



Department Executive Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 3, 2018



The Department Executive Committee met on Saturday February 3, 2018 at The American Legion Department of South Carolina Headquarters, 103 Legion Plaza Rd, Columbia, SC 29210.

**Present:**

Dept Cmdr Mike Strauss  
Dept Adjutant Nick Diener  
Dept J/A Stephen Lewis  
NEC Bud Hennis  
Alt NEC Gary Mitchell  
IPDC Bob Scherer  
Dept 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Cmdr John Britt  
Dept 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Cmdr Walt Richardson  
Dept 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Cmdr Roberta Poulos  
Dept 4<sup>th</sup> Vice Cmdr Ron Price  
D-1 Cmdr Jim Jarvis  
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-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis  
D-13 Carlton Patterson  
D-14 Cmdr Michael Brandt  
D-15 Cmdr Leroy Williams  
D-16 Cmdr Jim DeFrehn  
D-17 Cmdr Ed Miller  
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy  
D-19 Cmdr Bob Gibbons  
D-20 Cmdr Robin Rucker  
Dept Sgt-at-Arms George Oxner  
Dept Chaplain Bill Quarles

**Absent:**

Department Historian Matt Gooden

**Also Present:**

PDC Frank Whittle  
PDC/PDA Jim Hawk  
PDC John Palmer  
PDC Cecil Phillips  
Exec Dir M. May  
Mbrship/Program Dir E. Massaro

P-22 Cmdr Tommy Sinclair  
P-22 Vice Cmdr Terrance Inman  
P-123 Cmdr Clyde Mabery  
P-22 Vice Cmdr Charles Lott  
P-130 Adj Darlene Walton

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: I'll save my opening for later. I'll call on the Department adjutant for the roll call, please?

Adjutant Diener called the roll and told Cmdr Strauss he had a quorum.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Alright, at this point is where I read the minutes from the last meeting.

**Vice Cmdr Britt: I make a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes.**

**D-16 Cmdr DeFrehn: Second.**

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: All in favor? Ok, dispense with reading the minutes.**

Dept Adj Diener: Can I please ask with as many as we have in here, for our recording, even if you're seconding a motion say your name so that we can get it down?

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Ok, I call on D-20 Cmdr and Chairman of the mbrship team, Robin Rucker.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Does everybody have their mbrship report? While they're handing those out; most of you know we're going around the state and getting our revitalizations done. We just completed one in D-11, we had 23 people that were transferred and three new ones Jack? Three brand new ones so I'd say it was successful. For future reference, D-16 is having one on February 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>....

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Can I get you to come around, so we can make sure your voice is being recorded.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: March 16 & 17 we'll be at Seneca Post 120 and then we have a local revitalization on March 24 and then our last one is D-7, April 20 and 21<sup>st</sup> and that might be changed, over at Florence P-1. Many of you know we've already had three or four this past year and had one in January so we're making our rounds.

And I wanted to ask the district commanders here to if you have not been contacted by one of us on the mbrship team, I need to know that. See me after the meeting. Because each of you have been assigned a mbrship team member so if you have not been contacted by me or someone else on the mbrship team, I need to know that. The biggest thing right now, the 9<sup>th</sup> is the cut-off for 85% so if you're not 85% you need to be there before the 9<sup>th</sup>. This is the time of year that things really start slowing down. We'll continue to press this to get to our 100% we need to do that.

Do you have any questions about the mbrship report? (inaudible). If you have any discrepancies, please see me or Ernie and we'll talk about and just for right now we're behind where we were last year. I'll let the Commander talk a little bit about that but we're still behind, so we need to press it. That's all I have Cmdr.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Very good. On the dept officer home post mbrship report. We've done this the last couple years. This is something I asked to have printed out, its' the one with the yellow on the bottom. Some of you commanders and members on the e-board, we should be at 85%, some of you aren't very far from being 85%. We're behind where we were last year but not that far behind. We're very, very close to where we are. If every post can get 2 ½ members, average, we would be where we were last year. So, if you say we're 300 behind where we were last year, that's not very many per post.

That's just a phone call. If we can just get you to reach out to your posts. If they're at 85%, thank them. If they're just a couple away encourage them. Some of them are one, two, three members away from getting 100%. Give them that boost that they need, give them that call and tell them, hey, we're just a couple of members away, we can do this. We got a couple of months, we can do this. Remind them about the 172 list. Just two members is not asking a lot. IF they're doing good, tell them they're doing good. I looked at some of the post on this list that are at 100%,

Chester, Eastover, Turbeville, you know. Bobby knows about Turbeville. Some of these posts were struggling to survive a few years ago, they were on the brink of losing their charters. We reached out to them, we're helping them, now they're back at 100% of their goals. That's good. It takes leadership from you, I'm asking you to step up your game, reach out to those posts, like I said, two members per post is not asking a lot. We're not that far behind but I need your help to get us back on track. Some of you saw the Big Board, Robin Rucker on top, Jim Jarvis and Chuck Shaffer right behind him. We've got five people at 95% and our next cut-off is 85% is next week. Don't forget that cut-off. Mbrship should be here in by Friday so they don't get the march renewal notice. I can't stress how many times I hear is why did I get this renewal notice and I get a blast from some post Cmdr or adjutant saying why in the world am I getting this, what a waste of postage it is. So, when you make those calls for those two members, remind them that next week is the cut-off for the March notice. So, if you have your dues here by next Friday those members will not get a renewal notice in March so please encourage them to get them here by next week. I'll call on the adjutant for a delinquent post report.

Dept Adj Diener: While they're passing out the delinquent post report, I'm going to be the bad guy a little bit. On that first sheet, if as a dept officer, your post is in the one the posts shown in yellow, we need ya'll to step up because it gets hard. Posts notice that. And as a leader, if your post is behind and hitting the 85% it's hard to tell your other posts they got to get to work on it. So, we just ask that if you're in that yellow, please, please make this Friday your priority and try to get your posts up some. I know some of you are, but I just have to plead on that. On the delinquent post report, I'm required by the constitution to provide you a report prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> of March on the posts that have not reached the minimum number of 15 members and that delinquent post report is what shows that.

I would recommend that we don't take any further action at this point other than to note this and we need to worry about these posts but I would recommend that the membership team continue to look at this and at the next DEC meeting on April 14<sup>th</sup>, that they come in with a recommended action to you on any posts that at point are still behind on the 15.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Is there any possible way on this report when these posts are established? Are they a new post that was just started last year or is a post that's been around 50 years?

Dept Adj Diener: The system does not allow me to do that, but I can tell you none of these are new posts. These are some posts that are traditionally struggling. Any further questions on the delinquent posts? Commander, do you want me to stay for the finance?

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Yes.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, we're passing out the December finance statement. This is the unaudited end of the year finance statement for when we finished up in December. Once you get the report you will see, to me, that we did great this year. Yes, our revenue greatly exceeded what we budgeted, and our expenses exceeded it as well but they kind of went with each other. Bottom line to it is we made a profit of \$53,778.94 which to me is also very amazing because if you will remember one of the things we did this last year is we paid off the remnants of the Rock Hill loan, which was \$86,000, almost \$87,000 and that was a non-budgeted item because that money came in the previous year, so it shows up. So, when you look at the profit we did a lot better because of that money and we also paid off the second mortgage on this building that you all approved so that was an additional \$34,000 that wasn't budgeted but we still came out ahead. And make no bones about it what caused it was the success of the rifle raffle. I'll let ya'll glance at the report and if there's any question on it?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: The cost of the BB building, the completion of the work, is that included on this?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes, it is. We completed some of the drainage project for down at our lower building that BB rents so that's included in this well. We got the wall fixed, the drainage problem fixed down there and still came out ahead for this year. So, I think we had a very good year.

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: I got one question. Why can't we get these earlier? Instead of the same day as the DEC meeting. We can look it over and jot down notes on it.

Dept Adj Diener: This one we could have, some of the times, depending on the DEC meetings, we are scrambling to get it done. Just based on the timing of it. This just got approved a week ago through the finance committee, this one we got done but we'll look at it.

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: The more informed we are the better off we are.

Dept Adj Diener: We'll look at doing that.

**Vice Cmdr Poulos. I make a motion to accept the finance report.**

**D-2 Cmdr Blankin: I second.**

Vice Cmdr Price: Under total membership, you got a budgeted income of \$325797.75 so we're looking at and I want to make sure I'm looking at \$325797.75 for total membership?

Dept Adj Diener: Is what came in, yes. That is what came in during the calendar year, some of that is 2017 membership, some of that is 2018 membership but that is what came in.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Any other discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? Alright, the statement is approved.

Dept Adj Diener; I do have to ask permission on another action. Based on our success, we now have in our checking accounts, we have in our General Fund, our building account, our fundraiser account and our savings account, which by the way, even though it's on this report, \$36,000.00 went into membership savings. But when we looked at those, we have a little over \$300,000.00 in cash sitting in our bank accounts. There is an excess of \$89,000.00 from what is in our building fund and the general fund from what we actually need to operate and get us through. So, what we would like to do and what I need your permission for, and the finance committee concurs with this, is take \$89,000.00 and put it into savings account where it's drawing some interest. That \$89,000.00 will also include the \$38,000 that was in next year's budget to pay for the membership, the \$2.00 per member, we're basically going to move it in early and then there's another \$51,000.00 that we're saying we can move into there. The significance of that, to use any money from that savings account, you all have to approve us using that money so that puts us back with a reserve set or gets us about \$124,000.00 into a reserve account. So, I'd like your approval to do that.

**Vice Cmdr Price: I make a motion to do that.**

**IPDC Scherer: Second.**

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Are we sure you're going to have enough money for the department to operate on if you move that money?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes, I left enough leeway.

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: Any other discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? Ayes have it.**

Dept Adj Diener: At the last meeting we passed our operating budget, but we still have to approve the operating budget for the SAL and Americanism. They're straight forward. They're basically the same as last year. Starting with the SAL budget. They anticipate bringing in \$15,000.00 and spending \$15,000.00. Finance has recommended approval as well.

**IPDC Scherer: Recommend approval.**

Dept Cmdr Strauss: To clarify, this is the SAL Budget.

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

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: Any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? Ok.**

Dept Adj Diener: Next up is the Americanism budget. One of the things I did put in here and I put it in at the bottom. We award \$5,000 in scholarships every year, but that doesn't mean that they use them. So, at the bottom I showed you the balance of what we have outstanding for accounts payable on scholarships. But again, it's basically the same, the only change is I rounded a couple numbers, instead of putting pennies in there.

**Vice Cmdr Poulos: I make a motion to approve the Americanism budget as presented.**

**D-14 Cmdr Brandt: Second.**

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Any discussion?

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: I don't know how many of you go to baseball meetings at the beginning of the year, the state BB meeting but I know a lot of pp on the BB committee ask where does the registration fees go to? And somebody said it goes to oratorical and Boy State. And I corrected them two years and I told them it goes to the Dept of SC and they distributed the money where they see fit so if any of your commanders or coaches or athletic directors where it goes to, it doesn't just go to the Oratorical contest and it doesn't just go to Boys State, it goes to the Department of SC.

Dept Adj Diener: Let me just clarify that, those monies have to be used for Americanism programs. Oratorical is the only one, none of the money goes to Boys State.

NEC Hennis: Also Shooting sports.

Dept Adj Diener: That is correct. Law Cadet falls under Americanism, but they have their own checking account and their own budget.

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: All in favor? Any opposed? Ok.**

Dept Adj Diener: I've got one other item under finances. Per the constitution, I'm required to get an audit of our books yearly and the requirements are that I do that through CPA that is agreeable to this body. This last year we went out and we sent a request for bid out to 10 different CPA firms, including our previous firm. We sent it out and received three actual bids back. Last year we paid \$8900 for our audit, this year we had one bid come back for \$8850.00, one came in at \$8,000.00 and one came in at \$7,500.00. We reviewed those, and I've gone over these with the finance committee. The \$7,500.00 bid is through the Hobbs Group. A little background on that. The previous auditor, his firm merged the Hobbs Group so that was basically a bid coming back in from them. Back in December our previous auditor, because he was looking at bringing in accounts with his merge, he told us if we would not go out for bids and go back through he would drop the price to \$7500.00. We went ahead and put it out for bids and as the bids have come back in, the Hobbs group honored the price.

We have reviewed the bids; all three companies were adequate but price-wise the \$7500.00 came in a lot less. One of our other concerns was trying to get a fresh set of eyes on our books but with this new firm the audit team they are putting together will be a new auditor. Even though Jay Lindsay went over to the new firm he will not be doing the audit. We both those and good price by going with the Hobbs Group and my recommendation is we accept that bid with the Hobbs Group and bring them on and sign the contract to do the audit. I need your support to sign that contract with the Hobbs Group for an estimated \$7500.00.

**IPDC Scherer: I'll make a motion that we accept that. Is there a time limit on that? Is this two three years or what?**

Dept Adj Diener: This is for one year.

**D-16 Cmdr DeFrehn: I second.**

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: Any discussion on that? This was recommended by the finance committee. All in favor? Any opposed? Ayes have it.**

Dept Adj Diener: I do want to make a note about the roll call, we now have Charles Bethea, D-7 Cmdr and Ed Miller, D-17 are now with us. There is only one missing.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: The finance committee has been meeting for a number of hours and a lot of the work they put into that is to be commended. There is a lot of debate going on in there and a lot of questions in there and I want to congratulate Nick on the work on the drainage and wall, everything looks pretty good. If you haven't seen it, go down and take a look. I'll call on Robin Rucker for the legislative updates.

D-20 Cmdr/Legislative Chairman Rucker: Getting with the Legislative committee a couple months ago, it's called a "Fairness in Class Action Litigation Act." And basically, it's a law that clarifies the asbestos lawsuits that's going on because they've had a lot of fraud going through the federal system. So, basically, we're asking the legislative, the federal, senate and house of representatives to pass an Act, Asbestos Claim Transparency Act of 2017 (H.R. 985) to pass this law that will help to clarify and have transparency in all lawsuits that go through for the asbestos part of any lawsuit going through a federal court.

Because what's happened in the past, lawyers are making money and the veterans aren't getting it, pretty much. And so, we've been asked to support this so I'm bringing it to your attention. We also have Major General James Livingston write a letter a letter in support of this. Basically, we have a sample letter that Nick has done. I'll read it to you (Chairman read sample letter).

Dept Adj Diener: I need to make one correction, that was the recommended letter they sent to us, that wasn't a letter that we did.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Ok, I'm sorry, one they sent to us. What I want to do is ask you if we can send a letter similar to this, ask the department to send it, our support in this Act. **So, I'd like to get a motion.**

D-16 Cmdr DeFrehn: Wouldn't it be easier to just track down the attorneys?

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Hold it, hold it, hold it. Please wait to be recognized. We have a motion the floor.

**D-2 Cmdr Jarvis: I second that motion.**

Dept Cmdr Strauss: I have a question, is there a time limit on this?

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: It's been awhile but you heard from them a couple weeks ago, right?

Dept Adj Diener; It's already been through the house and now it's sitting in the Senate Judiciary committee so now what they're trying to do is getting it out of committee and get it to the Senate for a vote.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: There's no time for a Resolution. We'd just like to do a letter, is that correct?

Dept Adj Diener: Right, and Senator Graham is on that committee so we're urging him to get it off the committee.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Why can't we send a letter to all our US Representatives?

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: They've already made a recommendation so we're trying to get it out of the committee and into the Senate.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: Couldn't we also send it to Senator Scott?

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Scott is not on the committee.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: I understand that but hopefully they talk to each other and that would be a little extra push and say, hey, they're talking to me to, we need to push this and get it through and the more backbone we have I think the better it would go but I don't know, I'm just asking.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Same thing I said, send it to all our Representatives.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: No, it went to Scott too because he's on the Congressional delegation.

Dept Adj Diener: No, the House of Representatives has already passed the bill.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker; The SC Congressional Delegation has already seen this, that's the House members and the Senate.

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: Any other discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? Alright, the Department will send a letter.**

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: The legislative committee will meet February 12<sup>th</sup> here at 1:30, we have sent letters out, if ya'll would like to come. We're trying to fill that committee back up to help us with all the laws that are passed or recommended.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: I'll call on the Dept Adjutant for administrative updates.

Dept Adj Diener: First thing on the agenda, we passed out the employee handbook so you all could vote on that at this meeting. The committee that worked it and myself, we all came out in agreement on that. The only significant change was how to handle grievances. So, one thing I need is your approval to make that effective.

**IPDC Scherer: I recommend we approve the handbook.**

**NEC Hennis: Second.**

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Any discussion on the handbook?

D-4 Cmdr Goodman: Yes, got a couple items, on page four, specific policies # 2, three months or 90 days, they're not the same necessarily. You want to make it 90 days or do you want to make it three months, depends on when they were hired. That's one item, I got a couple more. I read it.

Page 7, under b, you got, again, you got all new employees hired and during their 90 days probationary period, shall accrue annual and sick leave. But down here in 6a, you got they don't accumulate annual sick leave on the probationary period, you got a conflict.

Dept Adj Diener: We need you to speak up, we need you to speak louder so this will pick it up.

D-4 Cmdr Goodman: It will pick it up, I have one of those.

(several pp in audience asked him to speak up)

D-4 Cmdr Goodman: On page 7, under b on the paragraph, you got new employees hired under probationary period will accrue sick leave but then under sick leave, item 6, you got A, they can accumulate sick leave after the probationary period.

Dept Adj Diener; No, we're saying they can't use it. It says sick leave with pay will be provided.

D-4 Cmdr Goodman: Ok, it was a late night. Page 10, under 13, Misc., C, cases of dismissal or resignation, compensation for accrued sick leave will not be paid. Isn't that the same thing that we just read? Item 6e.

Dept Adj Diener: No, if somebody resigns or is dismissed, and they have a sick leave balance, they do not get paid for that sick leave balance.

D-4 Cmdr Goodman: Last one, under 12, Computer data policy, second to the last paragraph, Dept Adj and Dept Assistant Adjutant are exempt from this policy. I don't understand that, why would anyone be exempt, it's just standard office procedure. You're all covered under this computer policy, correct?

Dept Adj Diener: Using as example, where it says employees should not add any software or downloads to their computer without permission, I guess you can say I can give myself permission but what we're saying there's some things I need to do.....

Vice Cmdr Price: He's the administrator of those systems.

D-4 Cmdr Goodman: You don't have an IT group?

Dept Adj Diener: We don't have an IT group, we're 3 pp, we're it.

Vice Cmdr Price: I think the difference between 90 days and three months should be clarified.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: I think we should stick with 90 days because it says 90 days later, make that one correction.

Dept Adj Diener: I have no problem with the difference there.

PDC Hawk: Is it 90 days from the day of employment or 90 days from when they go on payroll based on when payroll begins?

Dept Adj Diener: 90 days from their first day of work.

PDC Hawk: You're not going to start between payroll, you'll wait until the start of a pay period.

Dept Adj Diener: Right.

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: Cmdr Scherer, would you like to amend your motion to take out the three months and make it 90 days from the first day of employment?**

IPDC Scherer: Yes, sir.

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: Ok, is it still your intent to second that motion, Commander Hennis?**

**NEC Hennis: Second that motion.**

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: Is there any further discussion? Being None, all in favor? Any Opposed? Ayes have it.**

Dept Adj Diener: Next item on there is I am also required by my job description, not by the constitution or anything but by my job description to every year to bring in front of you all and I'm in violation because I was supposed to bring this to you in November, to bring to you the holiday schedule. The holiday schedule is the exact same schedule that's in the handbook that was just approved. So, unless there's a change, I see no reason to bring the same holiday schedule to you that's in the employee handbook. So, I would like to ask you all's permission that rather than come through and do that, that you all authorize that one line in my job description that says I have to

bring that in front of you all for approval each year, that you authorize that be taken out of my job description, so we don't do that every year.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Which one do you want us to do, dismiss you because you didn't do it bring it to us or make a motion? (laughter) **I make a motion that you don't bring it us unless there's a change because it's in the personnel handbook.**

**D-14 Cmdr Brandt: Second.**

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: To make it clear, he said he makes a motion that it be stricken from the job description unless there's a change. Any discussion? All in favor say aye? Opposed? Passed.**

Dept Adj Diener: At the Dept Convention, the Auxiliary made a donation of \$5,000.00 and it was made to be designated to go to a VA&R program. We don't have any expenditures that we make on VA&R programs. So, what we did we took it to our three VA&R Sub-committees, we asked them for their recommendation on what should be done with that money and what we're handing out is their recommendation and that is the combined recommendation, the Rehabilitation, the Health administration and the Veterans Benefits sub-committees.

What they recommended was two things. The 1<sup>st</sup> was that the DEC take the \$5,000.00 and donate it to the two Fisher Houses, splitting it to \$2500.00 between each. One reason they came up with that is the Auxiliary President's project for the year is the Fisher House in Charleston and of course we have the Fisher House in Columbia here that they are trying to get going. The finance committee, when they met and reviewed this document, they non-concurred with that portion of it. However, they concur with donating the \$5,000 but they could not come to a consensus to how to split the money between the two, so their vote was to non-concur with it and leave it to the DEC to decide on how to split the money between the two Fisher Houses. So, there's two recommendations, I guess I would say, we should probably handle the recommendations separately.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: So, the first recommendation is how to split the Auxiliary's donation?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: Did we even ask them?

Dept Adj Diener: No, the Auxiliary said please use it for your VA&R programs.

PDC Hawk: If the Auxiliary donated \$5,000 to the Fisher House, we should donate it to the Fisher House.

Dept Adj Diener: They only designated it for VA&R programs.

PDC Hawk: Ok. Right now, the biggest issue we have is the Fisher House, as far as big money is concerned, is that correct? The one in Charleston and the one coming in Columbia.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: That would be fair.

PDC Hawk: Why not give \$5,000.00 to Charleston and \$5,000.00 to Columbia.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: There's only \$5,000.00.

PDC Hawk: I'm thinking ahead.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: Why don't we make this easy, we know what the second one is.

**D-2 Cmdr Blankin: Why don't we go ahead and do that, I make a motion to donate \$2500.00 to Charleston and \$2500.00 to Columbia.**

**D-6 Cmdr Kvam: I agree, I second that.**

Dept Cmdr Strauss: We have a motion and a second, any discussion?

NEC Hennis: My opinion, we're deciding to give that \$5,000.00 to the Fisher House in Columbia and Charleston. Since we have made donations to Dorn for televisions in the last few years, it would be my recommendation that since the Charleston Fisher House is completed, to take \$10,000.00 and give that to Charleston next if the ladies see fit to donate \$5,000 and if the dept can come up with another \$5,000.00 donate that to Dorn. I think it would be fair considering that TVs have been bought and donated to Dorn.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: How long ago was that?

Exec Dir May: Ten or twelve years ago.

NEC Hennis: My point is that in the 18 years I've here, I have yet to see anything donated to any VA&R programs, that I can remember.

PDC Hawk: Mr. Commander, if I could tag onto what Bud said, we did give to four Veterans Hospitals, Asheville, Charleston, Augusta and Dorn, monies at the annual Dept convention when their representative was here we did present them. But when we got into the lawsuit we had to divert that money and we haven't done it since that time.

But we used to do it every year and we gave \$1,000.00 to \$2,000.00 to four VA hospitals. The other incidentals, that Bud's talking about, and Darlene can talk about, is what each hospital needs on a regular basis. What each post and each department, not only the Legion but the VFW and DAV, should contribute also on an ongoing basis. There's no way for the department to keep up with that unless it's turned on a consolidated post report that we know what posts do.

Being how Darlene's our Rep at Dorn, she keeps a handle on what Dorn needs. To clarify what Bud said, monies have been given to everybody in years past, but not recently. Another thing, it behooves us to rekindle that and revisit that. We have four VA hospitals and VA outpatient clinics and we have to look at those too and we've got to look down the road.

Dept Adj Diener: I need to clarify one thing, we keep coming up with \$5,000.00 and \$10,000.00. There is a second recommendation that was passed out to you. The reason we're handling it separately, the original \$5,000.00 that the Auxiliary gave us, we can't just leave that sitting in our general fund, we need to use it for what they gave it to us for. The additional \$5,000.00 is money that's out of our funds but it can be, but we need to make a decision on the initial \$5000.00 so that's why they did it separately.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: This past Christmas I went to the Charleston Fisher House and I delivered a \$500.00 donation from Post 193. And we got to tour the entire Fisher House and that's something you don't get to do simply because people are living there. We got there between completion and between people moving in. We gave them the \$500.00 and the one question we got was we appreciate your money, but this house is built, why are you not donating it to Dorn.

Post 130 Adj/Dorn VA Rep Walton: The thing of it is I agree with Bud because he wants everybody to be taken care of. But the thing of it is, right now, that's what's holding this up at Dorn right now is to have those beginning funds. Because what you don't realize that when the Fisher House is approved, and the Fisher family says they're going to put one at Dorn, they tell them how much money that they're going to give to have that established. But then Dorn has to come up with the contributions to match that to actually get the ground broke.

I would make the suggestion with the idea that there again we've been given, and I say we as the State, this \$5,000.00 from the Auxiliary. That we go ahead with what was first received, that we give \$2500.00 to Dorn and

\$2500.00 to Charleston one with the State also stepping up and matching that, and then next year, look at it again. If it's feasible, give each one of them \$5,000.00.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Let's just stick to right now.

D-2 Cmdr Blankin: I still want to do the vote.

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: With no further discussion, all in favor of accepting the recommendation of the committee?**

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: And what the heck was that?

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: It was to give \$2500.00 to the Charleston Fisher House and Columbia Fisher House. All in favor, any opposed? Ok. The ayes have it.**

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, the second part of that was, and I'll just read it, is recommend that the DEC match the donations by approving an additional \$2500.00 to the Charleston Fisher House and \$2500.00 to the Columbia Fisher House. That would bring the donations to each Fisher House to \$5000.00.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: For the record, the Finance committee was against adding that.

Dept Adj Diener: The finance committee was against adding the additional \$5,000.00.

Vice Cmdr Price: It was not in the budget, correct?

Dept Adj Diener: It is not budgeted. That money would have to come out of the reserve.

**D-14 Cmdr Brandt: I make a motion that we match it (inaudible).**

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: I just want to clarify what you said, you want to donate \$2500.00 each Fisher House, one in Columbia and one in Charleston.**

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

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed?**

D-15 Cmdr Williams: What account will that come out of?

Dept Adj Diener: It would come out of General Funds, if that is approved, we would have to back and look at it, remember I asked you earlier to about putting money into savings? We would have to go back and look at that.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: So just say that.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: We got a little bit of money now, people. If we start nickel and diming it, it ain't going to be around for long.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: So what are you recommending?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: I recommend holding off. If we have another good year like we did this year. We keep nickel and diming this to death, and soon we're going to be like we were a couple years ago

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: I agree with Walt, but I agree with everybody else too. There's a lot of veteran's organizations that need help. We've already given \$5000.00, now we're talking about our money, and he's right, it could eventually go away but I don't foresee that happening. I'm the optimist here.

But I can tell you that we're talking about the Fisher House, my troops have had to stay in Fisher Houses when they had problems with their kids and their kids were in hospitals and other places, but our veterans are also our veterans who are serving on active duty and there's a lot of programs for them that they're not getting right now. So, I think instead of saying yes to the second \$5,000.00, I think we need to look at other programs out there that are looking for money as well because the veterans of today are the Legionnaires of tomorrow.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: You need to ask yourself real quick, what have we done for veterans lately? I have to tell you something, I've been in the hospital for three months, I want that Fisher House in case I have to go back. That's all I got to say about that. Call for the question.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: I also have some comments. Just remember, we have four pillars of this organization, and pillar # 1 is Veterans. All in favor? Any opposed? The ayes have it.

Dept Adj Diener: I only have one other item for you all. This is just an update and there's no voting on this. And many of you all haven't even heard this but the finance committee and the vice Cmdr's have heard it. Earlier this month I received a telephone call from the owner of Schroeder towing company and he asked me if we would be interested in selling the buildings down below, he needs to expand into the white building which the Auxiliary is in, he needs that office space. After discussing with the finance committee, I went back to him and said if you make an offer, we'll consider it, but it would have to be lucrative because we would be displacing the auxiliary and I also said we would look at it if he would like to buy the entire complex. The answer I received from him was the only way he would be interested in buying the property down below is if he could get a really, great deal on it which is different than ours and that he in no way could even consider or is not even considering the whole complex. So basically, it's a dead issue now.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Ok, the issue is taken under advisement. Ok. Some of you came in late but I do have a department shirt, it will be just a little bit different. I've been to a lot of district meetings, each year we have our National convention and we order a parade shirt and you wear it to the National convention. We kind of changed up a little bit this year and we decided to offer the shirt to everybody and have the orders form come in before the Department Convention and we kind of made it a 100<sup>th</sup> year South Carolina Centennial Celebration shirt. It's blue, I have somewhere around here...this is the actual shirt, but the logo is different. It's a dry-fit type shirt, they have men's and women's sizes. The order form did come in everybody's mailout for the convention. Please take the time to pull that out of the packet. Here's the logo that will be on there. During your meetings, please tell your posts these shirts are available. There's also a 100-year South Carolina Commemorative Coin that the Centennial Committee approved. There's also an order form for that but if they don't know about it, you as District Cmdr's know, that the post Cmdr's very rarely put out information to their posts. So please at your District meetings, tell people there that these shirts are available. That you can buy the shirts before the convention, you must pre-order them. Promote the shirts, promote the coins. There are copies of the coins and shirts in that convention mail-out packet.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: When I have a District meeting, I get the impression and I get the sense, that once I talk to them, it never leaves that room. The way I get around that I built a large email base and I get out to the District and I'm hoping someone will say, wait a minute commander, what's going on. Is there an e-mail out there that has those pictures?

Dept Adj Diener: It's on the webpage.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: They don't go to the webpage.

D-13 Cmdr Patterson: Why don't the Dept just furnish the Cmdr's with a shirt (laughter)?

Vice Cmdr Poulos: Are we going to have at our convention, this would be a good incentive, I told my posts already that's what we're going to do. At some point during our convention, we'll have those shirts on.

Dept Cmdr: You'll get those shirts at the convention. So, if you order them, they will be ready for you, kind of like your packet's ready for you. Your shirts and your coins will be ready for you at the convention.

IPDC Scherer: Most of them are not willing to buy them. I've heard at two meetings now, the post commanders are saying they'll have shirts to buy there.

Dept Adj Diener; There will not be shirts to purchase at the Convention. In answer to your other answer too, Commander Poulos, right now we have not designated a day to wear those but that can certainly can be looked at.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: I have a resolution here. And as you know, the DEC can forward resolutions to the resolutions committee for voting on. Does anyone here not know what the Fisher House is? I'll just read the resolved part. "Now therefore let it Resolved that The American Legion Department of South Carolina at its 100<sup>th</sup> Department Convention June 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 support efforts and strongly encourages its local posts to support efforts in building a Fisher House in Columbia South Carolina near The William Jennings Bran Dorn VA Hospital facility." So that's going to be a resolution that I would like to bring forward, can I get a motion?

**Vice Cmdr Poulos: I make a motion that we accept this resolution to put into the Convention.**

**D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: Second.**

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: Any discussion on the resolution? This basically puts us on record as supporting the Columbia Fisher House. All in favor, opposed? It's unanimous. We will forward that resolution, I will sign that resolution and we'll forward that to the resolutions committee.**

Some of you go emails from me on this, the Ntl Cmdr is coming to town, obviously. March 5<sup>th</sup>, will be the Dept Cmdr Homecoming, there are advance tickets for that to be sold but if you're interested in going to that. Some of you already RSVP'd and got on my list. I've got a flyer for that. On Tuesday there will be a Cmdr & Adj with the Ntl Cmdr on March 6<sup>th</sup>. At your district meetings, please put that out, the first female in the history of our organization, 99 years so far. There will be some posts getting awards, she'll be speaking before the joint session. We'd love to have a whole bunch of Legion caps in the gallery.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: We have a series of things going on, we have a drop in for her. Sunday is a welcome for her, everybody's welcome for that. There's certain things going on, Dorn, but on Tuesday we have her meeting, it's not just for Cmdr & Adjutants, it's for everybody, everybody in this room.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Your right, some of it is limited access at certain points of it but we want a lot of people there but there are certain areas they aren't going to be able to go. Lawmakers seem to change times and dates on us, so we have to scramble for that.

**Dept Adj Diener: Per the decision on the additional \$5,000.00 I need you all to amend the motion approved earlier to put \$89,000.00 in the savings account earlier. I need it to be changed to \$84,000.00 because once I move the money into the savings account. I can't take anything out unless you all approve that.**

**D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: I make a motion to amend the previous motion to change that from \$89,000 to \$84,000.00 going into the savings account.**

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

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? More than two thirds aye. **Is there any business good for The American Legion?**

Vice Cmdr Poulos: I would like to make a motion, this would help clarify, what the commander was saying about the shirts and the district commanders when you're not sure sometimes that the post what you give them to the posts. But this is going along with that. I would like to make a motion that when the Executive office sends

postcards out announcing District and Cmte meetings, that the vice Cmdr's, and there's only four of us and then we change districts and now that we know the districts and where we're going to stay. That the vice Cmdr who has oversight over that district or Cmte, also receive one. I received one for the district that I live in, but I never receive one for the district that I have oversight. The committees that I have oversight. The legislative, I keep sending them e-mails and I never know when their meetings are until after they have them. This would eliminate, It's not your fault but if they have to report to you that they're having a meeting here and that they know it and you know it then send out the postcards or something.

Exec Dir May: We don't send them, the Cmte chairmen send them.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: I don't know why you're not getting them because I'm sending them to all the vice Cmdr's when I have a legislative meeting or a membership meeting.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: I got this last one. If you don't have a reply from me, you know that I didn't get it. So, but anyway, those kind of things, if we have a motion, at least if we could get them for the District meetings. We have five districts, that's only one postcard, that would come to, you know, that changes once a year if there's a new vice Cmdr.

**Alright, here's the whole thing, I make a motion that when the Executive Office sends a post card out announcing, and I'll just change this, for district meetings, that the vice Cmdr who has oversight over that district also receive one.**

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Ok, you heard the motion, do we have a second?

**Vice Cmdr Price: Second.**

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Alright, now we'll get into discussion.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker; If you check the calendar on the website, they're always on there.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: Yes, it is. I showed up for one that was changed, that the location was changed. Sometimes we as Vice Cmdr's, we don't always get that chain of command. And if they're running for 4<sup>th</sup>, you don't know this, that you don't always get notified by your district Cmdr, that you're having a meeting. I had several of mine that always let me know but I have some that are brand new that don't know they should let us know and has us come to the meeting.

Vice Cmdr Price: That will simplify it.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: And it would simplify it by one postcard that not that much different, because these run through and at the beginning of the year you add the name and you take that name off and add the next one. Because you have to add new District Cmdr's every year, every year you have to do a brand new district cmdr because it's the odd year or the even year. You have to do a brand new district Cmdr's because every year they change, it's either the odd year or the even year and they don't always stay the same so I'm just asking that. That's my part of the discussion part of it.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Ask Maggie, she sends the one that sends them out.

Exec Dir May: That's all you had to do.

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: Every year we have to send all four dates of our district meetings in and they're on the calendar and if there's a change, the district Cmdr is supposed to notify Maggie and it's changed on the calendar.

IPDC Scherer: Supposed to is the operative word.

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: Any other discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? Ayes have it. Anything else for the Good of the Legion.**

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: For those of you that don't know, Charleston Air Force Base, this is good for your membership, Chas Air Force Base is hosting the Thunderbirds, a one-day airshow on Saturday April 28<sup>th</sup>. The same weekend, Myrtle Beach Airport is having Thunder over the Beach/Ocean, whatever (inaudible) and they're having the Blue Angels on April 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> as well as the (inaudible). I was told at the Air Show Conference that they're doing it over the airport and the mayor told me they're doing it over the beach. We got notified that (inaudible) are headlining our Shaw Freedom Bash on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. That is not open to the public, that's only open to people that can get on base so if you have a friend that has an ID card that can get on base you can drive right through. We'll be selling food and beverages. We'll open the gates at 5:00, it starts at 7:00, ends at 10:00 followed by fireworks show, we're using a Disney type firework show so it should be pretty good fireworks show.

J/A Lewis: Boys State just had our planning conference last week and I don't know why I didn't think of this before but we're going to encourage all our counselors and the citizens that come to Boys State to join SAL if they're eligible, so we think that will be potentially hundreds of young men who will join SAL, so we'll give you an update on that. Maggie's already sent me all the stuff to give to them, applications so we hope that will encourage participation in Sal for these young men. Having said that, let me just give you the benefit of a survey that we did at Boys State. For the last few years, we have had online registration and this year was the first year we did a survey, here's what's interesting to me. One of the questions we asked to the students was, prior to becoming nominated, how much did you know about the American Legion. And 88% of the young men basically didn't know much about the Legion at all. The next question was, after participating in Palmetto Boys State, how would describe your perception of The American Legion. 95% of the young men had very favorable or favorable perception of The American Legion. That's important because these are young people who can join SAL and if they join the service they can become Legionnaires.

Here's the other thing and I think it's important based on Mike's encouragement of you to encourage another 300 members if you can. The parents survey, we asked basically the same question, prior to your son being nominated, how much did you know about The American Legion. Right at 70% didn't know much if anything at all about the Legion. Of course, the next question is, after your son completed his participation, how would you describe your perception of The American Legion, 96% had very favorable or favorable.

So, here's my thought process. These people are potential candidates to either become Legionnaires or who know people who are meet the criteria to become Legionnaires. And I know it's got to be hard to just cold call somebody and say, do you want to be or are you interested in joining the Legion. But if you know the boys or can get the information from your post on the boys that went to Boys State then you can call, hope your son had a great week, I understand you probably had an impact about it, would you consider joining The American Legion or do you know somebody that would considering joining The American Legion. Because these boys have the greatest testimony about what we do at Boys State. So anyway, I would just throw that out for food for thought in your efforts to recruit to get to that 300 #.

Two other things real quickly, I have an apology for you. I've been Director for the last 11 years, I've been on the program on staff for 30 years and until September of this year, I did know that there was Resolution that's about 15 years old I think, maybe longer, that the Boys State logo has to have the words American Legion in it. I didn't know that, and our logo has not had this. Now, the boys have the emblem, The American Legion emblem on their shirts, but the logo does not have the words American Legion on it. As soon as I found out about that I talked with the BS committee and we have now changed the logo to include the words American Legion. Here's what it looks like, it's basically the same as the logo before but it has American Legion on top, front and center. I just apologize to you guys, I didn't know the resolution was out there, when I was informed of it at the Directors Conference this past year and I just got this by e-mail from our designer yesterday in fact. So that's the new logo and I hope you appreciate. I didn't know it was supposed to be on there and I apologize to you.

One other thing, I announced to you last year, this online registration is a really good source of data for us and we've been collecting this data and we finally now have enough data to see where our boys are coming from. And

it's been a goal of the staff, especially the BS committee, my dad and Gene Morehead and Joel Smith, it's been a goal of ours to have at least one boy from at least every high school in the state. I don't know if we can do that but that's our goal. We just think there's got to be at least one kid in every high school who is qualified to be in BS. We have not identified at least 22 high schools in the state, and these are public schools, not private schools. In the state where we don't have any representation in BS. I met with Maggie and Nick on Thursday before a business dinner. I'm going to provide that information to Nick and Maggie and they're going to sort of do a diagnostic of what's going on. Maybe there's not a post near that high school or maybe there's a post that can't raise the money to send anyone. With your permission the staff at our planning conference this past weekend where we were presented with this information by Dave Fleming, our political science director, with your permission we're going to offer our assistance to posts nearby or posts that maybe don't have the resources to raise the money. Because we've got staff all over the state. And we can certainly come in and do whatever the posts wants us to do to help and try to get boys from these high schools who are not represented. So, we hope you appreciate that but it's just real important to us that the word gets out and it's important to us to get boys from every high school. I will meet with Nick and Maggie more about this but with your permission someone from the BS staff may be calling your post and talk with you about high schools in their area that aren't represented, and we want to do what we can do to help.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: We just adopted another high school from my post, Grey Collegiate Academy, we got two in Swansea and Grey Collegiate Academy.

J/A Lewis: Great! And we're encouraging that. We are encouraging nearby posts to adopt a high school that maybe they hadn't thought about because it's not in their area.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: How do you handle home school kids, we had a girl come to us for Girls State that was home schooled? Is it just that they're near the school?

J/A Lewis; No, there's a Home School co-op. We work with the Home School co-op. We get some of our best kids from Home School. Thank you, Mike.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: I'll add to that, out of all the counties in South Carolina represented by Boys State, Jasper county was the only county in SC that was not represented. So, if you're near Jasper County, let's get all counties represented in the state, reach out to Jasper.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: One of the kids that was at John Paul School which is in Jasper County was sponsored by Beaufort County because it goes in and out right there so was listed by a Beaufort County and not a Jasper County.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Very good information, we appreciate that. Any other business for the good of The American Legion. I'll just mention that the moving wall is coming in Camden in May if you're interested in seeing the moving wall, that's going to be in the Connector, I think. I'd like to recognize Murrells Inlet for their donation made to the VA Hospital, it was a substantial donation so those of you from Murrells Inlet in here, hats off to you. I would strongly encourage you, one of my programs this year has been the NEF, we've been pushing that all year. If your post has not yet donated their \$30.00, Maggie can get your list to see if your post has donated, please push that in your district meeting, we would love for you to bring those to the Ntl Cmdr's meeting on Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, there will be a lot of cameras there so think about it.

The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary Department Convention is coming up, we'll take donations for the NEF, there could be 500 people there with you up on stage giving your donation. We're only asking for \$30.00 but I know the spirit of SC Legionnaires will say, maybe we'll put in a little bit more than \$30 this year. So, if you haven't given or know if your posts haven't given, please consider that this year. We've had a lot of disasters this year and that's a fund by veterans for veterans to help them get out of disaster. Puerto Rico, they're in deep dire straits down there, we've got a lot of veterans there and South Florida and Texas, all in the Southern Bloc of our American Legion so we need to help step up those Legionnaires for a record year for the NEF for the Legion giving those people grants. So please let's kick it off and be one of the best states in giving to the NEF.

**D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Cmdr, I know you guys are ready to go but can we talk about baseball for a second. I know you guys are going to groan on this, but I have a motion. For the DEC to direct to the BB Cmte that Post 22 continue as the team of record in Union County and that they pull from the Union County High School as their base school instead of an independent team.**

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Ok. Is there a second?

**D-17 Cmdr Miller: I second.**

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Ok, is there any discussion?

Exec Dir May: Could you stand up and say that again?

Dept Adj Diener: I don't think everybody got the motion.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Basically, I'm asking that you let P-22, the Union post, be the BB team that pulls from Union County, right now an independent team has the high school and they're kicking the Union Post into D-3 which is my District in Greenville so it's really a weird situation.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: Isn't this the BB committee's oversight?

Dept Adj Diener: Did we have a second?

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Ed Miller.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: When we turned this over to the BB Cmte, we gave them the authority to make that decision.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Correct.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: And at this time, I think this motion is out of order until it's recommended by the BB Cmte if that's the way it is.

Dept Adj Diener: Can I make one clarification to what you're saying? My understanding that the BB Cmte decision on that was not to exclude P-22 but that both teams could recruit from Union High school. That it's a joint base school and neither team has exclusive to Union High school.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Ok. It seems like though that a Post team should take precedence team over an Independent team. Because it's American Legion BB.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: No ma'am.

D-20 Cmdr Rucker: Again, what the J/A said, I'm just asking, we're not supposed to be really into that, right?

Dept Cmdr Strauss: You direct all your questions to me. Any other discussion?

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: How are we defining Independent team, they're not associated with the Legion?

IPDC Scherer: They are.

Dept Adj Diener: It's just that the post doesn't sponsor them.

D-17 Cmdr Miller: It's a welding team.

I PDC Scherer: I've been with this debate for the last 2 ½, three years, the problem being is we have an Independent team with an American Legion patch on and the only thing they're getting out of it is publicity and the Post is doing all the work as far as all our programs and is spending all their money for The American Legion and in The American Legion (inaudible). But before they did that, the Union team had no problem with BB meeting all their obligations as far as games and everything but as soon as they started splitting it, we had the problems. So, I feel that P-22 should have 100% (inaudible).

Unidentified member from P-22: Inaudible.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: I can't recognize you, I'm sorry, you have to go through your District Cmdr.

D-17 Cmdr Miller: Having talked with the Cmdr from P-22 and one of the vice Cmdr's last Thursday it seems as though this situation should have been taken care of a long time ago. We have a post fully engaged with BB, over 50 years, had trouble with their coach, when they removed him as coach, suddenly things went south. I don't understand why P-22 doesn't have the right to (inaudible) this. Why are they sharing with anybody? If they're a legitimate post, they're actively celebrating and sponsoring this team for 50 years. Suddenly they're given this thing that they have to share it. Why? And they really would like to have a fair hearing before the BB Cmte, I'm hearing they aren't really getting that and haven't really gotten that. They would like to have a meeting with the whole Cmte, so they can air this and deal with it. So far, I don't think they've gotten it, I've read paperwork that they didn't. And I really do think this should be taken care of now.

D-16 Cmdr DeFrehn: I remember back when we were talking about this before with P-22 and BB and we had the issue with the coach. And the Cmdr for P-22 was here at the meeting and prior to the DEC making a decision, he just walked out on the meeting just sort of like, ok, you're going to do what you're going to do, we're not happy with it, and he walked away. And I've heard nothing but this, since then. So, he absolved himself because he didn't get the decision that he wanted at that DEC mtg.

D-13 Cmdr Patterson: I don't see how P-22 can be just pushed aside for a new team when they've been around for 50 years and when they went to renew, Ford went in and renewed so that pushed P-22 back as a new team. And from my understanding from I read, Post 22 had to send in a written request to transfer to another league and they didn't do that. So, when they went to sign up again, they beat them to the punch and they got Union High School and now they're trying to get four teams out of one high school, two junior teams and two senior teams there. It's just not enough to support four teams. To me, it's going to hurt BB, you don't have the quality players. And P-22, they can't get these players back. P-22 is the new team, and the other team is the old team, they go the base school, it don't sound right to me and there need to be changes done.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: I'm going to call on the person that has oversight over the Americanism Cmte and that's Walt Richardson.

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Everything you've heard is right. Don't think nothing about it. The problem we got is not with the BB team, the problem that we got is with the BB Cmte. Bottom line, case closed. We got a BB Cmte that allowed something to happen that should not have happened in the first place and I told them that. I told them that in this room right here. I cannot express to you my disappointment in the BB Cmte. If we want to fix it, we have to understand we have rules and regulations that we have to go by. The first thing that's got to happen is that BB Cmte has got to be changed. I'm going to be honest with you. They've made some decisions that are based on, for lack of better words, the good old boy system. Do I like it? No, I don't. However, we still have a structure in place that we have to go by and what we need to do is, now, understand this. P-22, they're not a bunch of Snow White's running around either, don't think that. Ford Welding, they're not either. What we got, when we talked with National, National, out of his own mouth, he said it looked like the BB players are being penalized by bad conduct by the post. That right there should have never been tolerated, it should not have been tolerated by the Cmte. They should have nipped it in the bud three years, we wouldn't have this problem. Now, I understand P-22. But we have a structure, we have rules, we have regulations that National said we have to go by and we're going by. What you got to do is if you don't like the system, change the system.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Who appoints the BB Cmte, are they elected, or we appoint them?

Vice Cmdr Richardson: Cmdr, correct me if I'm wrong on this. The BB Cmte is three appointments a year and the Cmdr gets to appoint the Chairman of the Cmte. That means there's an influx coming every year. But what happens is, they take one look, because trust me, because BB is time-consuming, it's hard work. And they say well, we got these pp and they're doing a good job, we'll just let them keep on doing it.

And what's happened is they've been on there for so long they think they can do anything they want to with complete impunity. What happened at P-22 was a total travesty of American Legion BB, absolutely no question in my mind. A team that had been there for 50 years, and then because there was a hoorah with the coach. But an even bigger travesty is these individuals, these grown people, these Legionnaires, can't sit down and talk and come up with a solution to benefit the kids. I'm so damn tired of hearing we're doing it for the kids. That's the biggest crock of bull I ever heard in my life. They're doing it because they're in a pissing contest with each other. That's what the problem is. And the problem is the committee has sat back and let them do it. The only way we're going to straighten this out we've got to do one of two things. Either we got to change the constitution on that BB Cmte or we got to change the Cmte. That's all I'm going to say.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: I want to be the first to tell you that you got to go back and look at the history of P-22. You talk about a committee running it, they run it for many years without the support of the first individual out of P-22. Until the recent Cmdr come on board. At that time, where they brought the BB person that had run the BB Cmte there for years, taking money out of his own pocket to run it.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Jack, I don't want to get into the history of it. If you have comments on the motion, go ahead.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: The comment on the motion, when you blame the BB Cmte, it started right here with the DEC. Let me tell you how it started with the DEC. The year before last this DEC gave the BB Cmte the authority, two previous Cmdr's, Joe Lysaght, Bob Scherer, gave them the authority to split. That was the first mistake to make, you can't blame it on nobody else, it started right here among us. Look at it, it's all documented, I'm not telling you anything that you don't know.

Dept Cmdr: We made no decision on that, let's stick to the motion. Let's don't go back three years ago.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: There can't be a motion on the floor, as you already discussed, Cmdr, when it's got to go before the BB Cmte.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: It's already been to the BB Cmte.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: When did it go before the Cmte?

Dept Cmdr Strauss: This year.

D-5 Cmdr Wright: Pertaining to what?

Dept Cmdr Strauss: I'll get into that. I'll have some discussion.

D-13 Cmdr Patterson: Why can't we get the J/A to review all the Rules & Regulations on this, so he can go back and see if any rules have been broken, who broke the rules. If we need a new BB Cmte but we need to get this straightened out.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: I'm going to discuss a little on this because I've heard enough about this, we're kind of rehashing this. Jack has a point a couple of years ago, a decision was made by the person in charge, not the DEC, let me make that clear, they made a decision that did not consult with this body. Just to clarify what you said, it was not the DEC, ok? I'm not saying whether the decision was right or wrong, but we have a Cmte, called the BB Cmte and when the Cmte meets, we have a lot of different committees, finance, BB, Law Cadet, we have a lot of

different committees in this dept. And the reason I'm not letting the decision go on and on and on about the history is because we're in a limited time frame here. We did have a BB Cmte meeting, there was some of the vice's present, John was present, Walt was present, and the members. This was brought before that Cmte, there was a lot of discussion on the matter, they made a decision, the decision didn't go the way of P-22.

Post do not have the authority to appeal a decision made by a Cmte. If they did, we would be having all kinds of posts be here every day. A post has a District Cmdr, a Dist Cmdr has that right to represent them at the DEC so the Post does not have that right to come here and protest a Cmte decision. They can appeal the decision to the National BB Cmte, P-22 can. The J/A has found that in the BB Rule book and we've had quite a lot discussion on this matter. The DEC can override a decision by a Cmte, just like we did on the finance decision today. They made a decision not to fund the Fisher House and we overruled that decision. But there's a lot of facts out there on this and there's pages and pages and pages but to let you know that Cmte met within our rules and regulations and they made that decision and that's where we're at right now. They did not rule in favor of P-22. Does anybody have any questions on that? I'll end the discussion. All in favor of the motion. Do we need to re-state the motion?

**Exec Dir May: In a nutshell, I think what Bridget said was she makes a motion to let P-22 be the team that pulls from Union High school.**

**D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Yes, the main team. We could overrule the BB Cmte.**

Dept Cmdr Strauss: We can but there's a whole lot of loose ends in that motion, I'm just going to say it right there. We'd be overruling a Cmte that's established to make those type of decision. We don't know where the other teams are going, we don't know anything, we're just overruling that particular decision.

Dept Adj Diener: My one comment on it and I'm not trying to get into the details of it. When we appoint the BB Cmte and that chairman, per these rules there are certain authorities that are given to that chairman and the decision they get to make. If it's appealed to National, National will look and see if the decisions are made in accordance with that book, and to me that ought to be where we're letting it go to.

**Dept Cmdr Strauss: I'll let that be the end of discussion. We've heard the motion, we have the second. All in favor say aye? Any opposed? Opposed have it. Motion not carried.** Alright, I'll call on Chaplain Quarles for the benediction. I'm sorry, I recognize Cmdr Bud Hennis, our NEC.

NEC Hennis: Thank you Commander. Commander Michael Strauss, American Legion Dept of SC. Dear Cmdr Strauss, as of March 31, 2018, I am respectfully resigning my office as The American Legion NEC for the Department of SC. I would like to thank all the Legionnaires of SC, for their confidence in me and for allowing me the honor to serve. Thank you, Commander.

Dept Cmdr Strauss: Bud, I just want to say on behalf of the DEC, we appreciate you for your faithful and timely service to The American Legion and we look forward to working with you as a Past Department Commander on the Executive Board. (Applause).

You can remain standing if you would.

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

For God and Country.

Nick I. Diener  
Department Adjutant

ND/mm