The Special Called meeting of The Department Executive Committee meeting was conducted on August 15, 2020 beginning at 10:00 am at American Legion Post 6, 200 Pickens Street, Columbia, SC 29205.

Executive Committee Members Present:

Dept Cmdr Walt Richardson
Dept Adjutant Nick Diener
Dept Historian Russ Cantrell
NEC Michael Strauss
Alt NEC Bob Scherer
Imm PDC John Britt
Dept Chaplain Richard Mullinax
Dept 1st Vice Cmdr Ron Price
Dept 2nd Vice Cmdr Robin Rucker
Dept 3rd Vice Cmdr Jim Kvam
Dept 4th Vice Cmdr - Vacant
D-1 Cmdr Jim Jarvis
D-2 Cmdr Reedy Hopkins
D-3 Cmdr Bridget Lewis
D-4 Cmdr Bruce Donegan
D-5 Cmdr Jack Smith
D-6 Cmdr Tim Burnside
D-7 Cmdr Michael Calcutt
D-8 Cmdr Ed Courtney
D-9 Cmdr Robert Sweet
D-10 Cmdr Tommy Sinclair
D-11 Cmdr Jack Lonergan
D-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis
D-13 Cmdr Rick Gibson
D-15 Cmdr Jamie Rumbaugh
D-16 Cmdr Jim Defrehn
D-18 Cmdr Larry Poucny
D-19 Cmdr Bob Gibbons
D-20 Cmdr David Mills
Dept Sgt-at-Arms Kevin Joy

Absent:

Dept JA Stephen Lewis
Dept Asst JA Cody Mitchell
Dept Vice Cmdr Jim Kvam
D-14 Cmdr Mike Brandt
D-17 Cmdr Jim Thrailkill
D-20 Cmdr David Mills

Also Present:

James Holland, PNVC
Jim Rabon, Post 17 Adj
M. May, Dept Exec Dir.
Annie Hough-Everage, Post 74 Cmdr
Rick Bernard, Post 166 Adj
Darlene Walton, Post 130 Adj
Matthew Gooden, Post 215 Adj
Eugene Everage

Cmdr Richardson, opened the meeting and called on Chaplain Mullinax 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 Richardson: I’m going to make this short and sweet because of this COVID-19, we don’t want to be around each other too long. But there’s a couple things we do need to make sure that everybody understands. And that is a special called meeting and there is one item of business on the agenda. And that will be all that’s done today. Next thing is I want to thank District Cmdr Jarvis, Jim?
For setting up and allowing us to use Post 6’s building, thank you very much. It’s set up very well.

Next, restrooms. Restrooms are out this door to the right and out this door and to the left. Adjutant, do we have the roll call?

Adjutant Diener called the roll and announced there was a quorum.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Without further ado, we’re going to proceed right into our scheduled item of business, Adjutant?

Dept Adj Diener: Thank you, Commander. The way we’re going to proceed today and again we’re going to try and make this as short, easy, and simple as possible. First thing we’re going to have to do is we will have to open the floor up for any additional nominations? Those nominations do have to come from a DEC member, everybody else has had a chance to submit. Then after that, once we start into the actual election, the way that we will work it is, I will call your name, you will come up to Maggie, she’ll check you, give you a ballot, you’ll go over to where Chaplain Mullinax is at, we’ll have that scooted out around, fill out your ballot, put it in the ballot box and go sit back down. Ok, we’re going to try and keep the social distancing so all I’ll have up here at any time is two people. One filling out their ballot, one picking it up, ok? So even though you can anticipate your time, be ready but don’t start making your way up here because we don’t want to get a bunch of people up here. On the ballots or on the actual elections, after the first round, of course if anybody gets 51% of the vote, which means they got to get to 13 votes with the number of people that are here. If anybody gets 13 votes, its over, ok? If no candidate achieves 13 votes, the second round will consist of the top two vote getters plus any ties, ok? So if somebody, two people tie for second place, there will be three people on the second ballot. And then we’ll do it again.

After the second round, if nobody achieves the 13 votes, we just keep going and keep going and do it however many times we have to, to do that. Ok, any questions? Alright, we’ll let’s go ahead and get it opened up. Do we have any other nominates for the position of 4th Vice Cmdr? Do we have any other nominations for the position of 4th Vice Cmdr? Do we have any other nominations for the position of 4th Vice Cmdr? Can I have a motion that we close the nominations?

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: I make a motion to close the nominations.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: Second.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, we have a motion that’s been made and seconded to close the nominations for 4th Vice Cmdr. All those in favor, say aye? All those opposed? Ok, motion passes. (all present voted in favor of the motion to close the nominations, none opposed).

Alright, just for your information, and the way that we have listed everybody on the ballots for the candidates, we listed them in alphabetical order, to be fair. The candidates for 4th Vice Cmdr are: Russ Cantrell
John Coaxum
Matthew Gooden
Annie Hough-Everage
Jim Jarvis
Jack Lonergan
Jim Rabon
Grady Richardson.
Ok, any questions? Ok, one other thing that I did want to put in in case somebody notices here, per Roberts Rules, when we are doing an election like this, the Department Commander does vote, he just had to vote before he knows any of the results, ok? So Chaplain, if you’d like to slide that forward and without any further ado, we’ll get started.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: I had eight candidates down, but you only ready seven.

Dept Adj Diener re-read the names:

Russ Cantrell
John Coaxum
Matthew Gooden
Annie Hough-Everage
Jim Jarvis
Jack Lonergan
Jim Rabon
Grady Richardson

Dept Adj Diener: On the ballot, you just circle the name that you want, and fold it over and put it in. We do have one individual that for medical reason cannot wear a mask, Commander Hopkins. What we will do on that to keep everybody safe. When we come to him, the Sgt-at-Arms will come up, pick up his ballot, take it over to him, let him fill it out and he will put it in the ballot box for him. Ok, without any further ado, let’s get started.

Dept Cmdr Richardson NEC Strauss

Again, we would ask, if you’ve picked up your ballot, don’t move over to the ballot box until the other person has finished to keep our social distancing.

Alt NEC Scherer Dept Adj Diener: I have it as everybody that’s present, did I miss anybody? Give us a couple minutes to count the ballots.

Imm PDC Britt 1st Vice Cmdr Price
D-1 Cmdr Jarvis D-5 Cmdr Smith
D-3 Cmdr Lewis D-7 Cmdr Calcutt
D-9 Cmdr Sweet
D-11 Cmdr Lonergan
D-13 Cmdr Gibson
D-15 Cmdr Defrehn
D-19 Cmdr Gibbons

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, while they’re counting the ballots, couple things I’m wanting to go over with you. Number one, just to give you a quick update on our DMS Blitz. Ladies and gentlemen, we’re already at 731, damn! That ain’t bad, that’s real good! Outstanding! We’re going to go ahead, we’ve got 15…15 more days and we’re forging on with this thing. Now, please understand, that once
this is over with, our second phase of our membership plan is going to kick into effect. Our second phase. Number one, first part of that phase is we’re going to take and we’re going to attack the low achieving posts. And we’re going to go to them. And we’re going to help them. Number two is we’re going to concentrate on our renewals and our new memberships. And the third phase of course, is we’re going to encourage the posts to continue to go after the DMS and the 172 numbers. So it’s coming, we’re on a roll and we can get this. Next thing is, the registration online. Come Tuesday of next week I’m going to start calling the posts that are not registering online, I think, Maggie, isn’t that what you call it? Mylegion, yeh. So make sure, you District Cmdr’s, that you’ve called your posts and you inform them that they’re about to get a phone call because I’ve got a list of people that are not on the computer thing, the registering online. I think right now we’re at, Maggie? 98, I stand corrected. We want all our posts in South Carolina registering online, it is a win/win situation for everybody concerned. And that is what we’re here to do and that is to make life easier for our posts. Sometimes you have to kind of pull them by the nose to get them to do it but that’s what we’re going to do. Alright, last thing is, everybody in here, Darlene? Everybody in here got little packets, right? Alright, when you give those membership awards out, whether you give them out at a District mtg or whether you arrange to do it at Post mtg, please I would like to have a white hat or a red hat there to present these awards with you. We have got to make these awards bigger and better and the only way we can do this is if we are there to help pass them out. So when you take these awards and you’re going to give them out at a District mtg, make sure you’ve got your Cmdr, you’ve got me, you’ve got Chaplain Mullinax, you’ve got the Sgt-at-Arms, you’ve got the Historian, you got a white hat or a red hat, you got Mike, you got Bob, call, ask, let’s get somebody on there so we can make this a big deal. Because we know, this membership, we have got to push it, we have got to push it. Also, last thing, is our Rifle Raffle is coming up. We’re going to start on it, and we can push this thing, we can make this thing good and we can from there. I see legitimately, legitimately, when we first did it, I can remember, first time that we did it, when we hit $27,000, we were dancing a jig at the Department. That meant we didn’t lose no money. Ladies and gentlemen, if we push this Rifle Raffle like it should be, and it’s going to be pushed, I can easily see the Department doing $300,000. Easy. If we can get everybody out there and get everybody pushing it, then we can do it. That’s all I have; do you have any questions?

D-4 Cmdr Donegan: Do we have any anticipated resolutions that we’ll be able to hold a raffle from the Senate or the House?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Cmdr Rucker?

Vice Cmdr Rucker: I talked to the Speaker of the House on that, and I think it’s the 23rd or the 24th of September, that’s the first thing on their agenda and he didn’t see any problems with that passing. It’s just a procedure thing.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Thank you.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, we have the results in from the first count, there were no candidates that achieved a majority. I’m not going through all the list on all the votes but the top two candidates that will move on to a run-off are Grady Richardson and Jim Jarvis. Any questions? By the way, as we go through these additional rounds, if we keep having a tie, each successive round we’re going to give Chaplain Mullinax 15 minutes to preach some fire and brimstone and we will add five minutes every round. And as you can tell, we don’t want to do that.

NEC Strauss: Are you going to give the count?

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Dept Adj Diener: We can put it out, but I did not want to go through the count for everybody. The two candidates, their names are on a piece of paper over here so you can see them. The next ballot, as you get them, all the ballot has on it, because we couldn’t anticipate or guess who it was going to be moving forward, it just has a blank line, so you’ll need to write in which candidate that you want to vote for on this second round.

D-15 Cmdr Defrehn: Do we still circle it?

Dept Adj Diener: You do not have to circle it after you do that but if you would like to circle it. Ok, this is from the Cmdr that asks if the ballots were in braille, but anyway (laughter). Ok, if there are no further questions, we will move into the run-off ballot. Again, it is between Jim Jarvis and Grady Richardson.

Ok, did we miss anybody? Ok, Cmdr, we’ll start counting again, you’ve got the podium.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, two things while they’re counting the votes. Number one, I wasn’t very good at math. (laughter). Alright, just want to remind you that on September the 26th, that our will be our next face-to-face meeting with the DEC. At that time, we’re going to fill you in, and hopefully most of your are aware of what is happening with this dialog that the Department of SC has going on with National concerning the method that they, that the goals for this year was established. It is our stance that according to Resolution 25 that the method they used was in error. And we have pointed that out to them, and we got a response, it was not a favorable response but anyway, we’re still working on it. On December (September) the 26th, Adjutant Diener will go over and give you step by step what has happened so far.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: You say face-to-face?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yeh, you know, face-to-face.

(someone asked if it would be a video conference)

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, yeh, that’s face-to-face. Alright, next thing is, Commander Oxford and Mike, please correct me if I screw this up too bad. Commander Oxford has started a hundred mile walk or ride. A hundred mile walk or ride. And we have, I’ve already got my T-shirt, I’ve already registered online and what it is, is you pledge, number one, you pledge to buy a T-shirt at Emblem
Sales and then you either pledge to either walk or ride a bike 100 miles. Michael, does anything say it has to be a bicycle or can it be a….

NEC Strauss: It can be a motorcycle; it can be a bicycle, or you can do both. You can drive a hundred of each.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Fantastic.

NEC Strauss: The National Commander’s pledged to do both on a bicycle and walking.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: And we be getting in touch with you about this so we can go from there and make sure that we have all our ducks in line. Because even though we’re not seeing eye to eye with National on this goal, we’re still a vital part of The American Legion here in South Carolina. And we will continue to uphold the quality and standards and the core values of The American Legion.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: What’s the cut-off date?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: The cut-off date is Veterans Day, November the 11th, the day right after the Marine Corps Birthday, Larry?

D-4 Cmdr Donegan: Cmdr, I signed up the other day, does that automatically register?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yes.

D-4 Cmdr Donegan: Oh, ok, because I couldn’t find the exact…

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I think what we’re looking for, if you can get your shirt and go somewhere and walk like in front of a Memorial and have somebody take a picture and send it to NEC Strauss or Alt NEC Scherer, we’re going to put them together.

Alt NEC Scherer: At the end of it, once you finish your hundred miles, there’s a certificate you can pull off and show that you did your hundred miles.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Thank you, very much. Don’t forget your certificate.

NEC Strauss: When you buy the-shirt, you are registered. A little bit more than half of that money goes directly to the Foundation that they set up. South Carolina veterans received $74,000 just last year from that account. $74,000 is a lot of money and they’re asking you go buy a $30 T-shirt or sign up, and half of it goes towards that fund to help replenish the fund. As you know, the year before we gave over a million dollars to the Coast Guard to people that we’re getting paid and it’s a pretty worthwhile event. However, because of the social distancing that’s going on, they’re only sending those T-shirts out once a month and if you sign up right now, you’ll get you shirt at the end of the month. If you don’t or if you wait a little bit and don’t sign up, you won’t get it until the end of September so try to get in there and get signed up. It’s a worthwhile cause and we’re helping veterans. A lot of people say, what are we doing for veterans, $74,000 just last year is quite a bit of money and we’re looking to hopefully replenish that fund.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok. Results?
Dept Adj Diener: Ok, last thing on that though, if you’ll keep track of, use the app on your phone, walking the hundred miles is not hard because it will keep track of your steps that you walk during the day. I walked almost two miles every day just at work, so anyway. The results are in, we did have a winner and congratulations to the new 4th Vice Cmdr, Jim Jarvis. And if you’ll come forward, the Dept Cmdr will swear you in.

(Department Commander Richardson swears in the new Department 4th Vice Cmdr, Jim Jarvis)

D-4 Cmdr Donegan: Can I ask for clarification, please? The DEC meeting, that’s a Zoom meeting, on the 26th of September?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: That’s my understanding, I’m not….

Dept Adj Diener: It will be a GO TO Meeting, same platform that we’ve used. I’ll send out the link and everything.

D-4 Cmdr Donegan: Ok, thank you.

Dept Cmdr Richardson called on Chaplain Mullinax for the benediction and closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

Nick I. Diener  
Department Adjutant

ND/mm