have a recommendation, by the book, from the finance committee before this committee can vote on it. So, I can do that one between now and the next one, they can make a recommendation, I'll put that recommendation to you, and then we can vote on it.

Imm PDC Jarvis: I was told by the Chairman it was recommended to not.

Finance Mbr Diener: We talked about it, but we did not actually vote on it.

Dept Adj Strauss: Yes, it's not in our minutes so that says...

Finance Mbr Diener: And I'll get that to the Chairman, and we'll do a formal vote. As I say, it was just an informal discussion as we were talking membership numbers and what the dues increase was going to do to it. That could be voted on at the next meeting. As I say, I apologize for the actual operating budget not being in there.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: The District Commander's getting a stipend., is that in the budget? Can we put that back in the budget?

Finance Mbr Diener: What I would recommend there is that you put something together and send the recommendation for what you think it should be and the finance committee will consider it.

Dept Adj Strauss: Repeat the question if you would.

Finance Mbr Diener: What Commander Pouncy is asking is why can't we put a stipend for the District Commanders back into the budget.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Yeh, because the building's paid off, we need to get the stipend started back (inaudible). You see some of in here know it, tell them, Commander Hawk.

PDC Hawk: The Department used to give all Dept Officers a stipend, at one time. That was before we had the legal issues, the lawsuit. Attorney fees. It hadn't been reinstated because of shortfalls in the Department at that time. Before I came on as Department Adjutant in 1996, they got a stipend, it was prorated, certain times each year (inaudible). It wasn't that much, but it offset the expenses of the District Commanders, the Vice Commanders, Zone Commanders at that time, with their travels doing Legion business within the state. Of course, gas at that time was a dollar something (inaudible) but we did at one time, do that. Now, it could be a possibility, but that's still a finance issue, they'd have to discuss it, (inaudible) Adjutant, (inaudible) what is recommended, brought before the new budget, 2024, they'd have to put a line item in there for that. But we did have one at one time. We had it probably up to 2008.

Finance Mbr Diener: The only thing I can say on that is I can take the issue back to the Chairman, I'm just one of the members, I'm not the Chairman of the Finance Committee, so I will take that back to them for their consideration.

Dept Adj Strauss: He needs to write it up, and then.

Finance Mbr Diener: It was \$500. Send that...

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Larry, if you want that and want to try and you want to try and see, make a recommendation, and send it to the Department to get to the finance committee so they can discuss it, and then we can put it out to the whole DEC to vote on it, it's not something that we can do today. But you put in the paperwork to do it? Thank you. Any other questions?

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: How much is National raising the dues?

Dept Cmdr Kvam: \$5.00.

Dept Adj Strauss: Effective July 1, 2024, so please get that up. There are a few of you that weren't here yesterday that are here today. So National is increasing their dues \$5.00. And the dues will go into effect July 1, 2024, for the 2025 membership year.

D-7 Cmdr Galloway: If we get a third employee, will that person work full time or what?

Dept Adj Strauss: Full time?

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Like we said, these are proposed budgets, that's why we're handing them out. You've already received the General Fund budget that Nick was talking about by email, we'll make sure that you get it again so you can look at it. Go through it. Like the District 8 Commander said, this didn't add up or this doesn't. If you see something, get it back into us so we can get it back to the finance committee so we can get it finalized so we vote on it at the next DEC meeting. Otherwise, we all sit there like a bump on a log and the day we get ready to vote, we don't need to raise our hands and say, oh, by the way, there's a \$5,000 error here because you added wrong, or this number got transposed or whatever it is. That's why we send it out so you guys can read it, digest it, go through the darn thing, and get back to us. Now if you don't feel comfortable getting back straight to the Adjutant, to myself, that's why we have Vice Commanders for. Talk to the Vice Commanders and they'll bring it up. But that's why we give it to you, read them. Don't just put it in your spam folder and say, ah, it's just something the Department wants us to do. Read the darn email and read the whole email. Go through the whole darn email, don't just say, well, I don't understand what that is, there might be another attachment on there. If you have trouble opening the attachment, let us know. And that way we can try to get it to you in another format, ok? I want to thank you very much, Nick, for coming up. Any other questions? Next on the agenda, we're going to do some administrative updates and Adjutant Strauss is going to do the updates.

Dept Adj Strauss: Ok, Lakeview property, Post 161. It's a post that folded years ago and we've had some issues with this post. Typically, when a post folds, the property comes to the American Legion. But apparently Post 161 had an agreement. A family donated the post home to Lakeview Post 161 and part of that agreement of letting them use that place, was that if the post folded, the property would revert back to the donating family. And the donating family has contacted us and provided us with that agreement, so it is my recommendation that we form a committee very similar to what we did in Gaffney. I researched Lakeview Post 161 and ask that the Department Commander be authorized to form an ad hoc committee and act on your behalf to look into the Lakeview property and make recommendations to this committee.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I entertain a motion to have me form an ad-hoc committee so they can investigate.

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: So move.

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: Second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion on the floor, duly seconded, to form an ad hoc committee to investigate the Lakeview property, any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor? Any opposed? Ayes have it.

Dept Adj Strauss: Alright, National dues increase, yes, the dues are going up. Please, please, please, this committee is the authority and please, especially at your district meetings, bring this up. We had a lot of handouts here yesterday to bring back to your poss. Please bring those back, talk about the legal stuff that we've been talking about all weekend, bring it back to your posts. Tell them that they have to file the taxes for the Post annually, they have to do all those things to remain in good standing. There's a lot of posts out there that are really, really struggling because they haven't filed their 990's and the importance of incorporating and that kind of stuff. And please, please at every district meeting, they have to have the dues increase form to us by April, ok. They can't wait until July because those dues renewal notices that go out in July are printed way in advance, millions of them. Some of them really need to raise their dues. Some of them are making between one and five dollars they are currently making on their dues so be the one to really make that happen at the district meeting.

I emailed out the Constitution and Bylaws change forms. Not much has changed but we have changed some of the language in there, we have those for a handout if the Sgt-at-Arms would pass those out. We also emailed those out. Just administratively, instead of going through every one of them, we'll vote on them as a group, all four of them at once.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Entertain a motion to approve the forms as submitted?

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: I make a motion to approve the forms as submitted.

D-20 Cmdr Mills: Second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion and duly seconded to approve the forms as printed and handed out and emailed. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor signify by saying aye? Opposed? The ayes have it.

Dept Adj Strauss: We have the members of the Const & Bylaws committee here today, all three of them as a matter of fact. They also have recommendations to the Constitution and Bylaws on those same forms, we'll be passing those out. There are two entities that change change to the Constitution and Bylaws to the convention floor, that's the DEC and the Posts. At this point on the handouts, we're looking at the one that has the little sticky on the bottom right. And you can see the changes outlined and recommended by the Dept Constitution & Bylaws Committee to update the language. **As you know, dues are no longer submitted to Department Hdqtrs, they are through mylegion and they go directly to National Hdqtrs and we're changing our language there to get Department out of there and changing that to National, and adding mylegion to update and make our language as it really is and not the way it used to be?**

Do we have a motion to accept the recommendation from the Constitution and Bylaws committee to accept Amendment # 1 to send this Amendment to the floor. It's not to pass the change, it's to send...your authorizing that this amendment be sent to the floor of the Department Convention in May.

D-8 Cmdr Cannito: I make the motion to accept the recommendation.

D-9 Cmdr Comins: Second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I have a motion on the floor for the DEC to send this on to the convention for voting by our body, it was duly seconded. Any discussion? All in favor, signify by saying aye? Opposed? Ayes have it.

Dept Adj Strauss: **On the handout you'll see # 2 on the little sticky note to try and make it easy for you to understand which one we're going to. The National Hdqtrs has authorized multi-year membership in January. We are told this, so we are adjusting this based on that recommendation that National Hdqtrs is going to be authorizing multiple year memberships, so we're adding the language for multiple years to our Constitution to allow us to accept multi-year memberships. And we'll need a motion for that.**

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

D-17 Cmdr Childs: I second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I have a motion on the floor, duly seconded to send this amendment to the floor of the convention. Any discussion?

D-9 Cmdr Comins: I know I heard it mentioned three years and then I heard two years. Is anything going to be three years, five years...?

Dept Adj Stauss: It's my understanding it's three years.

D-9 Cmdr Comins: Only three years?

Dept Adj Strauss: I'm not going to say only, right now it's multiple years but they haven't really given us a lot of clarity yet. They haven't really announced it yet, I'm told they're going to announce it in January. So we're going ahead and getting it out. We don't have much time between January and March to get that done.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: And part of the discussion also is the reason we use the term multiple years, if it should happen to be two years or happen to be five years, why do we have to keep coming back as a DEC to keep changing it

every year get it done. So if they change it to a four year, we're covered and that way we don't have to keep meeting to make changes every time.

D-9 Cmdr Comins. Maybe people want to pay five years or eight years, get over it.

Dept Adj Strauss: I think they're going to start small and then kind of work into that.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: That's at the National level, it's not at the Department level.

NEC Lysaght: The NEC approved a one, three and life members, to be tested for five years. That's why it's multi years.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Thank you, NEC Lysaght, for that discussion. Any more discussion, all in favor signify by saying aye? opposed? The ayes have it.

Dept Adj Strauss: Ok, the third one is five pages long, don't be overwhelmed by the fact that it's five pages. I would suggest going to page five of the five and read the explanation. This is something that was opposed last year, and we took it off because we had left off a paragraph, and just went back and added the paragraph to that and it's basically the same as last year. A little bit of the language has changed, and I'll point that out. We're basically moving.... they have district elections under the wrong portion of our bylaws. We're basically moving the district elections to where the district commanders' portion is. They're in the wrong section, it's very complicated because you have two different sections that have to be updated. You're taking out of one section and putting it into another sections so we're proposing two changes at once so that's two different sections so that's why it's five pages long. We had one line in there that says department district officers, which there's not department districts, just different districts officers so we took out the word department. Also, one of the questions, I'm sure Nick and James and Jim Hawk were asked for years, why doesn't the district have an Adjutant in the bylaws. People always ask, we're authorized to have county commanders and authorized to have a chaplain, why don't we have an adjutant. So, they may have an adjutant on their district executive committee if they want. We added the word may, if they don't want to do it, they don't have to do it, so we added the word may.

D-10 Cmdr Dilleshaw: Will they be able to come to the DEC meetings as well.

Dept Adj Strauss: No, it will just be for district purposes. Alright, do I have a recommendation this be approved and sent to the floor.

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: I so move.

D-4 Cmdr Morse: Second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, we have a motion on the floor and a second to send Amendment # 3 to the floor for voting, is there other discussion? Hearing none, all those that approve signify by saying aye? Oppose? The ayes got it.

Dept Adj Strauss: Alright, in the email we sent for advance reading, out we a dues management policy. Unfortunately, I forgot to print out a copy for everybody here. As you know, at the last convention, we updated the finance portion of our bylaws, and we had the dues management policy. Basically, it says we authorize the reserve fund and outlines the policies on managing those funds and how we manage them in the future. and kind of gives me guidance on how to manage those savings. It's a good thing, we haven't had savings for a long time and now we have savings so hopefully we can start building our next egg again. It outlines the way that I'm authorized to do that along with the finance committee. **So, we're looking for authorization to approve the dues management policy.**

D-8 Cmdr Cannito: You said you sent it out for advance reading?

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Yes

D-8 Cmdr Cannito: I didn't see it.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: It was there. It was sent out, I can't remember how long ago, but yes, it was sent out. Sent your spam folder. Alright, entertaining a motion to accept the dues management policy.

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

D-9 Cmdr Comins: Second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion on the floor to accept the dues management policy. Any discussion on what we heard a few moments ago, it did go out. Hearing none, all in favor signify by saying aye? Opposed? Ayes have it.

Dept Adj Strauss: Ok, some of you are aware of this because we announced this, but some of you were not here over the weekend. We're in the process of updating our website. Our website people have told us that our site has reached an age where it can no longer be updated. And they're working with us to establish a new website and in the very very near future, scarolinalegion.org will no longer be in existence. We are in the process right now of moving data over to our new website, southcarolinalegion.org. So work with us a little bit until we get all the data moved, we've got about 40% moved. Thank goodness to Maggie on that because she's been working hard on that and it's going to be a really nice website. Just kind of be flexible with us, if you can't find it on the old website, it's probably on the new website, but we are working to do that. And we have changed our emails. We strongly suggest that everybody on this committee, when you send us an email, please use deptsc@southcarolinalegion.org. And the reason we asked you to use that one in particular, because if Maggie or I are not in the office and you send us an email that's important, we can both see that email. You don't have to use three different emails. deptsc@southcarolinalegion.org will reach both me and Maggie. So if one of us didn't see it, the other one can still see it. So please use that for district meetings and transfers and a lot of your correspondence. Appreciate that.

Ok, new Ellenton, (Post 169) I'll go over that first. District Commander Dorman and the Commander and Vice Commander Rabon who has oversight for that, have been working with New Ellenton. It's been a post that does have a post home in Aiken County. They are next to dying, to put it nicely, but we're looking to authorize a committee to look into this post and make recommendations in conjunction with the membership team to make a recommendation to this committee on the future of New Ellenton. It's looking right now like they're going to merge with two different posts, maybe. Maybe one officially. Obviously, the members of the post will dictate where they want to go to but I think on the books they're going to merge with Aiken. **We have scheduled a meeting later on but officially as part of our checklist we are formulating a committee, so we're looking to authorize a committee to look into the membership of New Ellenton.**

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Entertain a motion?

D-20 Cmdr Mills: I make a motion for us to formulate an ad hoc committee.

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: I second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion on the floor, and duly seconded to form an ad hoc committee to look into the post. Any discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye? Opposed? Ayes have it.

Dept Adj. Strauss: Another post that is probably no stranger to this committee due to the troubles they've had with membership over the last years is Russellville. Russellville has a post home and we have scheduled a meeting. We have sent out letters to all the members of Russellville with the exception of Derrick Reddick. He at one point was the Commander and did not send us any correspondence when he moved. When we sent all the letters to the members of the post, we did hear from Derrick Reddick finally and he was insistent that they were above fifteen,

but they were not. I asked him.... he wanted to know the members that had not paid and one of the persons on that list was Derrick Reddick. So, he can't be the Commander and not pay his dues. That's when I told him he is not the Commander because his 2023 dues haven't been paid. We have notified them that we'll be meeting at a Subway. District Commander Cannito has been working on this and we've got the meeting set up and we've sent letters to all the members of the post, **so we are looking to be authorized to represent this committee by formulating an ad hoc committee to look into the membership of Russellville. I need a recommendation from this committee.**

D-8 Cmdr Cannito: I make the motion.

Vice Cmdr Cantrell: Second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: One little thing that I will note, we have received emails about Russellville and from the neighbors who have been mowing and taking care of the property because it's been an eyesore. I hate to say this because I've been to Russellville quite a few times as a District Cmdr for District 6. And it was a good group, it is a good group of people, but they just don't meet, and we have received emails from the neighbors wanting the American Legion to do something about the property because it looks like crap. So, I'm not sure who's still mowing it but at least they're still taking care of the outside so it doesn't become overgrown.

D-8 Cmdr Cannito: Two quick notes. We're not meeting at the post home because we don't have access to it, therefore we're meeting offsite. Secondly, to Michael's point, the last conversation I was able to have with Derrick, he admittedly said they have 15 members. All I asked for was the names and their membership numbers. And I never got it.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Plus, I believe he's not even living in the state anymore.

D-8 Cmdr Cannito: No, he's in North Carolina.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I think he's in North Carolina. Any other discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, signify by saying aye? All opposed? The ayes have it.

Dept Adj Strauss: I mentioned this at our District Commander training yesterday, but it's important that you know as a member of the DEC that our Commander is our Spokesman. So, as a District Commander, or a Vice Commander, it's very important that you don't shoot off an email to everybody without consulting the Commander. Because he is our Spokesman, and he may have more information. You might have received an email from somebody and you're going to forward it to everybody, but the Commander might have more information than you. So it's important to remember in our Constitution that he's our spokesperson and that you should go through the Commander to send out mass emails on behalf of the Department. If you get something as a District Commander and you can answer it, good. But if it's inflammatory or someone is complaining about getting kicked out of a post or a legal issue, that is something should not answer, and you should refer them to the Department. We've gone through a few people that have given answers that have put us in a bind or put themselves in a bind because they've answered questions without consulting the Commander so, please just send it to us so we can make sure the Commander has all the ammunition he needs. Because sometimes people are trying to drag us into their legal messes and it's important that you know you're not the person who is usually qualified, it's the Commander or the Judge Advocate. Sometimes that may take a couple days to get those opinions back. You can answer it if it's a very simple thing but if it's someone kicked me out of a post, or what's the by-laws say on this or this or this, refer it to us so we give a coordinated response. I'll turn it back over to the Commander.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Thank you, Adjutant, I know it's a lot of stuff that we just put out. But I'd like to entertain a motion to go into Executive Session.

Imm PDC Jarvis: Why:

Dept Cmdr Kvam: To discuss a Resolution.

D-9 Cmdr Comins: I make a motion that we go into Executive Session.

D-6 Cmdr Simpson: Second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I have a motion on the floor and duly seconded, Any discussion? All in favor, signify by saying aye? Opposed?

Imm PDC Jarvis: Opposed.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: One Opposed.

Imm PDC Jarvis: Why are we going into Executive Session?

Dept Cmdr Kvam: To discuss a Resolution. Ayes have it. We'll go into Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION BEGINS:

EXECUTIVE SESSION ENDS

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, now that we're out of Executive Session, I would like to give the results of the vote. It is recommended that the Resolution to nominate NEC Lysaght for National Vice Commander. For the good of the Legion, we would like PDC Jarvis to give us a brief on the VEAC and what's happening, Commander Jarvis?

Imm PDC Jarvis: Yes, sir. We had two VEAC's. One in Columbia last March, 717 walked through registration, let me put it that way. Not all of them made it to where they were supposed to go but 717 is the number we're using. We did one in Spartanburg from Post 28, and we did 355 veterans that weekend. We're looking at that one as a success. I had a long talk with the new Director of the VA Reginal, Director Jackson, and I think we're on the same sheet of music that we're going to look to have a VEAC in March and in October, basically two a year. Our next one that is scheduled and the paperwork has been signed is the 21st, 22nd and 23rd of March in Columbia at the National Guard Armory, with the set-up date on the 20th. That's the next scheduled one. And off the top of my head, we're about \$160.00 into that \$20,000.00.

Multiple inaudible questions from unidentified members and inaudible answers.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Stand up please and address the chair.

D-8 Cmdr Cannito: Rumor mill has it that Myrtle Beach might be next?

Imm PDC Jarvis: I got zero cooperation out of the person on the ground. I've only been able to communicate with him once and we've cancelled this October. And at the same time, we were trying to get this going, there's one more down the road (inaudible).

Dept Cmdr Kvam: One other thing under new business that I would like to address right now. I'd like to thank again, Maggie for all of her hard work this weekend and all of the hours that's she's put in at the office to get everything ready, along with Adjutant Strauss. It's been a really trying few weeks since the National Convention and I think they did a very super job, they really did, thank you, very much. (applause). **On that note, I would entertain a motion that we close the office tomorrow for both Maggie and Mike to be able to go home and catch up on their work that they haven't been able to do for the last three or four days.**

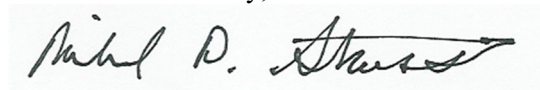
D-20 Cmdr Mills: I make a motion to give them time off.

D-8 Cmdr Cannito: Second.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I have a motion on the floor, duly seconded, all in favor say aye The ayes have it. Oh, wait a minute I forgot no, nays. (laughter). That's alright. I have nothing else. And I do want to tell you I'm extremely happy with what we had at the conference and with this meeting here. Thank you very much. We put in a lot of work. It went a little longer than I thought it would go but as I was telling you in the training just to get it done, and so we did a lot of great work and again, thank you very much. And the hotel actually bent over backwards this time and it was actually fairly easy to get extra chairs and get tables moved around and they really did a super job. They've been very accommodating with early check in and late check out and the breakfasts were really pretty good.

Commander Kvam called on Chaplain Mullinax for the benediction and closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael D. Strauss". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael D. Strauss
Department Adjutant
MS/mm