



Department Executive Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 2, 2023



The meeting of The Department Executive Committee meeting was held on December 2, 2023, at American Legion Department Headquarters, 103 Legion Plaza Rd, Columbia, SC 29210.

Dept Cmdr Jim Kvam  
Dept Adjutant Michael Strauss  
NEC Joe Lysaght  
Alt NEC James Holland  
Department Historian Matt Gooden  
Imm PDC Jim Jarvis  
Dept 1st Vice Cmdr Bruce Donegan  
Dept 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Cmdr Jim Rabon  
Dept 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Cmdr Jack Lonergan  
Dept 4<sup>th</sup> Vice Cmdr Russ Cantrell  
D-1 Cmdr Darlene Walton  
D-2 Cmdr John Coy  
D-3 Cmdr Kevin Brown  
D-4 Cmdr Lou Morse  
D-5 Cmdr Bonita Wells  
D-6 Cmdr Bill Simpson  
D-11 Cmdr Peter St. Onge

D-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis  
D-13 Cmdr Rick Gibson  
D-15 Cmdr Richard Dorman  
D-16 Cmdr Courtney Peeples  
D-17 Cmdr Jerome Childs  
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy  
D-19 Cmdr Charlie Strickland  
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  
D-7 Cmdr John Galloway  
D-8 Cmdr Mark Cannito  
D-9 Cmdr John Comins

D-10 Cmdr Doug Dilleshaw  
D-14 Cmdr Mike Brandt  
Dept Chaplain Richard Mullinax

**Also Present:**

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

Dept Cmdr Kvam: We're going to start a few minutes early. I remind you again to keep your phone in airplane mode. Also, if you're going to address the body, stand up, identify yourself and speak loudly or come forward so it can be recorded. We would greatly appreciate that.

Commander Kvam opened the meeting, asking everyone to uncover and called Department 4<sup>th</sup> Vice Commander Cantrell for the opening prayer. Commander Kvam, read Resolution 288, led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble to the 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'd like to entertain a motion to quickly go into Executive Session so we can discuss an amendment to the minutes.**

**D-4 Cmdr Morse: So move.**

Dept Adjutant Strauss: Just a reminder to everybody that when you make a motion, please stand and identify yourself because we are recording the meeting.

**D-6 Cmdr Simpson: Second.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion on the floor to quickly go into Executive Session, all in favor say aye? Any opposed? The ayes have it. Let's go into Executive Session real quickly.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION BEGINS:**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION ENDS**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Now I would entertain that I would entertain a motion to approve the minutes as put out and amended of the last meeting.**

**Dept Historian Gooden: Approve the minutes with necessary corrections.**

**D-13 Cmdr Gibson: Second.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, we have a motion on the floor and duly seconded to approve the minutes as amended. All in favor, signify by saying aye? Any opposed? The ayes have it.** Thank ya'll very much. Alright, the next thing on the agenda is talking about the budget. It's under old business and it's going to kind of roll into new business as well. So, if we could, call on Past Adjutant Diener and he's also on the finance committee. He's going to come up and talk to us and let us know about the proposed budget. Which you all have received via email, plus you have a hard copy of it right now.

**Finance Mbr Diener.** Good morning. On the budget, the Chairman is sick today, is the only reason he's not here. In fact he came in and got sent back home sick. So that he didn't expose everybody. So it's not that he's shirking on his duties, he tried, and he tried his best. So he asked me to fill in here and just go over these. The first budget we got there, not much change as what you've been sent in the past and what we covered at the last DEC meeting, that's the Riders 2024 proposed budget. Pretty straightforward, their expenses are about the same every year. Again, we have discussed with them and they're aware of it that for two or three years, they're going to have to look at the Legacy Fund contribution that they're doing out of their funds, not the funds that come in, because they're balance is dwindling down. So they're going to have to come up with the mechanism to cover that. But this next year they should still be good to go. Any questions on the Riders budget. **The committee makes a recommendation to the DEC the Riders 2024 budget be approved as submitted.**

**D-11 Cmdr St. Onge: I make a motion that we accept the budget.**

**D-13 Cmdr Gibson: I second.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, we have a motion on the floor and duly seconded to approve the Riders budget as presented, any discussion? All in favor signify by aye? Any opposed? The ayes have it.**

Finance Mbr Diener: Alright, the next budget is the Americanism budget. We did make a few adjustments on what was sent out at the last DEC meeting and that's just because we have a few updated figures come in. They were basically minor but to make the budget a little more accurate. One of the things that was questioned at the last DEC was on the net gain and loss line there at the bottom, that if you add those across, that they didn't add up. Well, the reason for that is, if you'll notice out in the total line, you go down, the third line in the total line is the General Fund transfer, \$10,500.00. That's where we transfer that in, and later on in the expenses, under Law Cadet transfer, we transfer out an additional \$2500.00 out to Law Cadet, those don't show up under the individual programs, so

bottom line is that bottom line will not add across to make that come up, so it is correct. Actually, it was correct the last time, I just wasn't fast enough to figure that out. Any questions?

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Entertain a motion to approve the Americanism budget as presented.**

**D-6 Cmdr Simpson: I make a motion.**

**Vice Cmdr Rabon: Second.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Ok, we have a motion on the floor and duly seconded to approve the Americanism Budget as presented. All in favor signify by saying aye? Opposed? The ayes have it.**

Finance Mbr Diener: The next budget is the next budget is the Law Cadet Academy budget. Again, pretty straightforward, same as what we've seen in previous years. They always cut it close but if we can break even, when we get to the bottom line and we're showing a \$95.00 overage at the end, we do good. It's paying for itself. I don't think there's anything really that stands out in theirs. They do a good job with it and handle the money pretty well.

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: I'd like to entertain a motion to approve the Law Cadet budget.**

**Vice Cmdr Cantrell: I recommend approval.**

**D-15 Cmdr Dorman: I second the motion.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: I have a motion on the floor, duly seconded, to approve the Law Cadet Academy budget as presented. All in favor, signify by saying aye? Opposed? The ayes have it.**

Finance Mbr Diener: Next is the SAL budget. Again, nothing significant on this, different than what they have done in previous years. Worked with the format some, to get a little closer to what the books show, but bottom line, they cover their expenses and there's nothing new or outstanding that comes up in that.

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, entertain a motion to approve the SAL budget?**

**D-13 Cmdr Gibson: I so move.**

**D-6 Cmdr Simpson: Second.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion on the floor to approve the SAL budget as presented, all in favor signify by saying aye? Any opposed? The ayes have it.**

Finance Mbr Diener: Ok, the last budget is the General Fund proposed budget. From what we sent out at the last DEC meeting, if you looked at this, there were several changes to this. Some of them were minor changes, again, the closer we get to the end of the year, the more accurate we can get in on some of the figures. Things like we now know a little better what the car insurance is going to be for next year, so we updated those figures. A couple of significant items though, that affected the balance. If you'll notice on the income, we did, from what we sent out last time, we did reduce the rental income down by about \$2,000.00. And that's just because it shouldn't have been up by the additional \$2,000.00. But the other thing that was probably biggest change on anything in here, was on the USAA insurance program, ok. That figure, that's been a nice thing that we get in from USAA and from National every year, and it's just not producing like it was in the past. So rather than go with the \$14,000.00, like what we had done in previous years, we adjusted that figure to make it a little more accurate. But that drops the income down by almost \$5,000.00, so it had an impact on the bottom line. But it's a more accurate figure on what we had. And again, little things in there, and I'm not going to go over all the changes. Department Convention, we updated the figure there. Because again, we have a little better figures on what it cost us for everything. One thing that did come up at the last meeting is Commander Pouncy had asked us to look at putting in a stipend into the

budget. And what he'd sent in was a letter saying he wanted to do \$500.00. One of the things that the finance committee looked at was, it's a little more complicated than that, ok. The plan that he submitted in said \$500.00 to the District Commanders. Well, what about the Vice Commanders? What about the Historian, when do we pay it? Is it going to be at the completion of a year's service or...there's just lots of little things there. So what the finance committee voted and recommends is that we look closer at that, consider it, but consider it for not this years but for the next year's budget and come up with a plan with all the rules and procedures and everything else that we can present to this committee. Any other questions on the general fund?

Vice Cmdr Lonergan: What's the increase for the Department employees? What percentage?

Finance Mbr Diener: 2.7%.

Vice Cmdr Lonergan: The National Social Security Cost of Living (COLA) is 3.2%. Why are we giving our employees less than the National COLA is?

Finance Mbr Diener: Because at the point that we put this together the projection was 2.7%

**Vice Cmdr Lonergan: I appreciate everything the finance committee does, I really do. Commander, I'd like to make a motion that we increase the employee salaries by 3.2% for next year.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: By or to?**

**Vice Cmdr Lonergan: To 3.2%**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion on the floor to increase employees' salaries to 3.2%. Do I have a second.**

**D-2 Cmdr Coy: Second.**

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

Finance Mbr Diener: Any other questions?

Dept Historian Gooden: The National Commander visit, why was there an increase in that of \$2750.00?

Dept Adj Strauss: Ok, so there's a couple if factors that go into that. Post 6 has agreed to use their room rental instead of using a hotel room rental. But there's a lot of factors that kind of go into that. The cost of hotels, everything the hotels as pretty much gone up. And we also cover some of the expenses for the Aide and the National Commander, and parking is another thing. But we're still going to have a hotel and everything but we hope to save a lot of that money, but just in case we don't, we have that in there because we were over on this year's Commander's visit. We haven't had the Commander's visit in two years, pretty much, in full, as the full time because Commander Oxford did not come the one year because of Covid and then Dillard only came for one day so we really hadn't had a whole week in a little bit so I think that kind of jumped up because of that?

Exec Dir May: The meeting room alone last year, was \$2,000.00. Which is why we're working with Post 6. They have graciously let us use their room.

Dept Adj Strauss: And the food, there was only coffee back there, it was outrageous. If we can give a little bit to Post 6 and it will probably go way, way cheaper by going there. They have graciously allowed us to go there. So, I don't expect it, but you never know, but we just want to be prepared for the worst case scenario.

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, entertain a motion to accept the budget as presented and talked about already.**

**D-6 Cmdr Simpson: I make that motion.**

**D-1 Cmdr Walton: I second that.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: I have a motion on the floor and duly seconded to accept the budget as approved and amended and approved. Any more discussion? All in favor, signify by saying aye? Any opposed? The ayes have it, the budget is approved as amended.** Alright, call on Commander Simpson, along with our Adjutant to go over Constitution and Bylaws proposed changes.

**C & B Chairman Simpson:** Thank you, Commander. Alright, we'll try to go through this as expediently as we can. On the first one, Amendment #1, the C & B Committee met and went through this, and as you can see the lined out items. And for the SAL, it was all voted on by the Sons of The American Legion, but we have to approve that. **And this is just some word changes, they voted on it, and we recommend approval.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Entertain a motion to accept the Sons change.**

**D-13 Cmdr I make that motion.**

**Vice Cmdr Rabon: I second.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion the floor and a second, any discussion? Just one thing on this one, this is one of those, correct me if I'm wrong Adjutant. In their re-write of their constitution, now that they're working on it. They had nothing on discipline in the Sons Constitution, so this is what they presented.**

Dept Adj Strauss: That's not entirely correct. What you see that was not underlined was the previous stuff, but they just had not updated some of the language in there in quite a while from when the Judge Advocate's meeting there at the Fall Conference.

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Any other discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye? Any opposed? The ayes have it.**

**C & B Chairman Simpson:** Alright, going on to the next one, Amendment # 4, for The American Legion Department of South Carolina, Department Officers, Article VII, Section 4. You can see we lined out, "and so on" and "in the lowest ranking Vice Commanders position."

Proposed verbiage, "the third Vice Commander becomes the second vice commander, the forth vice commander becomes the third vice-commander, with the vacancy to be filled occurring in the forth vice commander position." Explanation, there is no rank amongst is we all know. All remaining sections will not be changing as a result of this document and will remain with this Constitution.

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, entertain a motion to accept the recommendation from the C & B committee.**

**Imm PDC Jarvis: Is forth spelled right? Is forth spelled correctly?**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Yes, we'll fix that.**

**Dept Adj Strauss: Approve it as amended?**

**D-13 Cmdr Gibson: I approve as amended.**

**Vice Cmdr Lonegan: I second the motion to approve as amended.**

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Any more discussion?

PDC Scherer: Please explain to me how we're going to fill the fourth vice commander? It just says you're going to fill, but how are we going to do it? Is it by the DEC or is it going to wait until the convention, or what's the procedure going to be?

Dept Adj Strauss: The procedure has not changed. There will still be an election by the DEC if it happened during the year.

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Ok, any other discussion? All in favor, signify by saying aye? Any opposed, nay? The ayes have it.**

**C & B Chairman Simpson: Alright, The American Legion Department of South Carolina, Amendment # 5, Article VII, DEPARTMENT OFFICERS, see what we've taken out. And the explanation for that, Article VI, DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, Section 5, covers Executive session in detail, this is language that is not needed because of that, all remaining sections will not be changing as a result of this document and will remain in the Constitution.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Entertain a motion to accept the change?**

**D-13 Cmdr Gibson: I move to adopt.**

**D-11 Cmdr St. Onge: I second.**

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

**C & B Chairman Simpson:** Alright, now we're on SC Department Constitution, Article XI. You can see where it was lined out, I don't if ya'll had time to read these ahead of time but the explanation of this is that "Each Post shall be the judge of its own membership. The remaining sections in Article XI will not change as a result of this documents passage and will remain in the Constitution.

Dept Historian Gooden: Question.

Dept Adj Strauss: No, no conversation until we have a motion.

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Ok, entertain a motion to accept this.**

**D-13 Cmdr Gibson: I move.**

**D-1 Cmdr Walton: Second.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion on the floor, and it's been duly seconded, any discussion?**

Dept Historian Gooden: Yeh, in reading this, it's like we're dealing with the problems, we're pushing it back to the posts. To be a continuing effort here.

Dept Adj Strauss: Is it a question?

Dept Historian Gooden: What I'm saying is it's not a...if they're convicted of a felony, they can't have a Department position. I'm saying why not let this stay like it is because if you push it to the posts, you're saying they still can be at the post level.

Dept Adj Strauss: So, when our Judge Advocate was down here for the Fall meetings, we asked him about this particular document because we were basically dictating to the posts what to do, and we wanted to make sure it was

ok for us to dictate to the posts in that sense about having a convicted felon on their board. And he said it is ok. But if you, he said if we had kept that provision like it is, then we should be doing background checks on every single post executive committee, which would be very, very costly to us. And so he recommended that if we do keep it in there, that we require every background checks on every person in every....which we can't get the names of....when we ask for Post Commanders and Adjutants and we barely get those, so. If we're going to get the entire executive committee it would be a pretty burdensome process and probably a very expensive process for that. So the recommendation was made to the committee to review so that's why they decided to take it out.

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Anymore discussion? Alright, you've all heard the motion. All in favor of recommending approval, signify by saying aye? Any opposed? The ayes have it?**

**C & B Chairman Simpson: Alright, The American Legion Department of SC, Article XI, DISCIPLINE, just took out some of the verbiage in section 2. This one's pretty lengthy, so, the explanation is: "The duties of the department commander shall be to preside over the convention, and he/she shall be the ex officio chairman of the Department Executive Committee. He/she shall be the official spokesman on all occasions for The American Legion Department of South Carolina. The commander does not issue orders on their own. No other sections will change in Article XI and will remain in the constitution.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, entertain a motion to accept the change as presented?**

**D-13 Commander Gibson: For purposes of discussion, I move to approve.**

**Vice Commander Lonergan: Second.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion on the floor and seconded, any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, signify by saying aye? Opposed, nay? The ayes have it.**

**C & B Chairman Simpson: Ok. American Legion Department of South Carolina Article VI, this is Amendment # 8. Wording was taken out. The Explanation is " Provides extra layer of security for the organization on calling a meeting for the DEC. No other sections will change in this article and the other sections will stay in the constitution."**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, entertain a motion to accept Amendment # 8 as presented.**

**D-13 Cmdr Gibson: I make that motion.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright. Need a second.**

**D-4 Cmdr Morse: Second.**

**Dept Cmdr: Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, signify by saying aye? Any opposed? The ayes have it.**

C & B Chairman Simpson: Amendment # 10. The American Legion Department of South Carolina Article VII, DEPARTMENT OFFICERS, Section 5, some wording was taken out to make it correct, then proper verbiage was put in. While a type, in a world of political correctness, these two points need correcting.

Dept Adj Strauss: This was submitted by a post and did not need to come to the committee, I inadvertently added this to the ones to be voted on by us.

C & B Chairman Simpson: Alright, that's all I have for Constitution and Bylaws but at this time I'd like to thank my committee, Jim Hawk and John Britt, for all their hard work on this. We're meeting once a month now to make corrections to the Constitution and Bylaws. I do thank you and thank ya'll for your attendance today. Thank you very much.

D-20 Cmdr Mills: In that last one, in Section b, the end of that first line, it says the Adjutant may by.

Dept Adj Strauss; Amendment # 10?

D-20 Cmdr Mills: # 10, in the proposed wording, shouldn't that be may **be** instead of may **by**?

Dept Adj Strauss: Thank you.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I'd also like to echo Commander Simpson's thank you on the hard work the Constitution & Bylaws Committee is doing. They have gone through, and I know the Adjutant has, I know have. I read it every night before just before I go to bed (laughter). If you really want to go to sleep quickly, read it. (laughter). But it shows that we need to always update this document and it does change. The Judge Advocate when he came down to Fall Conference pointed out a lot of things that we really didn't notice, or it's always been done that way and it doesn't always make it correct. I do recommend that you look through certain sections of the Constitution and the Bylaws and see if you can make changes to it and get them in either to the committee or to the adjutant or to myself or send them to Maggie and we can get them put there so we can always be changing and updating the document. Because that's what we live by, we can't be stagnant on that. That's what a lot of these changes are we just voted on today. Just re-reading them and going through it so it's a lot of hard work and I do appreciate the committee's efforts. So thank you. I'd like to turn it over now to the Department Adjutant so he can do some Administrative updates and talk about the new website and email.

**Dept Adj Strauss:** Alright, we've got a couple things here. First Administrative thing is this document here that says "DISCLAIMER" on the front. This is not the entire employee policy manual; this is just a portion of it. We are projecting that we're going to hire a new employee, so we went through the employee policy manual and made updates as needed and we put this out in an email. We could go through the entire document or we could vote on it as amended, it's up to you. Does anybody have any questions about the document that just was put out? **Ok. Commander do you want to see if we want to approve the changes to the personnel manual?**

**D-20 Cmdr Mills: I make a motion that we approve the changes.**

**D-2 Cmdr Coy: Second.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion on the floor to approve it as presented and duly seconded. Any discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye? Opposed? The ayes have it.**

Dept Adj Strauss: Alright, Everybody got this document here with the little yellow line running through the middle of it? Our National Commander, Daniel Seehafer, had asked us to pass this out to everybody. This is just a little line item thing, you can bring to the posts and talk about how much National is giving back to the Departments. You can see that South Carolina received a lot of scholarships from National. And is just a way to show the posts what their membership dollars are doing. So he's asked that you send that out to them. Behind that there's a little greenbar looking sheet, this is the Veterans and Children Foundation since they started the fundraising drive. It has from October 1, 2020 when they started, to October 5, 2023, how much South Carolina has contributed. And we received a letter from National Commander Seehafer. It says on behalf of The American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation, thank you for your generous gift to the 1919 Society. Your contribution has made a possible direct impact on thousands of veterans and their families across this great nation. Your cumulative contribution since October 2020, when the 1919 Society was founded, qualifies you for membership at the silver level. Please accept the enclosed logo pen, which I have in my office if anybody would like to see it, as a token of appreciation of your support. Since 1925, more than Thirty Million Dollars has been distributed to disabled veterans and children of those that have served this nation. Contributions and gifts added to the trust is administered by The American Legion and Children Foundation to insure that these gifts are wisely invested.



As you know the Veterans and Children Foundation is our Commander's project this year, it's also Commander Seehofer's project, so we're basically getting a nice letter thanking us for our contributions to the Veterans and Children Foundation.

Exec Dir May: And we have another urn.

Imm PDC Jarvis: What is U-R-N? (laughter)

Dept Adj Strauss: Urn. At the NEC meeting room, if you've never been, there's a table that every state meets at and when you sit down at the table, there's two squares on the desk. And the squares used to be ashtrays back in they allowed smoking in the meeting room. They decided to come up with a way to tell Departments where they stand on the V & C Foundation so they established guidelines so when you reach a certain point you earn an urn to put in that little slot. The urn is actually a model of the urns that sit in front of The American Legion Headquarters, but it's kind of creepy. (laughter). Everybody teases, it's fun but its' just kind of weird how that is, but we have earned an urn (laughter).

Dept Adj Strauss: We get two urns if we reach another threshold, but we have earned the first urn. That's basically what the letter's telling us is we've earned the first urn (laughter).

Dept Historian Gooden: Do you have some information on why some are highlighted and some are not highlighted?

Dept Adj Strauss: I think that's the way they show if they have the first urn or the second urn, I think.

D-5 Cmdr Wells: What are thresholds?

Dept Adj Strauss: I think it was \$15,000.00 for the first urn and I think \$30,000.00 for the second one I think. That was just correspondence and a pat on the back for you guys, you are the ones that have been promoting our programs for the V & C Foundation, so hats off to you. So a lot of people have asked us about and we don't know the answers to multi-year memberships. But yesterday we finally got something from National on multi-year membership, and it wasn't...it was part of the membership report and that's the first thing that we've gotten other than people telling us that's it coming. But it says, do you guys have this? He's passing it out now. So as you can see, this is not really clear. It's about clear as mud, as some people say. But starting on December 4<sup>th</sup>, members are going to be able to renew their membership for three years at a time. This option can be accessed on the national website, [legion.org/renew](http://legion.org/renew). Only those who have not renewed for 2024 can take advantage of the renewal option at this time. This will be opened up to those that who have already renewed for 2024 membership year at a later date. So if you've paid your dues, you won't be able to do the three years years. If you haven't paid, it may open up at a later date, but they haven't given us that date. We don't know if that's going to be available, they didn't really say if it's going to be on mylegion an option if someone pays the post. I guess it's all online. They did offer the Departments to test and not one Department wanted to test.

PDC Scherer: What's the advantage of doing the three years? Other than you just don't pay your dues every year.

**Dept Adj Strauss:** Well, you avoid the National dues increase. That's the thing, is it going to be...if this person renews on the 4<sup>th</sup>, who hasn't paid his dues, is it for 2024, 2025 and 2026 or is it for 2025, 2026 and 2027? They haven't even said. These are the things that we've been asking as Adjutant's, you know. But we're not really getting answers to the questions. I think National is hoping to raise money and hold it in a fund and earn money off the interest. They're trying to come up with any source of income that they can come up with.

You may know that we've put a committee to look into the membership of New Ellenton 169. They are not at 15 right now. The committee's been meeting, Commander Rabon, who has oversight, Commander Dorman, who is the District Commander, and Commander Kvam and I have all met a couple of times with New Ellenton. Commander Dorman has also met with them at other times. We explained some of the options that they have and they decided they are going to merge with Aiken Post 26, officially. And they are looking for your blessing. **We are looking for**

**a motion to** merge Aiken Post 26 with New Ellenton Post 169. We were the next step in that process, the final vote would be by the National Executive Committee at the Spring meetings.

Imm PDC Jarvis: You're asking for Ellenton to go to 26?

**Dept Adj Strauss: The Post 169 charter would go away and 26 would keep their charter.**

**D-1 Cmdr Walton: I make the motion that we allow New Ellenton 169 to merge with Post 26 in Aiken.**

**Vice Cmdr Rabon: I second that motion.**

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Alright, I have a motion to recommend that New Ellenton Post 169 merge with Aiken Post 26.**

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: I have a question. What we're doing, then, is actually transferring the post information. The members, I want to make that clear, the members have a right to go wherever they want to transfer to. We're not dictating to the members that they go, it's just simply the language and everything goes along.

Dept Adj Strauss: Assets, all records and that kind of stuff, will go to Aiken Post 26.

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: We're not dictating the members go, they can transfer wherever they wanted.

Dept Adj Strauss: That's correct.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: As a matter of fact there are a couple of members in 169 that want to go to Jackson post, and that's fine. If that's what the individual wants to do, that's where they can go.

Vice Cmdr Rabon: I just want to clarify that means all the money from New Ellenton will go to Post 26.

Dept Adj Strauss: As of the day that the NEC closes that post. That means anything in their account after that day goes to us. If they haven't done anything.

**Dept Cmdr Kvam: Any other discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye? Any opposed? The ayes have it.**

Dept Adj Strauss: I want to make sure everyone's clear on the website and the emails because we still have people emailing us at our old email address. Our new email address after the @ part, our old email says outlook, ok? The new email says southcarolinalegion.org. So if you're emailing something, make sure sending it to [deptsc@southcarolinalegion.org](mailto:deptsc@southcarolinalegion.org) and not the outlook address. Because we still have some people, especially district commanders that are sending it there. We very rarely check that any more but we still have people sending it to that address.

Same thing with our website. People go to our website, and people say it's a bad link on the old website, that's because we have a new website. It's spelled out. <https://www.southcarolinalegion.org> It's been wonderful for me and Maggie because we've been getting a lot less spam.

And for those that don't know, the Oratorical form form is on the Oratorical page on the website, not on the forms page. I would also make a strong recommendation that you make your reservations for the department convention. Rooms are going very fast, we actually had to open some rooms up. If you haven't done so, make your reservation for department convention now. There is a deadline now, it's like a month before that, it's getting down to the nitty gritty on that. Anybody here going to the Washington Conference? If you've never been, just know it's very, very expensive and it's recommended that you try to get a roommate. I'm just warning you up front because the rooms are very expensive in downtown Washington and the food is expensive and travel is expensive and all that. It might be something to talk about with someone who's been. For the Washington people, we're going to try and do the meetings with the legislators on that Tuesday of the event. So try not to leave on Tuesday if possible. Alright.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Real quick, call on the membership committee chairman to come up real quick.

Dept Mbrship Chairman Walton: If you look, I know they've already put out the delinquent post report. I've been trying to press on this. I've been trying to contact some of these individual posts to see what's going on or whether or not they need help with that. But I do want to commend to who for the ones that already have gotten their 70/75% for their post and also for their districts. I think they're doing well but we've got too many posts out there right now that haven't even looked like they've moved at all this year. So you need to let us know between the Commander, Adjutant, myself, whatever, what can we do? I mean, we can't go out and actually spoon-feed them, but we can give them directions, we have a lot of directions out there. I know the vice commanders have been busy working out there too. And I want to thank them. Anybody have any questions? You get your weekly reports from me, I've tried to be explicit about it. It may be delayed this week because my computer died yesterday.

Dept Adj Strauss: The reason why we're passing this report out is at the end of December, the post goes into membership in bad standing. So that means they can't send anybody to boys state, can't have a baseball team, can't do anything with the programs unless they're in good standing. We get complaints on that December 31<sup>st</sup>, that next working day after that is when I send that nasty email you're suspending. That's per our bylaws. I'm not being the bad guy. I'm not trying to be the bad guy but that's why we're putting this out so you can tell your posts and your districts that they need to at least be 15 to be in good standing and participate in the convention and that type of stuff. They can't do that if they have membership under 14. The can come to convention but they'll have zero votes. 15, I'm sorry. 15.

Historian Gooden: How often do these delinquent reports come out?

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Weekly.

Historian Gooden: Do we have to wait until the end of the year to make something happen for these posts?

Dept Cmdr Kvam: We've been putting it out since June, July. Every week this report goes out. Darlene sent it out numerous, numerous times, sometimes twice a week. So it's not waiting until the end of December, we've been putting it out for six months right now. And so it's one of those things that everybody seems to turn a blind eye on. Oh, well, we'll get to it eventually. But it does go out weekly, if you're not checking your email, check your spam folder. Every once in a while I'll get a new spam in the spam folder and it's from the Department. How can it be that just an hour before I received something. But we have not waited until the start of December to do this, we've been doing it every month, every week, and we've done it at every DEC and at Fall conference. We put it out, put it out and just like we said, I can't tell you guys. I suggest what you can do and then you go to your posts, you can't tell them what to do but you sure can give them some good suggestions and just like the Adjutant just said, you have that carrot out there that on the first of January, you are a post not in good standing and you can't participate. Sometimes that's what it takes and last year it happened with a couple posts. We found out a couple post commanders that hadn't even paid their dues yet. They said, wow, what do I got to do? Pay your dues and then you can be a post commander again. So, it's not something that we've waited on, we've been putting it out constantly.

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: I'd like to take a moment of personal privilege and inform you that Salem Post 163 can be removed from this list. Yesterday I met with them they recruited and renewed six members so they'll move up.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Great! Anything for the good of the Legion? I know we've got a lot of stuff going on. A lot of Christmas parades, there's a lot of other things going on so keep us informed. My closing remarks, I want to remind everybody, we're in a crunch time. I know I haven't asked Commander Scherer to say too much but it's a crunch time because Oratorical's coming up and I'm getting a few phone calls on Oratorical and how do you do this and all that. And we tell them we go to website. Make sure, like they were just saying. Go to the correct website to get the information and there are some instances as well. What post is handling what high school and what post is doing this. Well, if you're in doubt, call the other post commander in your area, you know, who's doing what. There was an issue a little while back on Boys State. Well, he put out a email to the post commanders

and adjutants, I believe to the District Commanders, I'm not a hundred percent sure. There is no quota so if a post wants to send 20 boys if you've got the money. But we didn't have the information at headquarters. So when you called up here, you literally got the deer in the headlights, what are you talking about, we didn't know. We think we corrected that now by sending a couple other emails up there and saying, hey, let us know. But also we're at this time of the year where awards are starting to become due so have our adjutant going through your Adjutant Manual and start getting ready and doing your awards. Whether it's policeman of the year, fireman of the year, teacher of the year, they all come due right about this time so start working those and making sure we get the inputs. It's kind of embarrassing when you have a whole bunch of schools in SC and only one teacher of the year application. That's kind of strange, you know, and all of that. So make sure you have your posts looking at their awards. Also, Law Cadet is coming up so make sure that anybody that's interested in Law Cadet, have them get ahold of Kevin, he's the Chairman of the Law Cadet committee so we can start getting people signed up for Law Cadet, because that's really a great program. They're limited to 65, so there is a limitation on that one. But it's one of those great, great programs. We just need to do it. And I want to thank everybody here for membership because we're still ahead of North Carolina and we're going to get that ten pounds of pulled port.

D-2 Cmdr Coy: What are you going to eat? (laughter).

Dept Cmdr Kvam: I don't know what I'm going to eat but, Jerome's going to bring me some (laughter). We're still ahead of North Carolina. I think they're 31 and we're 23 now. We've slipped a couple. I think France and a couple of others that only have 2,000 members, finally got ahead of us. But we got to keep on the bet with North Carolina.

D-1 Cmdr Walton: Commander, Excuse me, I just want to remind everybody too, to make sure you remind your posts to get it in to Maggie for the first of April if they're changing their dues, ok? That is very vital. Because I know a lot of posts that I've talked to, didn't even recognize the information that's come out about the fact they've increased the National dues and that we are not as a state increasing our dues. But they need to get the information in so she can get it to National so on the membership renewal notices, it will be correct.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: And on the last tally on that, we are lacking quite a bit on posts putting in for if they're going to increase their dues. Some of them have to really take a look because I know a couple of them are only charging \$40.00 for their dues, you got to pay that and they're only making \$1.00 so all of a sudden now they're going to be in the hole every...you know, when they get that. So make sure that they know that's going up and they get that paperwork in, that's very, very important. Nobody wants to raise dues but if you're going to be losing money on a membership year, then that's not very good for your post, ok? Rifle Raffle tickets, by the way, if you haven't picked them up for your District, they're available in my office and I'll have you sign for them and you can carry them back to your District and give them to your post. They finally came in and we were able to get them separated so they are available to be picked up.

D-17 Cmdr Childs: I got a question, if she started out as a teacher and she's working in the library, she can still be put in for this award?

Dept Cmdr Kvam: As far as I know she can.

D-2 Cmdr Coy: The Victory House, which a lot of you are familiar with, down there in Walterboro. We're going to have what is called American Legion Day there, for all the residents, on March 15<sup>th</sup>. And we're going to try to do that every year. We had the parade and it was very well attended.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Thank you. Alright, anything else?

Vice Cmdr Rabon: Legion night at Segra Field will be on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: Ok. I was just reminded that the application is on the website for Law Cadet. And yes, I've already got complaints, people say it's a say it's too much paperwork to fill out and all that other stuff. And all I tell them is, fill it out because you have all the different activities they go on, like driving, shooting and all that. I'm

sorry, but know, you have to be safe and you have got to do what you got to do. So, you know, there's no way you can streamline the application process for that one. Suck it up and take care of it.

Dept Adj Strauss: We live in a legal eagle world.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: And one last word on membership. We are ahead of where we were last year on membership (applause) but let's get that 75% by the 13<sup>th</sup> of December. We are ahead but we're 600 short of 75% overall so let's get out there and push them. I know this is a hard time of year with Christmas and all that.

D-2 Cmdr Coy: I'm going to need another hundred tickets for a post that called me this morning.

Dept Cmdr Kvam: For Rifle Raffle? Alright, anything else.

Commander Kvam called for the closing prayer and closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

Michael D. Strauss  
Department Adjutant

MS/mm