



Department Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 4, 2017



The Department Executive Committee met on Saturday November 4, 2017 at The American Legion Department of South Carolina Headquarters, 103 Legion Plaza Rd, Columbia, SC 29210

Dept Cmdr Mike Strauss
Dept Adjutant Nick Diener
NEC Bud Hennis
Alt NEC Gary Mitchell
Dept Historian Matt Gooden
IPDC Bob Scherer
Dept 1st Vice Cmdr John Britt
Dept 2nd Vice Cmdr Walt Richardson
Dept 4th Vice Cmdr Ron Price
D-2 Cmdr Chuck Blankin
D-3 Cmdr Bridget Lewis
D-4 David Goodman
D-5 Cmdr Jack Wright
D-6 Cmdr Jim Kvam
D-7 Cmdr Charlie Bethea
D-8 Cmdr Chuck Shaffer
D-9 Cmdr Doc Sweet
D-10 Cmdr Russ Cantrell
D-11 Cmdr Jack Lonergan
D-13 Carlton Patterson
D-16 Cmdr Jim DeFrehn
D-17 Ed Miller
D-19 Cmdr Bob Gibbons
D-20 Cmdr Robin Rucker
Dept Sgt-at-Arms George Oxner
Dept Chaplain Bill Quarles

Absent:

Dept 3rd Vice Cmdr Roberta Poulos
D-1 Cmdr Jim Jarvis
D-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis
D-14 Cmdr Mike Brandt
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy

Present:

PDC Frank Whittle
PDC/PDA Jim Hawk
PDC Joe Lysaght
Exec Dir M. May
Prog/Mbrship Dir E. Massaro
P-130 Adj Darlene Walton
P-93 Mbr Bill Wade

Cmdr Strauss opened the meeting and called on Chaplain Quarles for the invocation. The Commander read Resolution 288, led the Pledge of Allegiance and then asked everyone to join him for the Preamble.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Alright, this is the point in the meeting where I read the minutes from the last DEC meeting, so I'll start reading the minutes, unless someone wants to make a motion. He asked for a motion to waive the reading of the last DEC minutes

PDC Lysaght: I make a motion to accept the minutes.

IPDC Scherer: Second.

Cmdr Strauss: Motion has been made and a second. All in favor? Opposed? Alright, we'll dispense with minutes and show it as approved. Membership report. Chairman Rucker?

While the membership report is being passed out, as you know we had some re-districting going on so I'd like to recognize the new members. Robert 'Doc' Sweet, D-9 Cmdr, Chuck Blankin, D-2 Cmdr, Bridget Lewis, D-3 Cmdr and rehashing a new old guy, Bob Gibbons, new D-19 Cmdr, Charles Bethea, D-7 Cmdr and Ed Miller, D-17 Cmdr, another new/old guy and Charlie Shaffer, D-8 Cmdr. Welcome to the DEC. I appreciate your dedication to the organization.

Mbrship Chairman Rucker: Robin Rucker, you won't forget me, I promise. I handed out several things and first of all you got the membership report and the delinquent post report. It's been highlighted.

Adj Diener: The post that were highlighted are the posts that have not achieved the minimum 15 yet.

Mbrship Chairman Rucker: We've got a date closing in on us. It's got to be in by when Nick?

Dept Adj Diener: We need to have it in by Monday, no the 9th.

Mbrship Chairman Rucker: The last sheet I've got is the membership team and the revitalizations we're doing on the bottom. Time is approaching, people have come forward and we are marching on. We're ahead of where we this time last year by a little bit but we need to keep up the good work and I do appreciate those that are going out and working. We've heard some good things about the people that are working membership from the local posts. Also, if you haven't got your pins, see Darlene before you leave. We'll talk with you about getting your pins, we're trying to get them to the posts. Also, if you look at the right on that sheet, you'll see assigned districts. Everyone on the mbrship team was assigned a district. They will assist you in that area, so I have D-17 and 20. Jim Jarvis has 11 & 1, Jim Kvam has District 2 & 6, Darlene has D-10 & 18, Bob Starnes has D-12 & 15, Stanley Webber has D-5 & 9, Rick Bernard has D-16 & 8, James Ridgell has D-14 & 19, Paul Smith has D-3 & 13 and Wayne Southworth has D-4 & 7. Any questions?

D-4 Cmdr Goodman: The cancelled posts in the Districts. Why are they still on the membership report?

Dept Adj Diener: One of the reasons, those and I'll talk about them later but those posts where we pulled their charters. Right now, I haven't taken them out of the reports yet because once I take them out of the system so they don't show up on that report, I lose every bit of history on them so we're still trying to accumulate some of that but the next time we put out the report all those will be off that. I'm manually printing history reports back to 2003 on those.

D-4 Cmdr Goodman: But that affects my percentage.

Dept Adj Diener: For your district but not for the overall department.

Mbrship Chairman Rucker: Cmdr, do you want to talk about your list?

Dept Cmdr Strauss: For the posts that have been cancelled can affect those numbers greatly and I understand that but as of right now, that's the list that I have to go by so that's what I'm using. We misspoke about the cut-off, we want them here by the 10th so strongly encourage your posts, go back and let them know they need to have that up here by the 10th. And there's another date that you need to talk to them about and that's December the 8th. December the 8th is the cut-off for the next renewal. National sends out a renewal in January. All the posts dues that are here by December the 8th, if they're here and paid by that date, they won't get the renewal in January. And a lot of you District and Post Cmdr's have heard that before. Why did I get a renewal notice? That's why, you have to have them here so let them know about their dues right now up for this cut-off in November and December 8th is the other date to let them know to avoid that dues mail-out by National on January 5th.

The big board behind me is our Veterans Day target, we want to be at 65% so we have 10 District Cmdrs at 65% already and that's why I put them up on the Big Board so everybody can see it. We have just a few of you that are very close to that 65% so pick up that phone, we've got two weeks here or a little less than two weeks before that next deadline. Take a look at your numbers, look at some of those posts that are lagging, those are the ones that drag you down a lot of times. Call them up, let them know you're checking up on them, it's veterans' day and you want to check on them. We just sent 600 plus dues in and we're up to 68.38 % so we have met our target already so we're well ahead and the train's rolling. Let's just keep it up, it's good to be ahead at this point but we don't want to take our foot off the gas. We got to keep shaking those trees, you know what's coming up. Christmas and it's a bear to get those dues in between Christmas and New Year's so it's good to have a little pad there and be ahead of the game than behind the game and have to catch up. Picking up that phone will make a big difference.

Mbrship Chairman Rucker: Last thing. We're trying to make every district meeting, at least one of them, some member of the membership team. Once they've been assigned, maybe they will call you, please give them an opportunity to speak at your district meeting or myself, whoever we can get down there. We've got a lot of conflict because we've got a lot of moving parts. We've got revitalizations, we got district meetings, membership drives, so try to get at least one person to your district meeting to talk about membership. Thank you.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Ok, thank you Cmdr. I have just a couple cards that we got, as you know, at the last DEC meeting we wrapped up some fundraising for Brett Reistad who is the leading candidate to become the National Cmdr next year. He sent a handwritten note, which is kind of nice nowadays:

"Dear Officers and members of the DEC, thank you so much for your kind and generous contributions to my campaign for National Commander. I am blessed to be a member of such a great organization with such wonderful members and I'll be sure that your donation is spent wisely. Thank you for your support, I look forward to my future campaign visit. Sincerely, Brett Reistad".

We also received from the family of William C. Plowden, Jr. a grateful acknowledgement of that expression of sympathy for our PDC William C. Plowden – 1957-1958. 99 years old, so they did appreciate the of cards from the Department of SC. At time I want to call on the Chairman of the Centennial Cmte, Jim Kvam.

Centennial Chairman Kvam: As ya'll can see, for those of you that don't know me, I'm Jim Kvam, I'm the District 6 Cmdr but I was also selected chairman of the Centennial Cmte. We've had a couple meetings in trying to get things going back together again. Our biggest, and the Dept Cmdr told me I could talk for a half hour/45 minutes so I'm going to ...(laughter)...One of our top priorities that we have to do for starting the Centennial, you've heard about it and you've seen the shirts, and everybody says yeah, it's the Centennial and we'll do something about it. But we have to get out there and have ya'll start registering on-line and get our posts registered with the National website. And that's one of our top priorities right now. So I'm asking the District Cmdr's when you have your District meetings or when you go to your post meetings explain that's it's very, very important and imperative that we get them registered on the National website. That's www.centennial/legion.org And once you get in it, it's a very easy website to get around and it is your history. And it's amazing, there's 30 posts right now that are registered. I think if you look at the page for SC, it' looks like there's 32 or 33 but two of them are registered twice

so we do have 30 posts registered. And when you first start, whoever you get to do it, they're the administrator and then they can have people come in and post pictures and they can allow people to get through to registered on that. One of the good things, our buddies up in the Chapin Post 193, they have issued a challenge. They said they will pay \$5.00 to the NEF for every post that registers. We have 168 posts, up to \$500.00. So we want to get in there and get these posts registered so we can take \$500.00 from Chapin and then also give to the NEF to help. Because those funds are getting depleted so rapidly after these last three storms. So we really go to get out there. It's not that hard to do, you can start it, post the pictures and at least get it on there. My Post, 166, they started about a week ago and it's the history has already started. It allows the post to put something on there and then it's archived so if there should happen to be a disaster at the post, and I think Post 40 is a good example. They had the flood and then they had the fire. If they'd been registered on the Centennial site, they can pull all their information back. And it has to be a picture, they don't accept PDF files. Take a picture of your charter, upload it and put it on the webpage. So we really need to get out there and get these posts registered. Any questions on that? The district Cmdr's really need to push this. If you want me to try to come to the district meetings, just like mbrship, I'll come to the meetings. I've already been to D-19 and went through this as well.

The other thing we're doing right now is we're designing a coin. We are going to have a centennial coin, we have one design that was submitted by PDC Scherer, we're looking at that, we've also have a couple other designs so we're looking at those. We also have a design that is being made up because when you do the design that becomes the property of the company that did the design and we cannot send previous submitted designs to National and ask Emblem Sales how much it would cost to make it because of copyright infringements. So we have to make our own design up and we're going to go to Emblem Sales. Right now, most of the coins run anywhere from about \$4.50 to \$5.00 to make them, no matter what company it is. I've seen some from Maryland, it has the Maryland Flag and a blue crab because they're known for their crab. SC, we're thinking about the State and it has Myrtle Beach in the background, that's the one that submitted, and we also had one that just had the state outline in the middle, so we'll see what that looks like. Because you can see the State with the Palmetto Tree and the Crescent Moon, that's what SC is known for. So, we're going through on those coins. And we're going to sell the coins, and they run up to about \$5.00 and I think we'll sell the coins for \$10.00 apiece and we'll use those monies to pay....

Dept Adj Diener: Get donations. (laughter)

Centennial Chairman Kvam: Excuse me, donations. We can't sell them, we'll get donations for \$10.00 apiece to help offset the cost of the getting them made. So we'll use that money that way. And another thing that we're going to do, for posts that want to purchase a coin, we're going to get them engraved with the post #, say Post 147 would like a coin for a shadowbox or whatever they want to put in there. If a post purchases one, we're going to ask quite a bit more. It's another fundraiser, to use that money to turn around it and use it at the convention for a centennial banquet. This is in the planning stage so that's what we're looking at plan wise.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Are you dead set on using Emblem Sales?

Centennial Chairman Kvam: No, we're not dead set, we're seeing how much it costs. We already have one from 4Heros and there's another company I've contacted.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: I have sources, I don't have them with me, but I have sources for coins. As you're talking about taking coins out to get them stamped with numbers on them the company I have will do that for you if you buy a certain amount and the more you buy the lower the price, I'm talking \$2.00 a coin.

Centennial Chairman Kvam: We want to see what Emblem Sales says.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Can you submit an idea for a coin?

Centennial Chairman Kvam: Yes, you sure can.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: How about a tiger paw on there (laughter).

Dept Adj Diener: You can waste your time if you'd like (laughter).

Centennial Chairman Kvam: But yes, we are taking ideas, submit your ideas and the committee will get together and the committee will come up with a suitable coin.

Historian Gooden: Not to re-hash what you said but we do have three duplicate posts out there on the National site, Post 6, Post 130 and Post 193. But one of the biggest things I've seen working on the team is we hear a lot of comrades say we don't have computer skills to add things on the web. But what you can do and don't realize is your ROTC program. Every end of the year they come to us for medals for their ROTC banquet. What you can do is take your photos, take everything you need and speak with your ROTC Dept and have them do it as a project. Those kids can zip this stuff in there very quickly for you so use that as one of your tools.

Centennial Chairman Kvam: Also, that brings the younger kids into the Legion too, that's a good idea.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: What's the timeline for this?

Centennial Chairman Kvam: We're hoping before Christmas. One company is telling us if we get them in shortly it's three or four weeks to get them made and if we wait until January it's five or six weeks. And as I said early, we'll use the funds for the Centennial Celebration. This starts at the Dept Convention in 2018 which is the 100th birthday and culminates in 2019 which is the Centennial Convention, we'll order 500 coins to start with. The one company we talked with, it will be one price when we first order if we have to order additional coins the price won't increase.

On the 100th convention, we plan to do an honor guard present the colors and we want to set up the POW/MIA table and as the reading is being done, someone will bring in the table, then the tablecloth, then the rose, then the plate while significance of the table is being read. So it's something more than Resolution 288 and we'll go through that. And we want to look at some banners that we can put up at the hotel that are tasteful but won't damage the walls, so the hotel won't be mad. If anyone has any banners, feel free to give them to me or the Dept Cmdr or Adj so we can have a nice 100th convention so we can kick off the centennial year. So that's what we're looking at for the 2018 convention. We're looking what color guard we're going to pick, Rock Hill and Goose Creek have Color guards, maybe we can combine them and have a special guard. We have a little time on getting the Honor Guard in place and people that will help on the POW/MIA ceremony. And then at the next convention we'll be looking for the oldest and the youngest Legionnaire and we'll have a big cake. They come up and cut the cake. Again, that's a year and a half out. Another thing we're talking about is the Placemat. The Dept Cmdr can talk a little more on this but the Placemat is something that National puts out and it's a timeline of the history of the Dept of SC so if you have significant events we can get those put on. Cmdr Strauss has already got quite a bit of stuff that he's sent up to National. One proposal is the outline of the state that shows where the posts are and significant events. One of them was Law Enforcement Academy, SC would be great with Boys State because as a state and Dept we have one of the Best Boys State in the Nation. If you have any significant event that happened in your post or district give them to the Dept Cmdr or Nick or myself. National will be sending these placemats out next year.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Yes, these are going to be pumped out right after the 100th year kickoff so we hope to have these at your post so if you have a 100-year party or whatever you're going to have at your post at the local level, we can get you tons of these things to have as placemats at the table so everyone can see what The American Legion in SC has done.

And these are great tools that National is doing for us but all we have to do is come up with the information for them to put on there. I don't want this to be Mike Strauss' version of Dept of SC. I want your input. So e-mail me if you have a significant event, we have some history books. We have some really, great Legionnaires in this state. I'll give you a few examples. William Jennings Bryan Dorn, a past Cmdr of our Department, the VA hospital is named after him in Columbia, he was a Legislator, we got E. Roy Stone, I could go on and on about things. But I think these are good examples, but I might not know an example in Lancaster or Myrtle Beach, so if you know something that we can put on there, get with us. We don't have the final authority about what goes on there,

National does but we can give them tons of ideas and the more ideas the better.

Centennial Chairman Kvam: That's the significant thing there, the more information we can give them, they can pick and choose, the more they have the better it will be for our placemat. Another thing that we're kicking around, I have never heard of them, fatheads, they're peel stickers that you put on there, we'll see if we can do anything with that. If you put a banner up they don't damage your walls.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: The National American Legion has contracted out with Fathead and they're coming up with a Fathead decal for The American Legion.

Centennial Chairman Kvam: That's a pretty good deal, I had never heard of Fathead before, I had to google it. And this next one is really in the infancy stage. And we're trying to come up with a Legacy Ride to start after the 100th convention, and we've done a lot of firsts in South Carolina as far as the Riders, we were 2nd in the Nation for donations. So what we want to do is be the first one in the Nation that we have a Legacy Ride, even if it's by quadrant, but hit every post and then get a picture of every post with the Legacy Riders and we can say we were the first one in the Nation to have a Centennial Legacy Ride and hit every post in the state and they're also going to have T-shirts for sale, with the culmination of a parade from the Marriott to the State House with the Governor proclaiming it American Legion Day in the State of SC and we plan a march with the Rider's following and we'll be at the Statehouse where everybody can see the Legion. That's what we're working on and if anybody has any ideas, let us know, this is just starting. Getting back a little bit on the coins, we got to have a seed money to get the coins, the coins are about \$5.00 each and if we order 500 to start out, I'd like to make a motion that the DEC authorize the Centennial Cmte \$2500 to get the initial set of coins.

Adjutant Diener: You can't make the motion as the chairman of the committee.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: I make a motion we accept the recommendation from the chairman of the Centennial Committee, that the DEC allow \$2500.00 to purchase the coin.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: Second.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: A motion has been made and a second, discussion?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: What will be the profit, net?

Centennial Chairman Kvam: If we do the first 500 coins, it will be \$2,500.00.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: The fund the money will come out of will be the Rifle Raffle money, as we get money in from the coins, we put the money back in for that.

Vice Cmdr Price: We're not locked in on the cost of the coins yet?

Dept Cmdr Strauss: No, we don't know yet but we're projecting 500 coins.

PDC Lysaght: You just said something I can't get a handle on. The money that we're going to allocate for the purchase, the \$2,500.00, we're going to use some of the money for the raffle, when we get the money back from the sale, we're going to put the money back in the raffle money. Jim said the \$2,500.00 proceeds net were going to be used for the Centennial Celebration. We're taking \$2,500.00 and putting into two separate pots, it's still only \$2500.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: The profits from that, from the coin.

PDC Lysaght: Yeah, we get 500 coins for \$2,500.00. We get donations that are going to come back and give us back \$2,500.00. \$2,500.00 of that \$5,000.00 is going back to raffle.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Or we could put all of it towards the Centennial Celebration or not pay it back, that's up to you, you guys are the governing body.

PDC Lysaght: That's really my point, even though the raffle generated money, it generated money for use by the Department really, for that amount of money it's something we could think about, we could apply that \$5,000 toward the Centennial. None of us are going to be around for the next one.

Dept Adj Diener: As far as the \$5,000, just think we're a little premature on doing that until the committee comes up with everything else that they're wanting to do. Instead of piecemealing it, let them go ahead and finish out their plan and look at some of the cost that they're looking at for the whole year for next year.

PDC Lysaght: You're right Nick, but the Commander already said that's a bridge we may cross down the road and we may end up with more than \$5,000.00.

PDC Hawk: The main thing is this is phase one of numerous stages of the Centennial, we're starting off with the coin. This is phase one of a process.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Very much like the Rifle Raffle, that was a process.

NEC Hennis: On the purchase of these coins, I think it would be to our advantage to look at getting them from Emblem Sales. Emblem Sales is part of our organization and to go outside and purchasing them from someone else is taking away from the veterans of this organization whether you realize it or not. Emblem Sales gives a percentage of sales back to each Department. It may cost a little more but at least we're keeping the money in this organization.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: One good deal, not only did you mention that Emblem Sales gives us back money on sales, and they own the copyrights to anything that says American Legion on it. If we decide to go outside we still have to get permission. Any other discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? Alright, the ayes have it. (The motion to purchase coins with \$2,500.00 was passed and so ordered).

Centennial Chairman Kvam: Thank you. I just want to remind you to get out there and remind your posts to get on line and register. If anyone needs help or has trouble, please feel to call me. I have my cell phone on all the time, send me an e-mail or a text. I'll try to help in any way I can. Matthew is on the committee and the others, we'll be glad to help you in any way we can.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: I just want to let you know in May 2018 Shaw Air Force Base is having a two-day air show. I don't know the exact dates. And we're proposing to have it in honor of The American Legion 100 Anniversary, I know one of the project officers personally so that's what we're pushing for.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Thank Jim, we got a lot of exciting things happening in SC. I think this 100-year celebration, we just touched on a few things but we got a lot of great ideas. We want to hear from you guys and gals about your ideas for a 100-year Celebration. We don't have unlimited funds but we do have a lot of history. If we don't tell our history, think about our 300-year Celebration, we want to tell people about our first hundred years. We want to get pp behind this.

NEC Hennis: Mr. Commander, at this time I'd like to call an Executive Session.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Ok, we have a motion, do we have a second.

Dept Adj Diener: We need to add that staff can stay.

NEC Hennis: Staff can stay.

D-6 Cmdr Kvam: Second.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Would all non-members of the DEC please leave the room. Sgt-at-Arms please close the doors.

END OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

Vice Cmdr Britt: We need to ratify what we did in Exec. Session.

Dept Adj Diener: We don't need to ratify what we did because we're taking minutes of the Executive Session.

Vice Cmdr Britt: Yes you do.

Dept Adj Diener: Not according to our lawyer.

Vice Cmdr Britt: I'm going by Robert's Rules. Anything that you do in Executive Session, stays in Exec. Session minutes, then you have ratify and all you say is ratify Executive Session and that way it's not recorded in the minutes.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Do we have a motion to ratify what was said in Executive Session?

D-5 Cmdr Wright: I make a motion to ratify what was said in Exec. Session.

D-10 Cmdr Cantrell: Second.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: All in favor? Any opposed?

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Alright, next up on the docket is our Finance Chairman?

Dept Adj Diener: Our finance chairman is not here, finance Cmte member Leroy Williams has been designated to represent him.

D-15 Cmdr Leroy Williams: I'd like to start by saying I had a full head of hair when I ordered this hat, I had hair six months ago. Our finance chairman is not here so I'm going to fill in for Grady. I'm handing out a short report here. It basically says our finance position is strong and I'm pleased to say we're working hard to manage your money wisely. For example, we met last week to review last year's income and expenditures and to work on FY 2018 budget. We also had a conference call Thursday with the Cmdr, Adj and the Chairman to further work out some details. We've also done some things to manage your budget very well. What we've done is increase the accountability of the members, reduced redundant travel, reduced unwise expenditures. The Adjutant can go into detail on what those numbers are. The bottom line is we believe we're in the best financial position that we've been in in years. The bottom line is revenue is more than expenditures. And that's what you want to see in a finance report. That's my finance report.

Dept Adj Diener: I'll kind of go over it. The handout is the finance statement for September 30th. One of the things you have to realize on these budget numbers, when we refer to the Rock Hill loan, those numbers were not in this budget at the time. So, we have been able to handle a \$89,000 expenditure for the year and the bottom line is we're still showing a profit. A lot of that is due to the rifle raffle and I can't thank Cmdr Richardson enough on everything he did on that rifle raffle and everything that ya'll did on that. That has changed so much of our financial outlook and given us so many more options because we not have some money in reserve. One thing on the next report, last year we changed the budget and looked at cutting the cost for the fall conference and we significantly reduced it in the budget, and beside what we reduced in the budget, we came in even less than that. Bottom line to all that, the fall conference this year cost \$11,000 less than last year. Two things we cut out were the reception and we had enough people come that we met our minimum room requirement. That was big. Last year

we had over a \$5,000 penalty because we didn't meet our room requirement. I think we've done a good job in getting the numbers down and membership is still coming in so we're moving forward on that. Any questions on the finance report?

PDC Lysaght: How did you come up with the dollar value for the proposed budget and the income category for the membership?

Dept Adj Diener: Can we hold off on that, we're talking the finance report right now and then we'll move onto the proposed budget.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: On the finance statement, we've got budgeted \$77,000. Remember, that's for two years, now for one year.

Dept Adj Diener: It hit onto here because it came in during this fiscal year. But just because we did well on that does not mean we can take all this money and spend it. We have to use that for the future. Any questions on the September finance report?

IPDC Scherer: I move to accept the finance report as presented.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: Second.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: You heard the motion, you heard the second. All those in favor? Any opposed? Ayes have it.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, the next sheet is the proposed 2018 budget and one of the things that we showed you on the form, I put out the 2017 budget and the proposed 2018 budget so you can see the changes. Just kind of highlighting, I'm going to skip down so I don't have to over every figure. Last year and this year because our membership has done well, we've bumped that projected membership figure up. That is based on us Attaining 97% of what we did last year. And it was literally go through and look at the members, the PUFL's and look at we think we can hit 97% so we carried that computation all the way down on those.

PDC Lysaght: If in fact that's what you based it on, then mathematically your numbers are a little out of step because if you're saying we're going to have an income of \$347,231.00 in membership, last year we did not break 20,000 members, the year before that we did not break 20,000 members, the year before that we did not break 20,000 members, year before that we did not break 20,000 members and the list goes on. But you're proposing an income with a \$21,433.00 increase because we're going to have 23,402 members.

Dept Adj Diener: No, we're basing it a little over 19,000 members.

PDC Lysaght: How much does the Dept get from the post?

Dept Adj Diener: \$15.50.

PDC Lysaght: \$15.50.

Dept Adj Diener: We also have for the 172 members we get a total of \$36.50 for the 172 members.

PDC Lysaght: And you divided all of the numbers in this amount and you figured that's a reasonable amount?

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: For 97%, right?

Dept Adj Diener: Yeah. And as an example, last year, go back and look at the 2016 calendar year, for income for membership, we brought in \$341,000.00 And looking at the way the numbers are coming in, we'll be at

\$341,000.00 again this year. Last year we had dropped the number even lower from previous budgets because we didn't know what was going to happen with the dues increase. Back when the budget was proposed the dues increase was still hitting, so we based it on getting 90% of the membership in.

PDC Lysaght: But 97% is the target for attainment for the income?

Dept Adj Diener: For the income. Last year we hit 98%. Ok, dropping down, on rental income, we now have all our facilities rented. We have the dance studio rented last year but at the time last year's budget was done we didn't have it rented so that's where we picked up the additional income there. The Dept convention, fall conference and Ntl Convention, again, if you remember from the last DEC meeting, Grady Richardson went through an explanation on how he didn't have the right numbers right on last year's budget and this year we have them right so that's why you see the changes there.

There will be no Rifle Raffle this year so that's a zero line there, the utilities income was left out of the budget last year, that's one where it's an accounting thing where the renters pay us for their utilities and we pay the utilities. One of the things we'd like to do is get everybody to change those over to their own names.

PDC Lysaght: I misunderstood something, you're showing \$77,000 and Walt said that was over a two year period.

Dept Adj Diener: We're going to spend it over a two year because if you notice we have nothing coming in. If you'll notice, because we have nothing coming in. We budgeted for what we had come in. We just can't turn around and use all that money that we brought in. It's not a lot of money, we're going to have to use some of that, part of that is to cover part of this budget but there's no more money coming when we do the accounting entry so this year there's no income for Rifle Raffle.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: It's already there.

Dept Adj Diener: It's already there, we already received it.

PDC Lysaght: It seems like a lot of smoke and guns and mirrors.

Dept Adj Diener: How is it smoke and mirrors? We have no Rifle Raffle this year.

PDC Lysaght: You only have 50% of that \$77,000 that's available for usage in 2017, is that correct?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Yes.

Dept Adj Diener: This is the income.

PDC Lysaght: I'm talking about income. How much of the \$77,000 is available in 2017, Cmdr Richardson?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: \$38,500.00.

PDC Lysaght: Of the \$77,000.00. What is the income?

Dept Adj Diener: The income is how many tickets we sold.

PDC Lysaght: Ok. And we're not apply these numbers toward expenses so if you're not then your numbers down are incorrect. One and one is two, not three.

Dept Adj Diener: No, sir. I've already got the money in the bank.

PDC Lysaght: Exactly.

Dept Adj Diener: I've got \$196,000.00 in the fundraiser account. The account that we use it out of, all Cmdr Richardson is saying is we can't all of a sudden go out and use all that money, we already got the money in. In 2017 we accounted for the income and the costs associated with the Rifle Raffle. That money's in the pot and how we turn around and use it is up to us but it won't be a specific....I use this out of rifle raffle, that's not on a budget sheet. This is just showing expenses, it's not showing what accounts they come out of for the accounting purposes.

PDC Lysaght: So if we spend \$38,000.00 out of this \$77,000 that we already have that's not part of the 2018 proposed, what if we spend \$39,000.00?

Dept Adj Diener: It will go against whatever budget line item expense that we spend it on.

PDC Lysaght: Then you're exceeding the \$38,000.00. I don't understand that Nick. How can we say we got this money to spend? Even though we have \$77,000.00 in the bank but Cmdr Richardson said we only have \$38,000.00. Half of it to spend this year. What happens if we exceed that amount?

Dept Adj Diener: Then we don't have enough money in the bank. We can dip into it but when we're planning for the budget all we're looking at is here's what we're going to spend money on and what he's saying is we don't need to be going in and coming up with things to spend money on because we got that extra money in there. Saving the money is making sure we have enough money to cover these expenses and not having to dip into those funds and transferring it to the General Fund to cover. But the money is there. So, when you're doing an income statement, unless money is coming in, you don't show it. And the money has all come in, so it had to be accounted for this year. We brought in \$180,000.00, when you look at the finance statement, we brought in \$180,000.00.

PDC Lysaght: But you still can't use but half that money. If you take that half....

Dept Adj Diener: But why does that show up on here, sir? That's what I'm trying to say. When I come up with expenses here I can't plan on using more than half of that money. But it's not going to show up as a line item for Rifle Raffle for this year.

PDC Lysaght: It's going to show up your total figure, which it does.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Look at the last page.

Dept Adj Diener: Look at the last page where we talked about using some of the money from the rifle raffle. I had to put it down at the bottom, but it doesn't hit the budget because it's not going to hit the actual books but we're talking about transferring money out of the Fundraiser checking account and putting it into a membership savings account to help with those expenses. But for the income statement portion, I'm not using that. It's not going to show up on an income statement or a profit and loss statement. For that all I'm doing it transferring it between accounts. It doesn't show you on here which account I'm not making a payment out of.

PDC Hawk: A proposed budget is just a proposed budget. All the expenses you've got listed goes out through the whole year, that's listed what you anticipate the cost to be, \$551,000.00? Right? Your anticipated income, if everybody does what they're supposed to, including membership getting 97%, that's \$601,000.00. So, you're looking at approximately \$49,500.00 to the good based on everybody in this room doing their job for the income side.

Dept Adj Diener: And I'm not including anything income from the Rifle Raffle in coming up with those figures.

PDC Hawk: If we do not as a department, do not meet that obligation to fulfill our expenditure side then we take the money out of someplace else which will fulfill that obligation. That will show up on this time next year's budget, right?

Dept Adj Diener: Right, if we can execute all this other than at the very end of the year other than transferring money to go into a savings account so therefore it's just a transfer, our plan is not to touch any of this year's expenses.

PDC Hawk: It's predicated on us doing our job on membership which is the biggest bulk of income coming in, since we don't have the Rifle Raffle as we know it, it behooves everyone in this room to get out and get membership to offset the cost at the end of this time next year we'll have a \$50,000 profit.

Dept Adj Diener: That's right. Membership is critical on all of it.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Let me get this right, I think I understand. last year we budgeted \$77,000. That's great. We brought in \$183,110.00. The budget was for \$77,000 but that was for two years. So, we get \$38,500 for last year and \$38,500 for next year, am I right so far?

Dept Adj Diener: No. The way we planned to use that money for future years was to split it between two years but then the last years actual budget we had \$77,000 but that's just accounting for what we thought was going to come.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: In other words, we had \$38,500.00 worth of expenditures covered by the Rifle Raffle, is that correct? What happens to the other \$68,100.00?

Dept Adj Diener: It's sitting in a checking account. Actually, we haven't touched any of the fundraiser money that came in, we've been able to cover out of the Operating account.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: In other words we got \$106,000.00 which is extremely rare for this Department which is not making us any money.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: That's something that we're going to be talking about.

Dept Adj Diener: Actually we've got \$170,000.00 and some odd cents.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker; If you would, bear with the Adjutant, let him explain all of it and then we can go back and ask questions. Because we didn't get this until last night, let him go through it and then we can ask questions.

Dept Adj Diener: The next line down, if you'll look at the Dept Expenditures, on the mortgage, there's a significant decrease on the amount we currently pay. And that's a vote I need ya'll to take. There's two mortgage notes still sitting out there, one is the large one of \$800,000.00 plus. The smaller note is only \$41,000. What we would like to do and we would like ya'lls approval, take the money in the Pamplico CD's \$18,000.00 plus \$23,000.00 out of the fundraiser balance that we have and go ahead and pay that loan off this year. That monthly payment is about \$2,200.00, which close to half of it is interest right now. If we can cut that out long term, we save ourselves money and we've got \$18,000.00 in a CD which is earning less than 1% interest and we're paying on a loan where we're paying 4% interest. The fact that we're down to that and I'd like ya'lls approval and the finance Cmte has looked at this and have approved. I'd like your approval to cash in the CD's and the other funding to pay this loan off.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Is that showing here, with the \$111,000.00?

Dept Adj Diener: That's the expense last year. It will drop down to \$84,000.00 if we get approval today. If we don't, that figure goes up to \$110,000.00.

PDC Lysaght: I move we pay off that loan as described by the Adjutant.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Second.

PDC Hawk: This has your approval as Nick said, of your finance Cmte, they did discuss and the finance Cmte made the recommendation, is that correct? And Nick is bringing their recommendation to this body. The Cmte did their job and is bringing that to this body for the soundness of The American Legion.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Alright, let me understand, we're going to take \$18,000.00 in the CD's making 1% and pay off a 4% loan and we're going to take \$23,000.00 out of the Fundraiser? Would it be more senses to leave our savings where it is and since we have a surplus of \$49,649.00 in the budget, go ahead and take that \$23,000.00 and put it in the budget and that way we would only have \$26,000.00 and then we'd come close to having a balanced budget. In other words, don't go into a savings account, that should be a sacred cow that we use for emergencies. But according to (inaudible) we have an income of \$601,581.00 and expense of \$551,932.00 which gives us a surplus of \$49,649.00.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: That's projected.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: I understand, it's projection, that's what this budget is. It's projected. Why can't we project \$23,000.00, out of that it leaves us a \$26,000.00 cushion.

Dept Adj Diener: Even if I pay that \$18,000.00 in there, I'm still going to have to make mortgage payments all next year.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: You're missing the point. I'm not saying just pay the \$18,000.00. I'm saying add the \$23,000.00 into the budget.

Dept Adj Diener: When am I'm going to pay that \$23,000.00 is what I'm saying.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: It's proposed. It's not actual money.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Whoa. You can't have it both ways. You just told Cmdr Lysaght that you could do it and now you're saying you can't do it. One way or the other.

Dept Adj Diener: If we do it your way I can cash in the CD and you're saying keep paying the loan on its normal schedule next year.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: No I'm not.

Dept Adj Diener: Next year. That's the only way I can do the money. Are you saying pay it all off out of next year's budget?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Yes.

Historian Gooden: At one time.

Dept Adj Diener: Out of the operating expenses, if I try to pay it out of operating expenses, and I did it five January, that Operating account, because the first six months we have to watch our cash, I would not be able to pay that other \$23,000.00 off until next July because I won't have enough money to cover all expenses until then. So, if I waited until one January and put it into this, I would still need to take it out of the fundraiser account in order to pay it off early.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: If we pay it off later, we would have the money?

Dept Adj Diener: If I waited until July, I could pay the money.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Why not pay the money out of savings account and pay it off and in July put the money back into savings?

PDC Hawk: That's something could recommend. Let the finance Cmte work it out, you've already got a motion on the floor to pay it off, this \$49,000.00 that Walt's talking about, then this time next year and everything is good to go, that \$601,000, that's what you end up the year with if we do our job.

PDC Lysaght: The motion to me, is we're going to use real money instead of imagine if you will. We said we're going to do this, and as Cmdr Hawk said, we're going to do if everybody is on board and we hit the 97% and if we do, there's a lot of if's, ok.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: We're going to make that, we might make 100%. (laughter).

PDC Lysaght: But the reality is what Nick's talking about is money in the bank, he can go and satisfy this thing. Hell of a big difference. That's why I made the motion, we should allow this to be passed and on behalf of the Dept, put this boy to bed.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Alright, all in favor? Any opposed? Ok.

Dept Adj Diener: I will make one comment. The way we are this year, one of the things the Dept needs to do is look at where are we going to put some of this money, how can we make some of that money grow. We haven't had that problem in many years but it's a nice problem to have because we don't need \$170,000.00 in an account that's not making any money. I don't want to hit it all now, but we need to come up some plans.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: The finance Cmte will be talking about that.

Dept Adj Diener: There's a big change on line 8, on the Dept Expenditures, on the RR expenses, we did put \$4,000 back in there because we anticipate next year we'll have to print the tickets for the next RR. Page Two, the car payment, it's zero, both vehicles are not paid off. So we have no expenses there. Next is recommend a slight increase on salaries, not including mine, that allows me the flexibility to give pay raises, it's not very much of an increase there but that does give me some flexibility. If you go down you see a large change on Dept convention on expenses, even though it shows the \$14,000. That's back to that problem where it was put in last year's budget wrong, but we've got those figures corrected based on historical data. Same way on page three, fall conference expenses, that is just correcting what was in there before. We need another quick vote on this, the expenses and income on convention and fall conference, those income figures have been based on increasing the registration fee from \$20 to \$25. I don't know if we need a separate motion or part of the budget. We're still looking at things for the future, on parking and those type of things, we haven't increased that fee for years. It's been \$20 for years so this just raises it to \$25 to help cover some of the increased cost.

Dept Cmdr Strauss; Which was also recommended by the finance Cmte.

IPDC Scherer: I make a motion to raise it to \$25.00. Will that affect the late registration fee to \$30.00?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes.

D-2 Cmdr Blankin: Second

Dept Cmdr Strauss: \$25 for registration and \$30 for late registration.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Understand, we just got through with six years of tax, tax, tax. We're just got a little bit on our feet and now we're going to hit them again an increase. I mean people, look. We're talking about we got \$170,000.00, what are we going to do with it and the next breath out of our mouths, we're going to raise the cost to go to convention. Look at the blue hats, how are we going to explain that to them? No, I don't think so, I'm against that.

Dept Cmdr Strauss; All in favor say aye? Any opposed? Let's get a roll call? If you're able to stand, stand for the increase. Nay's please stand up.

Increase – 16, Nay's 7. (The motion to increase the registration to \$25 and late registration to \$30 is passed and so ordered.)

Dept Adj Diener: One of the other things, if you go on down, Leadership development, we did put a line to possibly send two people to Legion college. We have to work out the details on how they would be selected. We increased Trophies and Awards by \$2,000. That's a nice problem to have, we had so many posts achieve 100% we had to give out more. We also picked up the NEF donations, Leading Candidate donation, both those are picking up what ya'll approved. We also put in Cmdr discretionary program, that is simply some money in there that will allow the Cmdr to do some discretionary programs, that's not a lot of money so we don't have to go through some of the problems in the past. Someone wanted to do a Baseball Coin and now the Cmdr will have the discretion to do that.

IPDC Scherer: Doesn't the Cmdr already have a \$5,000.00 credit card?

Dept Adj Diener: He has a credit card, that just happens to be the limit on the credit card, that doesn't mean he can go out and spend \$5,000.00?

PDC Scherer: I'm just saying could he not use that \$2,500.00 since you're going to pay that off right away anyway.

Dept Adj Diener: No, if he uses the credit card, that goes on the expense that goes on here. The \$2500.00 is a separate pot of money. That \$5,000.00 limit is just that, that is a limit on the credit cards. That doesn't give him the authority to just go out and spend \$5,000.00.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Not two minutes ago we voted to raise the cost of going to convention and conference 20% and now you're giving away \$2,500.00. We're going to catch hell explaining that to the members. How can you rationalize raising the cost of something and then giving a \$2,500.00 discretionary fund? No disrespect to the Cmdr, I'm sure he would use it right, but you have to draw the line some place people. These members, they're going to be eating breakfast with the members on Monday morning with 193 and I know I'm going to get my butt chewed. It makes sense to raise the rate for the convention, to raise the rate for the conference and then turn right around and then give a \$2,500.00 discretionary fund to the Cmdr.

NEC Hennis: If he decides \$1,000.00 for a program, does not come back to the DEC for approval?

PDC Lysaght: Guys listen, we won the World Series, I had to make a decision, when I found out the Dept really hadn't put anything in place to acknowledge what those young men had accomplished and what they brought to the state of SC and how they impacted our membership. So, in a brief conversation with our Adjutant and the finance Cmte, I ordered them with the understanding I would pay for them if I had to. You people that were here, I stood here, and I was chastised for spending that money because I didn't have a discretionary fund and I didn't want to use a credit card. But thanks to your support it got shut down and it got approved. We're talking about a situation like that but for anybody that never been a Dept Cmdr, or been out 365 days a year, there are expenses and our Cmdr needs to have some discretionary money. If you can't trust him then let's impeach him. Because we all know because even as district Cmdr's and post Cmdr's, we really should have some discretionary funds. If everything has to come to the DEC, we're going to have to meet every other weekend. I think it's a very smart move, and should have been doing a long time ago.

Dept Adj Diener: One of things that you can do is always come back once the budget is approved is set some limitations on that. Say, you got \$2,500.00 but if you try to spend more than \$500.00 on any one program you have to come back, you can set some parameters on that.

NEC Hennis: His credibility is there. \$2,500.00, I'm not going to do that, no one is going to spend it unwisely.

D-13 Cmdr Patterson: When I was Post Cmdr, my post gave me the authority to spend \$500.00 and it worked out at our post and I didn't have to go back to our board and do this and do that. If something came up, I could spend \$150 and get it done and get it out of the way.

D-2 Cmdr Blankin: At Post 147, I have a \$2,000.00 budget if I need it.

D-16 Cmdr DeFrehn: As a post Cmdr, I have a budget that I can spend. But to Walt, the Post pays the registration fee, we pay the fee for these guys to go to convention if they want to go. And I'm sure there are a lot of other posts that do. If the other posts aren't, if they make you pay, that's maybe something that post should look at if they have the funds. It's going to get more guys involved and more people there if the post puts it up.

NEC Hennis: That's what dues are supposed to be used for, the goodwill of The American Legion. It's not our money. You get to control it, but you got to carry on the programs of The American Legion and anybody that thinks it's their money is totally wrong. Because if a post loses its charter, it's going to National, so you might as well keep you a little bit to live on and maintain your post and whatnot but make your donations. It's very important. Send people to Dept convention that's never been because of the cost. I know Post 178, they send us.

Dept Adj Diener: We need to get back to the budget, it's not a line item vote. If you notice for Arlington there's a zero on there and we increased the Washington Conference. We're going to combine those two things and do Arlington at the same time as Washington Conference, it saves us \$500.00 by doing it that way.

The utilities it shows a \$7000.00 increase on there, that was correcting the figures from last year's budget. The realtor fee, when we rented next door, we went through a realtor and we pay them a fee. That's also a correction on the budget from last year. Same way with Emblem Sales, it not accounted for in last year's budget, but we've had that. Same with the bank charges. Line 11, we put a line in for unplanned meetings because if you look at this year's statement and every time they occur we had to list them, this is just a place to put those costs. And on IT upgrades we have to update our computers. Our computers are five years old so we have to do that. And the last thing, that membership savings account. When we do it for this year, it's going to show up as an expense as we move some of that money into a savings. Next year, because we won't have anything come in there, it will just be a transfer from Fundraiser into a membership savings, so it doesn't go into the actual budget.

PDC Lysaght: What is that Realtor Fee?

Dept Adj Diener: That's where we rented next door and we went through a realtor and we pay a monthly percentage of the first five years of rent that we pay to the realtor.

PDC Lysaght: That's an annual fee?

Dept Adj Diener: We pay it monthly but that's the total.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Maintenance? Is that maintenance for the whole complex or just this building?

Dept Adj Diener: That's the whole complex.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker; Is that enough to cover, I don't know if ya'll notice or not but it's falling around us? It's got leaks, and the sidewalk, different things. Is that enough to upgrade the Emblem on the building.

PDC Scherer: We can't hardly see it.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: We can't hardly see it. Is that enough to upgrade what we need to upgrade?

Dept Adj Diener: It's enough for us to do some of those things, it can't possibly do everything that needs to be done but it's putting money in there to do some things. That's where we'll have to keep looking at every one of those so that all has to be looked at. Your list might be different than someone else's list.

Vice Cmdr Price: When you talk about membership savings, correct me if I'm wrong. Isn't \$2.00 supposed to come out of every membership that the state gets to go into that savings.

Dept Adj Diener: Yes.

Vice Cmdr Price: Well, here it shows you're getting it from the Rifle Raffle.

Dept Adj Diener: I'm pulling it out of a different checking account.

Vice Cmdr Price: So are you stating that.....

Dept Adj Diener: It's still out of the same money, the Constitution just says we'll take \$2.00 and put it in a membership savings account, it doesn't say which checking account that we have to take it out of.

Vice Cmdr Price: So it's not stipulated you have to take it out of the membership dues paid to the state?

Dept Adj Diener: No, it says for every dues that are paid I have to put \$2.00 into a mbrship savings acct. And per discussions with the finance Cmte, because to try and do that every time we put a mbrship in is an accounting and paperwork nightmare. At the end of the year, we will take the total numbers of members that paid this year, we take \$2.00 per member and transfer it to a savings account so it will be a separate pot of money and not into a checking account.

Vice Cmdr Price: So, when did that last year, \$38, 000, when did that go in last year?

Dept Adj Diener: We didn't do it last year. There has been no money set aside to put into that because prior to being able to do it, anything we moved we would have immediately pulled back out so that has been waived.

Vice Cmdr Price: So when we do put that money in for the first time since 8-10 years whenever, what is the purpose of that membership fund? Is that to be pulled out or is it fenced?

Dept Adj Diener: That is something this body would decide. As far as going over the budget. I'll let the Cmdr finish up.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: We've got a couple options. I understand you got this last night. We can vote on it now or we can come back for special called meeting for the budget, or we can have an e-mail vote if it's approved by you to do that. Do you want to vote on that today? Does anyone have a problem with that?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Yes.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: I don't have a problem with it if it's approved by the finance Cmte and presented by the Adjutant.

PDC Lysaght: I make a motion that we approve the proposed 2018 budget.

D-16 Cmdr DeFrehn: Second.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: I got the budget at 9:00 last night, I've had it less than 24 years I haven't had a chance to look at it and think about it, that ain't right.

PDC Lysaght: I'd like to rebut that, it's a proposed budget. The controlling arm on that budget is sitting in that room. Just because we allocate funds for whatever, it still comes back to us. There's certain things we don't dish out our money on. That's probably why, for the first time in a long time we have the money in bank. And there's no doubt about it the sweepstakes, the RR, have really enthused this Dept. It's a proposed budget and every month we're going to receive information from finance, quarterly at least, it's this body that says, I'm out. So this is not carved in stone because they use the word proposed.

D-7 Cmdr Bethea: Utilities went up by \$7250.00, is that because the building is rented?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes sir, if you will look at the income side, that income is because they're paying us for that.

Historian Gooden: Leadership development, if we want to raise that to \$5,000.00, can we do that? Raise it from \$1200 to \$5,000?

Dept Adj Diener: We would not get that many seats to Legion College, we would not get that many seats. We get guaranteed one seat and the only way we get a second seat is if someone doesn't use their seats so putting the money in there, I couldn't necessarily send them to Legion College.

Historian Gooden: But if you have four seats available, if we want to send four additional people.

PDC Lysaght: I got a strange feeling that somebody don't understand, you can make a recommendation to the finance Cmte today that we do so and so. They'll discuss it and come back and recommend this, we found Delaware isn't sending theirs to the College, we got the guys that want to go, the DEC gets it and we pass it, it's that simple.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Any other discussion? All in favor of accepting the proposed 2018 budget, all in favor? Any opposed? Ayes have it. 2018 proposed budget passed and so ordered.

D-20 Rucker: I make a motion that this body direct the finance Cmte and the Adjutant to have a proposed budget to us by October 1st.

D-2 Cmdr Blankin: Second.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Is there any discussion?

PDC Hawk: What figure are you going to base that on?

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Yeah, that's fine, October to October.

PDC Hawk: Then you've got November, December.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: And you can estimate that from other years, pretty close.

PDC Hawk: Pretty close. But if you have good membership or fundraisers or whatever, that's going to offset it anyway, but you got to give the accounting

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Again, it's a proposed budget.

PDC Hawk:you got to give the finance committee a definitive date. October 1st to September 30th.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: I said October 1st, have it to the DEC by October 1st.

PDC Hawk: You won't get the bank statement until mid-October to balance the checking account to give you a full statement so you've got to have it by at least the November meeting.

Dept Adj Diener; The one thing for this year, my proposed budget that I had to give to the finance Cmte, I had to do that before October 1. But we just have to realize the earlier we do that gives you all more time to look at it but it just sets it up for more chances that when we get into the year that there will have to be adjustments on it because we won't necessarily know all the figures on it but that's going to be any of the times.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Also, if we have questions, we'll have time to sit down with Nick or the finance Cmte to get those answers and we don't have to stay in here several hours trying to figure out what we want to do. It's just good planning, that's all it is.

Dept Adj Diener: You're not saying have an approved budget, you're saying the first proposed budget to you all by then?

D-20 Cmdr Rucker; No, I said proposed.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: All in favor, any opposed. Alright. (Motion to have the proposed budget to the DEC by October 1st passed and so ordered

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, I've got several updates we need to do.

ONE:

First thing that we'll pass out is the updated employee's handbook. Not going to ask for ya'll to approve it at this point. Little back history, under Cmdr Scherer, he established a committee and we looked at the employee's handbook to update it and we went through it line by line. As we hit the end of the Cmdr's term, those updates, one or two final things didn't get done and it never got submitted to the DEC. Even though the committee technically ended with Cmdr Scherer because it was an ad-hoc Cmte. I've coordinated with PDC Gibbons who was the Chairman of that Committee so I'm giving that out to ya'll for approval but I'm not going to ask you to read all that right now, but we will vote on it at the next meeting. Most of the changes were grammatical changes, with one exception. There is a paragraph on the employee grievances, we made a major change to that, prior to that we had grievances going to the personnel committee which we don't have any more. Cmdr Richardson suggested a procedure that if an employee has a grievance that the panel is made up three of the four vice-Cmdr's, the employee gets first choice of which vice-Cmdr they want on the panel, the person the grievance is against chooses another and the Cmdr appoints the third person as a panel. We came up with that procedure to protect the employee and management. Part of the thought process is that's a Cmte not appointed by the Cmdr but a Cmte elected by the Legionnaires. You can read through all of that but that was the main change. The rest of it we had a conflict with the probation period, one place said 90 days and the other place said six months and now everything matches. Our J/A has seen it and has no problem with it, so I'd like ya'll to look at that and unless you just want to vote on it today we can take that vote next time.

TWO

This is for information purposes, there was a constitution update that we've discovered that was never done. The constitution should have been changed after the 2016 convention and it was not. When the results were being read, there was an amendment that had been put in that when somebody asked what were the results of that amendment, when Cmdr Lysaght asked Adjutant Holland, Adjutant Holland answered that the amendment had been combined with another amendment and it had not been combined. It was a separate amendment and voted on separately in the caucuses. It was approved and needed to be changed. The amendment changes the paragraph dealing with officers the Cmdr appoints and it changes the wording to: The Department Commander with the DEC shall appoint the following non-voting Officers, Department J/A and here was the change, and up to four assistants and then Dept S/O, then Department Chaplain, Department Sgt-at-Arms and continue on. The change was four Assistant J/A's and that any staff could remain in the room with approval of the DEC in Executive Session. We went back to the minutes, the tally results that were turned in from the caucuses and it was approved. So before we go out and change the constitution I wanted to inform you all of that.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Did I hear you right when you said four assistant J/A's?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes sir.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: The error was found and we're just letting you know the error was found. It happened when Joe was Cmdr and we're just letting you know we're correcting it and putting it in there.

THREE:

Dept Adj Diener: Next thing is a packet on TFA. (Temporary Financial Assistance) At the Fall meetings of the NEC, the NEC voted to approve Resolution # 8 which restructures TFA. The handout has some of those changes. The significant change is, prior to this there wasn't a cap on how much an individual assistance. Now it's capped at \$1500 to any individual. And they've changed the qualifications, the applicant must be a current active service member or an up to date member of The American Legion. That's a big change. Previously an applicant only had to be eligible to be a member. 90% of our applicants were non-Legion members. Previously on the applicant would fill out the application and as long as they checked everything and signed the form it was good to go. Now they have to show documentation that they applied for other assistance. In the past our C & Y Chairman received and reviewed the applications with her recommendation. Now, the posts are going to have to be involved. Post will have to investigate it and we'll be coming out with procedures for the posts to do that. All significant changes to that but I wanted to get it out so you all can see it and have a chance to look at it.

FOUR:

At the Fall meetings, the NEC approved the merge of Nichols Post 118 and 82. Blackville 91, Williston Post 75, Timmonsville Post 18, Barnwell Post 46 all had their charters cancelled as approved by our DEC.

FIVE:

On closing Posts, we looked at the DEC vote in 2008 on closing posts. The Decision at that time, when a post closed, the first vice Cmdr, the vice Cmdr in charge of the Quadrant, and at the time the Zone Cmdr and the District Cmdr, were in charge of making sure all assets were turned in and properly accounted for. As you all know with some of the things we were doing with the Eastover Post and some of the other posts, that was not always accomplished. We'll be coming out with some instructions to ya'll to make sure those posts are closed and their assets are turned over.

SIX:

Our Fall Sweepstakes, we have three or four trays in there and John and Betty Palmer who've normally volunteered to do that but they will not be able to do that this year so right now I don't have anyone do it. That's a good solid week of work for two people. When these sweepstakes were set up, we set them up so volunteers can work them. If we have staff do it, then what do not want your staff to do for one week.

SEVEN:

Our bldg. in Eastover, we have finally located a lawyer who will take care of it for us. The town of Eastover does not have any lawyers so working with the Mayor we've got that working and we're hoping to get the bldg. transferred to Post 119 within a week.

EIGHT:

We're just waiting on the brick mason to start our wall, he has to give us a start date.

NINE:

Pamplico Post 98 bldg: The individual that had equipment in the bldg. made us an offer. We told him we would accept the offer and we told him he'd have to put some money down. He's told the realtor on several occasions he would come in and talk with him but he has never done that. The realtor is still advertising, we hoped Mr. Carter would purchase it, but it doesn't look like he's going to. The equipment is still in the bldg. and belongs to us. In March we sent him a letter and gave him time to get it out and he did not get it and I ran those letters through our JA and we informed him if he did not the equipment became ours.

D-16 Cmdr DeFrehn: Is it sellable?

Dept Adj Diener: Probably. There's some junk but there's some other stuff. The biggest challenge we have, even if I went down there and cleaned the bldg. out, I don't have any place to put that. We do have one individual who contacted the realtor, he's considering putting in an offer and that offer may or may not include wanting everything in there. That's a recent one that came up last week, we haven't heard from the guy yet.

Vice Cmdr Price: I want to go back to the sweepstakes. We pull the tickets in December I think it is? I just want to make sure everyone knows the impact of not getting those checks deposited and so on and so forth or we're not going to be able to pull those tickets in December unless we get some volunteers. But going to that now, we're asking District Cmdrs. and Vice Cmdrs. go out and get some volunteers. I know that last time the Palmers did do it, we had to, well, we didn't have to, but we did pay for their stay. If you bring somebody, be it from Myrtle Beach or North Augusta up here, obviously they can't come up here every day without some type of help or stipend. Would the board be considering a stipend to bring somebody up here to stay up here for a week or two weeks, whatever it takes to get that done?

Dept Adj Diener: If someone came in right now, they would not have to come in and stay, again, because we still have tickets coming in. They could alternate different times, they wouldn't have to do two or three days in a row right now. What we have traditionally done, when the requirement was needed, we reimbursed them for their hotel room. When the Palmers came down, and if they came for two days, we reimbursed them for their hotel room, but we did not pay them a stipend or per diem. Otherwise you would be saying we're hiring them part time and we'd have to go through all that.

D-16 Cmdr DeFrehn: With this area around here, could we hire Temp Services? Real states and countries have them. Or take it out of Walt's money.

Dept Adj Diener: And take it out of the money for the sweepstakes? I will tell you on this and a larger part of the issue, when we do these fundraisers or set these programs up, right now we don't have a true committee for handling these. As an example, we've talked about how successful the Rifle Raffle is, we don't know who will do the RR next year. We're going to have to get a volunteer to do the RR because there is not a Fundraiser Committee or somebody like that to be able to be working.

D-16 Cmdr DeFrehn: What about your vice Cmdr's?

Historian Gooden: Post 215 will take care of that. I have a team and we'll come and take care of this. Post 215, we'll volunteer for that. (applause)

TEN:

As we've been working on the conventions and we've talked about this before, we're now reaching the point where I need to start negotiating and start looking at prices. Our contract is for two years out but we have to start negotiating and get contracts in place because we have to do it that far out. I need your opinion on what you want me to do. Do we want to keep it in Columbia or do you want me to look at prices in other cities? I will tell you that the attendance to both the convention and fall conference has continually increased every year since we started having it in Columbia. Before, we had it in Myrtle Beach and Greenville. My recommendation would be that we continue to do it in Columbia as a central location and that I go out and start checking locations in Columbia and getting various bids.

PDC Scherer: Can we look at having it in February like we used to have? It's just too much to have to come to Dept Convention and then National and then to here. And that's where we used to announce if we're going to run someone new and now it's word of mouth and you never hear anything so can move the conference to February or March?

Dept Adj Diener: We moved it from winter because you have a long period there. At fall conference there's information we need to get out to people and meet them. If you wait until February that's an awful long period and the year's almost over. That can be another hour discussion here. All I'm trying to do today is determine if we want to do it in Columbia?

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: I run the club at Shaw Air Force Base, we do conferences all the time in there. I'm sure the club at Fort Jackson is pretty big.

Dept Adj Diener: Fort Jackson's club could not handle it.

Exec Dir May: No, it's really tiny.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: I've never been in their club.

Exec Dir May: It's tiny.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Ok, alright. I can't handle the convention, but I could probably, based on the number, probably handle Fall Conference?

Dept Adj Diener: What about hotel rooms?

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: We have plenty of hotel rooms in the local area and we have a hotel on base. So, I'm just putting it out there because you're paying how much to use the Marriott? You're talking about if you don't have enough room nights it cost another \$5,000. It cost \$350 to use my ballroom for a day, two days, \$700. You talk about you didn't have enough microphones to go around one time, I mean, all that stuff is built into my fee. Cmdr Richardson and I talked about it, you know, on Friday, if there's nothing going on in the afternoon, we have an 18 hole PGA golf course on base to where if you want to do a golf tournament and raise money for some fund that we have or if you want to go out and shoot skeet that afternoon and raise money for some fund that we have. Those are all options that are all available on the base and then we have a dining room and we have plenty of bars and have plenty of liquor and beer for people to drink at a lower cost than what you're going to get at the Marriott or someplace else like that. I'm not saying let's do it, but I'm saying let's look at the military bases. I don't know what the other military bases are, I know there's a Marine Corp base and a couple of other bases in SC so why don't we look at the other bases too to see what they have to offer?

Dept Adj Diener: My recommendation is if you're going to go that route, if you want to do that is appoint a committee to try to figure out how we want to do all this. Because you're talking a lot of parameters here. One, we haven't looked at the military base in the past because we try to house everyone at the same hotel that we're doing the meeting at. There is more than just the meetings than sometimes what you all are seeing. The Auxiliary is having their meeting, the SAL is having their meeting, the Riders are having their meeting, so there's a lot of additional rooms and space that's needed there. The luncheons and rooms for those, there's a lot of pieces to that.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: I'm just throwing that out there.

PDC Lysaght: I like the idea of a committee.

Dept Adj Diener: If we go with some sort of committee, you're talking about somebody that's going to need to meet and start working on this because in the January timeframe we've got to be starting to talk to hotels or else we're not going to be able to get reservations.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: I got a question, who has been doing this in the past?

Dept Adj Diener: The Executive Director and the Department Adjutant. And that's one of the things, ok, now, I've got to travel to Myrtle Beach, go see several hotels, see what they have, go to Greenville.

D-13 Cmdr Patterson: I think it's working just fine with what we have now.

PDC Hawk: For those Newbies and Probies on this committee, we used to meet every year, one year in Columbia, one year in Greenville, one year in Charleston. We couldn't guarantee affordable hotel rates to get the blue caps there. Then we went to Myrtle Beach for the Conference in late Fall and maybe January to get good hotel rates. You're going to have people complain no matter where you go, no matter what time frame. But the dollar figure to put one of these things on, you've seen it in the budget. It t cost money no matter where you go. You're not just going to sleep folks. You got to have rooms, you go to food and beverage cost, there's a lot of stuff involved. We did look at Fort Jackson once to have a training session but the problem, people can't get on the damn base. And if they have an alert or something, nobody's getting on base. Even though the Officer's Club has a big meeting room to hold a small membership meeting, people still have to be able to get on base. We spend time looking at the beach, summer it's cost prohibitive and so is Charleston. Columbia is the cheapest place, you've got places here in Columbia, Marriott is good, we used to go to the Doubletree, it's getting outdated. But you've got the Auxiliary, the SAL, the Riders and the Legion and then you've got to have breakout rooms on top of that. One of the biggest complaint when we had it at the Convention Center for those that remember and for those that do not, the biggest complaint is that people were spread out. Even though we had the Hilton at \$109.00 at that time and people thought they could go to the Hampton or other places. The Convention Center had room but it's not conducive because of the same thing, we're not housed and meeting in the same place.

D-13 Cmdr Patterson: Like Jim said, you need everybody in one spot. You don't need people driving from way over here and over there to get there, we need everybody in one spot.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: It seems as though you and Maggie have done it before. You know what to expect and can coordinate what is needed, I don't think a committee would understand the whole scope of it.

Dept Adj Diener: If you will give me your decision to keep it in Columbia, then Maggie and I can do what's needed.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: I make a motion to give the Department Adjutant and Executive the authority to look in Columbia for future meetings.

Dept Historian Gooden: Second.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: You heard the motion and the second. All in favor? Any opposed? Ayes have it. (the motion to keep future meetings in Columbia was passed and so ordered. Ok. Do we have a motion to adopt the TFA policy as our policy? The policy that Nick talked about, Temporary Finance Assistance.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: I so move to accept the policy that was presented.

D-2 Cmdr Blankin: Second.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: All in favor? TFA policy as Nick explained will become our policy so we'll put that right in our new policy book.

Dept Adj Diener: We don't have much choice but to follow that the NEC said.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: That's right. I said I'd hold off on my stuff that I wanted to talk about. We're doing great, the donations have been coming in, I know we've got a lot of meetings coming up, I'm asking each post to donate \$30. If you can get with me I can tell you who has donated, I'm not going to read off the list here but thank you for what you've been doing on the NEF. I appreciate that very much, they are still coming and we're fastly approaching \$5,000 so far and with your help I think we can get even further. SC has always led the way, keep doing what you're doing. Strongly encourage those posts to donate \$30 at least. I know with the spirit of SC Legionnaires, we're going to get bigger donations than that.

A while back, some of you that have been around while, we used to have open voting at the convention. A rule was passed where we now have a silent vote, a secret ballot sort of speak where we hand the ballot in and we do the tally on the stage. One of the things that was never changed for the Rules Committee, they still have a random order of what you vote on because the rules say you have to have an open pick. It's my opinion we don't need a random order anymore because I would like to have the rules of the convention changed (Code of Procedures) by this body to start at Post 1 and go in order numerically because it's a secret ballot not to have the drawing for the secret ballot. It makes it easier on the committee. I ask for that recommendation, posts will need to know when to get in line and know when to get up and not to get up.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: I make that motion.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: Second.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: All in favor?

Dept Adj Diener: Can we have some discussion? The only thing I'd like you to consider is at the last convention, we were keeping a tally back there, when we reached where we had a majority, we were able to cut the voting off and we flipped flopped the order. If we go just a straight order you're going to just have the same posts not getting to vote. So now we'll have to have every post turn them in and you're going to extend that voting time out.

PDC Hawk: If there's a run-off, go to the back end first.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: We can implement that rule if everyone agrees to it.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: I'll amend that motion to be able to flip that order.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Flip the order on each election, starting at Post 1 and everyone will alternate. Do we have a second?

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: Second.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Discussion?

Historian Gooden: Regardless of how it goes, when we get to a majority, does the vote get cut off then?

Dept Cmdr Strauss: That's correct.

Historian Gooden: We haven't been doing that, we have to sit there.

Dept Adj Diener: We did that this last year.

D-6 Cmdr Kvam: Last year we did that.

Historian Gooden: No, we didn't.

D-6 Cmdr Kvam: Yes, last year we did that.

Dept Adj Diener: Yes, we did, sir.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: All in favor, any opposed? (motion passed and so ordered) We're going to be out a Connector very, very soon. A lot of you are on committees. We want you people to know what's going on, we'd love you to have something in our Connector, we want people to know we got your six.

D-130 Cmdr Walton: Can you tell me what the deadline is for the Connector?

Exec. Dir May: Whenever we get time (laughter).

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Basically there's not a deadline. As soon as she has it done, they're going to print it.

Unidentified: How do you want pictures?

Exec. Dir May: Jpg, only.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Whatever you want type, submit it typed in Word. I would also like to say Legion College is a great thing and I appreciate having that in the budget, we need to train our future leaders to become great Legionnaires. I was a graduate of that in 2009 and I think it's a great way to train our Legionnaires. Our first Dept Cmdr, Julius Walker, was 22 years old when he was the State Cmdr, that is probably an all-time record for all departments. He was a buck -private. I found out I'm the youngest Dept Cmdr of all the departments but I'm no longer the youngest on the DEC. On a good note, let's keep it positive. I appreciate you having my six, alright?

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: D-20 Christmas party is going to be at 1033 Riverside Drive, Post 4, Orangeburg on December 2nd at 6:00 pm. You're all invited if you'd like to come but it is reservation only if you'd like to call me. It's the 3rd annual. We're estimating between (inaudible) so let me know.

NEC Hennis: By now, all the appointments have been made to the commissions & committees and Councils and you should have already received a letter stating which one that you're on, if you've received a new appointment. I plan a meeting in January here at headquarters with all new appointees to go over the appointments and if you have any questions. I think you'll enjoy it and you need to see how the other end works and it will add to your knowledge of The American Legion and I look forward to seeing ya'll there.

Commander Strauss called on Chaplain Quarles for the Benediction and closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

Nick I. Diener
Department Adjutant

ND/mm

