The Department Executive Committee met on December 7, 2019 at The American Legion Department of SC, 103 Legion Plaza Rd, Columbia, SC 29210.

Executive Committee Members Present:

Dept Commander Walt Richardson
Dept Adjutant Nick Diener
Dept Historian Russ Cantrell
NEC Michael Strauss
Imm PDC John Britt
Dept 1st Vice Cmdr Roberta Poulos
Dept 2nd Vice Cmdr Ron Price
Dept 3rd Vice Cmdr Robin Rucker
Dept 4th Vice Cmdr Jim Kvam
D-1 Cmdr Jim Jarvis
D-3 Cmdr Bridget Lewis
D-6 Cmdr Bill Simpson
D-7 Cmdr Michael Calcutt
D-8 Cmdr Chuck Shaffer
D-9 Cmdr Robert Sweet
D-10 Cmdr Tommy Sinclair

D-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis
D-13 Cmdr Jimmy Wilson
D-14 Cmdr Mike Brandt
D-15 Cmdr Jamie Rumbaugh
D-16 Cmdr Jim Defrehn
D-17 Cmdr Jim Thrailkill
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy
D-19 Cmdr Bob Gibbons
D-20 Cmdr David Mills
Dept Chaplain Richard Mullinax
Dept Sgt-at-Arms George Oxner
Asst Sgt-at-Arms Kevin Joy
PDC/PDA Jim Hawk
PNEC John Palmer

Absent:
Alt NEC Bob Scherer
Dept JA Stephen Lewis
Asst JA Anthony Livoti
Dept Asst JA Cody Mitchell
D-2 Cmdr Chuck Blankin
D-4 Cmdr Wayne Southworth
D-5 Cmdr Carroll Kelley
D-11 Cmdr Jack Lonergan

Also Present:
Darlene Walton, P 130
M. May, Dept Exec Director
Ed Courtney, Post 178
John Lenotte, Post 214

Steve Reck, Post 12
Tom Yarborough, Post 12
Matt Gooden, Post 215
Tony Dunn, P 214
Cmdr Richardson: Welcome to the DEC meeting. Alright, a couple of things, number one, to give you an update on Chaplain Quarles. Chaplain Quarles is not doing very good, from what I received, and he had to resign. And I want to introduce to you our new Chaplain, Richard Mullinax from Post 193 (applause). Now, another thing that we’ve done is we’ve got a lectern up here and they will eliminate everybody from having to walk up and come all the way around and all the moving around up here. So if you’re going to give a report, like, you know, Jim with the finance report, you can do it from right here, ok? Alright, very good. Now, all rise, colors being in place, hand salute, two.

Cmdr Richardson called on Chaplain Mullinax for the invocation, Vice Cmdr Rucker for Resolution 288, Vice Cmdr Kvam for the Pledge of Allegiance and Vice Cmdr Poulos for the Preamble.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I just want to let you know that over the past week, we’ve lost two of our very important American Legion Members. One was Harry Brown and the other one was Pat Patterson, if we could have a moment of silence for them please. Thank you very much. Keep them off because we’ve got another one. We also lost a dear friend. A person who was a staunch advocate for all veterans, Howard Metcalf. This was, anybody’s that been around here for a little while, knows the kind of person Howard was, veterans came first. Have a moment for Howard. And lastly, finally, please remember today is December 7th, Pearl Harbor Day. The day that will live in Infamy, if we could have a moment of silence to remember all of the veterans that fell.

Thank you very much, re-cover. Alright, couple of things. I’m going to give you a brief, very brief breakdown on the condition on the state of the Department of South Carolina. We’re strong, we’re getting better and we’re getting stronger. Our membership, not to steal anybody’s thunder, right now we’re 606 people ahead of where we were last year and we’re at 76 and a little bit percent, which means we already made our December 11th deadline. Our finances are good, they’re getting better, going to have to keep on working. Just want to let you know that we’re beginning to get requests from different organizations to join them to help promote The American Legion and other organizations. Yesterday I went to Palmetto State Armory (PSA), and they asked what they could do to help with The American Legion and I’m sitting there going well, you know, we’ve got the Rifle Raffle coming up and he says, well, whatever we can do to help you, let us know. He says as a matter of fact, when we do your next Rifle Raffle, we’ll sell some tickets for you. They have five stores throughout the state and so that’s going to happen, they came to us. Also, Columbia Fireflies, on Tuesday, Nick and a contingency of Legionnaires, we’re going down to the Columbia Fireflies stadium and we’re going to have lunch with them. And we’re going to discuss how the Columbia Fireflies baseball and The American Legion can work together to better the Legion, baseball and the area in South Carolina. And finally, on Tuesday, I’m going down to Ridge Springs/Monetta and I’m going to speak or ask some questions about something called a Purple Heart School District. Now, I’m not quite sure what this is, but I think what it is, is when a military family moves from one place to another place, the kids in school, they have a hard time transitioning to that school. And what I’m going to go down there and see is, is there any way The American Legion get these kids integrated into the schools faster. Ok, other than that, oh, one thing. We’ve been kind of short on the details on Harry Brown’s funeral. Larry’s got some information on that, if you would please.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Thank you, Mr. Commander. I called Low Country Mortuary, and Harry Brown’s funeral is going to be next Saturday, they don’t have the time yet but it’s going to be at Pee Dee Baptist Church on Spring Street, I got the cell phone in the car with the number but it’s going to be Saturday, a week from today at Pee Dee Baptist Church. Thank you, Mr. Commander, I had a hard time finding that, I’ve been calling since Wednesday, all this week, and got this late yesterday afternoon.
Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, as soon as we get it, I’m sure that Nick and them will put it out so everybody will know. Alright, Mr. Adjutant, can we get a roll call, please?

Adjutant Diener called the roll and informed the Commander he had a quorum.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Minutes?

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: I make a motion to accept the minutes as is.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Second.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, the motion was made by Cmdr Defrehn that we suspend the reading of the minutes and accept them as written and seconded by Cmdr Lewis, all in favor say aye, opposed? (Motion passed and so ordered)

Very good. Alright, we looked over it and couldn’t find any old business, if anybody can remember anything that we haven’t covered or we need to go back and cover, we’ll cover it right now. Old business once, twice? It’s gone. Moving to new business, we’re going to the finance committee report, Chairman Jarvis, Commander?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Thank you Commander, as the 2019 year’s ending, we’re continuing to move in the right direction. The finance committee feels that we’ve had a very good year, financially and I think you’ll see that soon. The finance committee has several proposals today that will need your attention and your vote. As we go through these, you will see how we have significantly reduced the mortgage and increased our savings account. And due to the efforts of our Adjutant and our Executive Director, we’ve reduced expenses considerably as well. Reducing the expenses, that’s an ongoing battle with them and they’re constantly working that issue. Our income and expenses this year have been on track, with only a few glitches. Income wise, we’ve had a banner year with the rifle raffle. We’re going to address that individually after this but as far as the finance sides concerned, it’s done considerably well. Sweepstakes is low, but, for only the second time since 2015, the Fall Sweepstakes was higher than the Spring Sweepstakes. Still, overall, between the Spring and the Fall was low, but it didn’t go down or didn’t reduce any further. And then with the diligent efforts, again, of our Adjutant and Executive Director, we have been able to decrease the expenses. Their goal this was to go after the phone, the internet, the copier and mailing expenses have been a continuing effort. Over the last eight years, mailing expenses has decreased by almost a little over $7,000 a year, so that is a major plus. The telephone, we tackled that by the Department Executive Director putting that under a bundle plan, we’ve basically cut that in half, that’s supposed to go into effect this month, that’s the landline and the wi-fi. The trash, which I stated to you back in the last DEC meeting, they threw a zinger at us by doubling our trash expense. Well, we immediately did two things. One, we started looking, two, we asked, the Adjutant wanted a copy of the current contract. Well, it took us well over a month for them to finally come back to us and say they had no contract. As soon as they told us they had no contract, then we sent them a 30-day notice letter stating that on December 31st, we’re going to cease and desist with Advance Disposal. And we signed a contract to go into effect January 1st with CWS, and it’s actually, if you don’t take the increase that they doubled, it’s even cheaper than we were paying before the double so it saved over, what’s that number, I’ve got a lot of numbers here. $2,000.00 almost $2100.00 a year.

Copier expense, when we made the shift, we had a flat rate. We were paying unlimited copies. The problem we were having with that was we had to change out four cartridges, it’s four cartridges at a whack, twice a year, that’s almost $4800.00. So, what we did was we went to pay per copy. Pay a certain amount for black and white, pay a certain amount for color and we don’t have to pay for those...
cartridges, which is $4800.00, and the staples. In the end, even with the usage, in the end we save about $2100.00 on that one as well. So we cut those, the phone, the copier, the trash is going down and the postage is continuing to go down. So expenses have been cut. The only real surprise to the 2019 financial statement is the loss of an income.

The Auxiliary has decided not to renew, in other words they vacated, or the will on December 31st, vacate 107 ABC&D, that’s a $1400.00 a month rent, which comes out to about $16,800.00 that we have lost. We’ve already, using 2019 maintenance money, the Adjutant has already started getting supplies in for painting, preparing it for rental. He’s also gone a step further, gotten hold of a commercial realtor, had him come in and give us advice on what to do. For instance we were thinking about changing out the carpet and putting the same kind of flooring that’s in 107A, put that in B, he told us to stand off on that and use that as a bargaining tool. So right now, we’re going to fix the walls, paint it, we’ve already cleaned the outside and working to get it re-rented. You’ll notice when we get to the budget that we left it as a loss for the whole year, that’s just to cover our tail, we don’t know how long that’s going to go un-rented. That was the only real surprise that we had. Today we’re going to have to look at the 2020 budget, we’re going to have to look at the 2019 end of year money allocation. We’re going to look at the Rider budget, the Americanism allocation and you already approved the Sons back in October and then we have to look at the Law Cadet.

Let’s start with the proposed budget You’ll notice we gave you a change out there, emailed a change out, that was only to reflect the loss of income, the $16,800.00 loss of income, just so you knew about that. I tried to do this to give you an overall view, basically the bottom line is we have $529,126.00 in income, that’s what we’re proposing in that budget. We have $511,583.15 were expenses, that puts us to a deficit of $42457.15. But we split the income from the rifle raffle between one year and the other year, and that would bring that $54301.02 in we’re looking at $11,843.87 to the good so that how the balancing of the budget went out. We can’t put this as an income, because it was an income last year, in 2019, it wasn’t in 2020, it’s a shifting in the money, that’s why we depicted it this way. This down here is membership savings for the 2020 budget, $37,816.00, you’ll see it a little bit later, the proposal the finance committee is that we prepay that like we have been doing with 2019 money which still leaves us in that same bracket of $11,000.00. But that’s the overall push on that, on the budget. That’s what the budget’s going to be, I’ll give you a second to look at it. Most of you should have a copy but some of you may not have. You’ll notice also in there that we didn’t change the trash because I want to see it come to fruition. I want to see December 31st actually happen and January 1st happen. We’ll leave it that way, that way it just goes in, the couple thousand dollars just goes into the end of the year funds. And we did the same thing with the telephone, we were just able to negotiate that in the last week or two so that’s also where it was, and we left that alone as well. But both of those will be less. Any questions.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Can you explain the difference between upkeep and maintenance?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: I did that on the phone to you.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Well, I know, but other people were on the e-mail.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Upkeep is normal, routine stuff. Maintenance is big items, ticket items. The breakdown is things like QuickBooks, Microsoft, minor repairs, we made a minor repair to the AC unit, routine type things. Maintenance is big items like the digging and the piping for down below and the drainage to be fixed, they had to put a new pump in there. Then they had to go back in further on down the line and fix an electrical problem, we had, to my knowledge, three or four issues with plumbing down there and that’s maintenance items.
D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: So when you say maintenance, you’re allocating a certain amount of funds for that, if we don’t use it, it rolls back?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: It goes right back into the end of the year money.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Got you.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: And we were trying, what the Adjutant’s doing right now, we’ve got paint, paint supplies, tarps, that kind of stuff that we know that we’re going to need to work on 107 with, and we’re using 2019 money on that so it’s helped with that. Same thing with the shrubs outside, we’re getting termite issues with these shrubs so we’re talking to people about getting them pulled out. And we’ve already power washed, we put that under maintenance, we’re going to paint out there once the cracks are fixed. Those are the bigger ticket items. If we have an AC problem, we go to maintenance but upkeep’s just the basic routine stuff. Terminix coming in every three months to spray.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Maintenance’s a sliding scale.

Dept Adj Diener: Right.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Depending on what breaks or doesn’t break. On another note, when you go out to vendors, do you request quotes for things, (inaudible) contract to come fix something that’s broken. I’m assuming you get multiple quotes.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Three, four, sometimes five.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: And it’s presented to these folks, even along the lines of, say, utilities, that we are a, and I’m asking, because I don’t know. We’re a 501-C Veterans Organization and they take that into consideration when they give us quotes for services?

Dept Adj Diener: Some do, some don’t.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Utilities is a weird one. It’s like, we’ve got everybody now, this building, the dance people, baseball’s all on their own electrical now. But when we try to get everybody on their own water, now we’re talking ten, twelve, thirteen thousand dollars just to get re-piping, new meters, a router, they wanted almost $9,000.00 for a router valve prior to us, so we backed off on that. We pay the water but the electrical is now into the rental type thing. We don’t have too much, you know, they hold us over a hard spot when it comes to those actual utilities. We have very few people to talk to about that. Now, trash, we went to six or seven.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Well, I’m assuming it’s been proposed. Case in point, I’m eating breakfast this morning, billboard pops up, Farmers telephone, second largest co-op in the nation, do telephone, Wi-Fi, internet, they flashed up a 20% discount for veterans. Do the utility companies that we deal with, do they offer that?

Dept Adj Diener: We deal with Mid-Carolina, SCE&G.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Local places right now, and we’re always looking. I just told you four areas that we went after, we’ve got two other areas that we’re going to try to work next year and we always watch what we’ve got already. The finance committee and our Executive Director and Adjutant, we’re constantly looking at decreasing. My philosophy (inaudible) but keep trying to get the expenses down.
I mean, as low as we can possibly do it. Some of these things we have contracts that we’re obligated to a certain period of time and if they don’t want to be nice then we’ll look elsewhere but that’s how we’ve been working it. And we get as many of the people to respond to us as possible. Trash was six or seven companies we got quotes from. Any other questions?

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: I know you said you’re working on the postage but could cut that down more using e-mail.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: You’re preaching to the choir. What you want, you can’t go like that, and it happens. It’s got to work. And when you turn around and decrease that by over half and all we’re doing is going down and down. We got people in this room that aren’t on e-mail. We understand that, we realize that, we’re working toward that. But we can’t do it overnight.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: No, you can’t force them to get e-mail but those that would rather have it e-mailed, you can e-mail it. But those that would rather have it e-mailed; you can e-mail it.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: We’re working that issue as well. The general issue, you’re the new kid on the block, that’s the expression I use. We’ve gone through this, and gone through this and gone through this, we all wanted to put minutes on, it’s not practical. We’re are looking at that and we are trying every endeavor. For instance, the DMS calling, we fill out a transfer form, the green copies got to go to the post. Well, we need them to get that because that’s going to welcome that 172 person into their post. If they don’t know that person is coming and that person comes, we want them to be ready. Maggie came up with let’s scan it and e-mail it to the Posts instead of mailing it out. People in this room, you all help. Bringing brochures and pamphlets and all that stuff out to your districts, that was a huge postal expense. The membership team takes, my car’s full of that stuff. Every time I go somewhere, I give it to them. Trying to stop them from calling us, and it’s been working big, calling us and requesting this stuff. To mail out a box of that stuff is ridiculous. And postage just keeps going up. So we’re working the e-mail, we want to ideally, we’ll all be on it.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Postage, that’s the Post Office. They’re rate goes up, you got to pay it. If that’s the issue, we shouldn’t be talking about it. We can’t do nothing about it, not unless we got someone that wants to hand deliver it. But the postage rate, we can’t do anything about it.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: I know some things have to be mailed but there’s a lot of the, no offense, crap, that you guys send me in the mail that could have came in an email. Ha, I hate to say it that way, but I would rather have it e-mailed and save it on my computer than to have stacks of paper sitting around.

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: I’ve got to say this though. I’ve got five posts that will not do e-mail, period.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Yeh, and I’m not so much talking about the posts, I’m talking about the people in this room.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, let’s try and keep this thing on task.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Ok.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: It is Saturday, we want to get out of here.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Ok.
Finance Chairman Jarvis: Any other questions? The finance committee makes a motion to accept the 2020 budget as submitted.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: Second.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, the motions been made by Jim Jarvis, seconded by Bob Gibbons that the budget proposed by the finance committee be accepted. Is there any discussion?

D-20 Cmdr Mills: One comment. We included Quick Books in utilities?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: And Microsoft, that stuff’s all under….

D-20 Cmdr Mills: That wouldn’t fall under IT upgrades?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: No, upkeep. IT upgrades is what do you call it, software?

Dept Adj Diener: Hardware.

D-20 Cmdr Mills: So it’s got its own line item under software?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: That’s under upkeep and utilities, it’s a subscription that we pay.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Any further discussion? Somebody call for the question, call for the question? The motion’s been made and seconded. Discussion’s complete. All I in favor signify by saying aye, opposed? Carried. (all present voted in favor of approving the 2020 proposed budget.)

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Commander, next thing is the allocation of year-end money. We’re working with about $200,000. In the past what we’ve been doing the past couple years and it’s been to our benefit, is to pre-pay the 2020 membership savings out of this end of the year money, leaving us with $164,000. $10,000 we need to allocate into the Americanism budget, to cover the quadrant oratoricals now. The increase to Baseball scholarships and things. Those are going to be eventually worked into the budget where they’re a line item. But right now they’re funneled through Americanism. That’s what that $10,000 is. I met with the finance committee prior to this meeting and we want to make the change here, this $85,000 that we want to put to mortgage, we want to make that $100,000 towards mortgage. Which would decrease the bottom line going into savings by about $15,000. Now, this bottom line is a variable. We don’t have all our expenses, all our bills in yet. But it’s going to be close to that. So if we take the $15,000 away, we’re putting into savings about $54,000. But we’re putting $100,000 towards the mortgage and you’ll see that’s savings us well over $50,000 in interest. But that’s what the finance committee recommends.

So I make a motion, or the finance committee makes a motion that end of year allocation money be distributed as this, with the change that this is now $100,000 and this is about $54,000.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: Second.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Motion’s been made by the finance committee that we go with these changes and it has been seconded by Cmdr Defrehn, do we have any questions?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Let me show this one here, the mortgage one. You guys, and ladies, need to be pretty proud of yourselves. In nine months, you went from a 13-year mortgage, probably now with
the $15,000 extra, probably to about an 8.1 mortgage in just 9 months. And if we did nothing else after this time, if we did nothing else to the mortgage, I expect the mortgage to be somewhere in the neighborhood of $584,000 next year at the same time as this. And that’s if nothing’s done, besides this $100,000, so you need to be pretty damn proud of that.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Two questions?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Yes sir?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: If we put the $100,000 against the mortgage, which I’m totally in favor of.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Principal.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Against the principal, what will that drop our principal down to? Ball park figure.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: My figure is $695,000, just under $700,000. No, let’s add $15,000 to that, about $680,000, somewhere in that neighborhood.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Now, with us putting $100,000 against the principal, we’re not cutting ourselves short on money that we might need next year, are we?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: No, we’re comfortable with the $85,000 with no sweat and after I’ve been, the Adjutant and I have been playing with the numbers. When we made this decision at $85,000, we were in October. We’ve seen our October bills, we’ve seen our November bills, we’re not only putting, what did I say, $54,000 in savings? We’re actually putting $54,000 plus $37,000, so we won’t be…

Dept Adj Diener: The membership savings.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Membership savings, so we’re not actually, we won’t be at $300,000 but we’ll be pretty close and at the same time, we’re increasing that savings and we’re significantly decreasing the mortgage.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: How much do we have in savings, total?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: What’s $37,000 and $54,000, it will be slightly less than that because of the decrease in that. It’s going to be somewhere in the neighborhood of $275,000, $280,000.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: So whenever we (inaudible) the money that we’re going to put in, it’s going to bump it up over $300,000?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: No, no, that’s bumping it up.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, so we’re still, we’re still solid on that? On the finances?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Yeh, yeh. We have that money, we also have the money that’s being left in the checking account to get us through the lean months of January, February, March. I’m comfortable, the finance committee was comfortable with this and our goal, the finance committee’s long-range goal is to increase the savings and decrease the damn mortgage. And you guys, you’ve done a great job. I mean, we’re talking five years in less than seven months. And we won’t stop here, we’ve got more,
we’ve got more end of year monies, we go this and that, we get a windfall, we can throw it in there. We’re in good shape.

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: Call for the question.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Question. Any further discussion? All in favor of the proposal to, end of the year allocation money proposed by the finance committee, say aye? Opposed? Done. Thank you.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Ok, the next thing that we’re going to look at is, do they have the Rider budget? Ok, the Riders submitted their budget, they submitted it in a great timely manner, we didn’t have it in time to do it with the Sons in October but they got it a couple weeks after that. Their budget’s basically the same and they’ve allocated for their contribution, which they hadn’t in the past, to the Legacy Ride, for the Legacy Fund Scholarship. And the finance committee recommends or makes a motion that we accept The American Legion Riders budget as they submitted.

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: I second it.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: The motion’s been made we accept the Riders budget as submitted by Cmdr Jarvis and seconded by D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh. Do we have any discussion? No discussion, all in favor say aye, opposed? Carried.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Next one, the Americanism budget. That’s where with the end of year money we’re putting the $10,000 in and this is a hard budget to keep track of. Because we give out award scholarships and some are accepted, if a freshman gets an award, we have to wait until they get to college and we have to keep certain levels in there, but the Adjutant knows where it’s at. But this has been gone over by the finance committee. And the finance committee makes a motion that we accept the Americanism budget as printed.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: I second.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: The motion’s been made that we accept the Americanism budget as turned in by Cmdr Jarvis, it was seconded by Cmdr Defrehn, do we have any discussion? No discussion, all in favor say aye, opposed? Carried.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: The last one is a tough one. The Law Cadet budget was presented to the finance committee at our last finance meeting. Not enough time to play with it, once we talked about it, once we played with it, we had some questions. An e-mail went out from the Adjutant asking for answers to these questions. The e-mail they sent out was basically from the finance committee chairman and himself, as the finance officer. We got no response back as of yet on that one. This morning, as Chairman of the finance committee, I am still uncertain, and I’ve seen e-mails flying from both sides. I’m not convinced the committee, the legitimate committee, has looked at this proposal. There’s just too many questions in the air and this isn’t a budget that needs to be passed this moment. We need to figure out what’s going on and fix it. And we’re not going to recommend a Law Cadet budget at this DEC meeting.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: I’d like to make a motion to table the decision.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: I’ll second that one.
D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: Before we do that, can I ask another question?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: No. A motion has been to table by Cmdr Defrehn and seconded by Cmdr Jarvis. All in favor of tabling the Law Cadet budget until the next DEC meeting? Excuse me, that’s what you were talking about?

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: Yes sir.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Tabling it until the next DEC meeting on February 29th, signify by say aye, opposed? It was carried, one abstention by Commander Sinclair. Two nay votes, Commander Sinclair and Commander Rucker.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Thank you Commander, that’s all I have.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Thank you very much, I appreciate it. Membership report?

Mbrship Chairman Walton: Good morning. Ok, like the Commander said, we’re looking good in the fact that we as a state have reached that 76.19%. But, out of that we have 12 posts out there as of yesterday that have reached 100% of their membership. That being said, we still have 12 districts that have at least two or more of their posts that are less than 50%. Now, we’re getting ready in January to go after revitalizations. I’ve been working on the schedule, I’ve put it out to ten, because we’re doing ten districts this year and we will alternate and do the other ten next year. I’m talking 2021. And out of that, I sent to those ten districts to give me a place, date, to hold these. And through the efforts of our Cmdr and myself, needless to say, I’ve only gotten six responses from those ten districts. There again, we are trying to reach out and assist these posts with building this membership. Yeh, the numbers look good but a lot of the numbers that look good are from posts that are out there working it and sad to say, if you will look at that report, especially when you look at the Big Board report, you will notice that there again, a lot of these posts that are up there in the upper ten, they have over a thousand members in them. Where we’re having our problems is with our small posts. Now, we have several posts that we’ve heard nothing from, that there again, with the Cmdr and the Adjutant, we’re working to go out and see what we can do to (inaudible) and see if they want to actually want to keep their post going. So, that being said, you all have done a good job to this point. One of the biggest things that we’re proud of, we’re almost at 50% of our posts using the processing online Legion. And I hate to say, break the news to everybody, but I would dare say within three years, that is the only way membership will be done, is by mylegion. And those of us that are on mylegion and doing our processing, knows it’s a no-brainer. It’s the greatest thing since sliced bread. Other than that, like I said, let’s keep the motivation out there, if we don’t keep the numbers in, we don’t keep those finance numbers up either. So, yes sir.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: With my finance hat and my membership hat, we’re only, slightly over 70 posts of our 163 are on this processing, new processing system. That saves money. It saves money at the state level, post level and national level. We need to encourage those other posts to get on board. It’s great, no one has had an issue with it.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: Is there a point that we’re thinking about, when we’re going to look, we’ve done it before, at some of these posts that are at 10%, 20%, looking to combine them with another post in their area.

Membership Chairman Walton: Ok, that’s been discussed but there again, we are not going to kill them out of the water. We need to go out and find out what the problem is and a lot of times, there again, with Nick’s work and the Cmdr’s work, what we do is we contact all the members that are registered
there and find out whether or not they want to close that post or want to move. And if it’s just a matter of us going out there and giving them the tools and helping them, we can keep them alive. We’ve seen several posts in the last couple of years that were always showing up as zero account, but with a little bit of work from everybody involved, they’re up there now with big numbers. It’s just we got to get out there and (inaudible) with it.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: To that point, Post 47, we’ve had a conversation. Charlie tried to resolve this issue back before I took over. You and I spoke about it. Robin, you and I spoke about it. Has anything been done with those guys? Because we can’t contact them. I mean, and I’m still showing them with 16 members for them for 2020.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, and we’ve put this out and maybe you’ve missed it someplace. When we get down to the point of that we’re saying that we want to close a post, National has a checklist, a form, that we have to send into them, ok? One of the last steps in that is we have to be able to document that we have tried with the Cmdr and everybody else coming to a meeting. So, you know, if you have a post that’s hitting that, like post 47, ok? The last step in that is we’ve got to get, the District Cmdr has got to set up a meeting time and location with at least 30 days out. We will turn around and send a postcard to all the previous members of that post and have a meeting, ok? Even if nobody shows up at the meeting, if we don’t do that, when we send it to National, they will disapprove us closing the post and they will come back and say re-do it. You’ve got to remember; we don’t get to just decide to close a post.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Understood.

Dept Adj Diener: When we say close one and pull the charter, ok, it has to go to National and the NEC has to approve it.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: And not to get too far in the weeds on this one particular post, but was that not done?

Exec Dir May: No.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Charlie assured me that was done back at the first of the year.

Chairman Walton: No, it’s never been touched. I can assure you, because we’ve all been working on that one.

Dept Adj Diener: We asked him several times on that.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: I don’t want to throw him under the bus but.

Dept Adj Diener: And yes, there are several of the posts that were at that point, but I would also say another reason why that’s important, and it plays to your post. Several years the Cmdr and Cmdr Pouncy and myself went to Post 160.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Yeh.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, off of that same thing of we were going ready to close the post, ok? And two people showed up, one of them agreed to step up and be the Adjutant and Post 160 has hit 100% membership the last four years. So, you know, you need to take that step to work it because it can possibly save them.
NEC Strauss: Ware Shoals is another good example.

Dept Adj Diener: Ware Shoals, and some we’ve had to close.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Like Nick just said, National’s not going to let you close a post if there’s that membership. Like Mr. E. Roy Stone said, long years ago, the big posts need to help the little ones instead of going down there and trying to cut them off. Have you been to that post (inaudible)?

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: I can’t get in touch with anyone, I’ve tried for six months, I’ve called, I’ve mailed, I’ve went by. I’ve called the gentleman at work.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: You’ve got to go to his job.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: I’m not going to show up at a man’s job, I mean. We’re getting too far in the weeds now; I’ve got two more membership things. I got two transfers from hdqtrs posts; I got a call from post 13 last night. She said she’s received four and I think I know how this works. She’s had four people that’s transferred from 172 to Post 13. She said I’ve reached out to these people, they’ve shown no interest in joining my post, rejoining The American Legion. I said, unfortunately that’s kind of a two-edged sword. Those numbers were transferred to you in order to help you but if they shown no interest, you’re going to have to take a hit for 2020.

Dept Adj Diener: No, but when we send….

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: That’s the way I understood it.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: What went to that, did they get just the green form?

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: According to the Post Adjutant, she got four names from hdqtrs post 172, if I’m saying that Post 13.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: How, I’m asking you, how did she get those names, physically?

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: I didn’t ask that question. I took that to be something that you guys were sending to the post as you look at the numbers.

Dept Adj Diener: But if we did any of those transfers, that would be based off of a team calling, ok, calling and asking those people if they wanted to transfer, because we don’t just automatically transfer and secondly, all of those, if we transferred them in, should have been already paid for 2020.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: And the post still gets credit. And when a person comes into the post, my line with them is, you can be as involved as you want. They may just be a figurehead; they pay their dues and that’s all they want to do.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: But her point, and I don’t want to, we can take this up later but that’s fine.

Mbrship Chairman Walton: Bobby, you had a question?

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: I have an issue with Post 73 in Lake City. I have gone to a good bit of expense over the last two or three years, sending correspondence out to everybody. We did have a meeting, two showed up, one that has all the material, who was the Adjutant, and then the first vice. And their
comment was if nobody shows up, they weren’t going to show up again. The Cmdr, last Cmdr, has not paid his dues, at that time, for two years, and he resigned. Since then, the Adjutant has passed away. And so I sent a letter to the individual’s wife, for the Legion material, have not heard anything else. We’ve got a meeting with the Cmdr and Adjutant. I think Charlie was under the same impression I had, we had done everything we could do and we thought had everything under control but we didn’t realize we had to have the Cmdr and Adjutant in another meeting to make sure if anybody shows up. We’ve got two people that pay their dues. I assume they are PUFL’s, but anyhow, I’ve ended checking where they have their checking account and everything I could do but the last time I went to the bank, I had some checks to turn in, they said the signature on the account was no longer valid and the account has been closed. So I guess it’s going to be up to, I guess, the Department on what to do. There was some funds in the account the last time I checks.

NEC Strauss: That needs to put in writing and sent to the Committee to review.

Dept Adj Diener: Well, and again, it comes down to that last checklist is that we can document that we have sent the postcards, we’ve given them the notice and we go down. Because any remaining funds or even buildings or anything like that after we close the post, that all reverts back to us and we can make that happen. But that’s that last step that we need to make happen.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: The only thing is I have not been able to identify who closed the account and where the money is. And so I did talk with the first vice and he said the account has been closed. And that’s all I’ve been able to get.

Dept Adj Diener: Once we’ve gone through (inaudible) and the charter has been pulled, ok, we end up having a little more clout with the banks, ok, to get some of that information. But that’s why we’ve got to go through those steps.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: You also have to watch your wording. When he says we, that’s the Department. The Adjutant needs to be there, the chairman of the Membership needs to be there, so when he says we, he’s talking about himself.

D-9 Cmdr Sweet: I’m real confused about this whole issue because it was my understanding that you have to have fifteen members in order to maintain a charter.

Dept Mbrship Chairman Walton: Yes.

D-9 Cmdr Sweet: Ok, well, apparently this issue is fairly ubiquitous because I’ve had a post that’s had three members and they’ve had it for three or four years now. And we’ve done everything that we can to try and increase their membership, I’ve talked with them on the phone a number of times, and I got the membership committee involved when Robin Rucker was the Chairman, he talked to them. Stanley Webber talked to them; Darlene’s talked to them.

Dept Mbrship Chairman Walton: That’s why, there again, Doc, you need to go ahead and set up a time, get a place and let them know so we can go in and come out there and do the proper procedure.

Dept Adj Diener: The minimum of fifteen is per our constitution. To cancel a charter, ok, we’ve got to show National, we’ve got to go through their checklist, I think I’ve sent you that checklist before, but we’ve got to say, here’s everything that we have done and document all that before National will do it or National will kick it back and say go work harder on it before we’ll cancel the charter. That’s why that
last piece in that is us sending the postcard out, you setting up a meeting time and location, us sending the postcard out and then we have it all documented, and that’s the final step.

D-9 Cmdr Sweet: We’ve got the same problem the District 7 Cmdr’s got, we can’t get in touch with them. They don’t answer telephone calls.

NEC Strauss: Certified mail.

Dept Adj Diener: It doesn’t have to be at their post home. You can set it up at any place that you can get it set up.

D-9 Cmdr Sweet: Plus we’ve arranged with another post to take the ones that are remaining there.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Whoa, whoa, whoa, we’re beating a dead horse. Let’s just go ahead. Commander, if you feel you need a post to close, then we have a process that has to be followed, step by step. You can go out there and make all the phones and all the letters, but if you don’t follow that process, to put it bluntly, it ain’t going to happen.

Exec Dir May: Commander, may I please say something?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Absolutely.

Exec Dir May: Bobby, we talked with you, if you remember, all we’re waiting for you to do is to set up a place and time, we talked to the Commander, and we’ll send the postcards out for Post 73. I just sent 90 names to Post 201, we’re working on that one. They don’t want to close; they’ve already said they don’t want to close. Ok?

D-9 Cmdr Sweet: They don’t want to do anything.

Exec Cir May: Well, they’ve got 90 names and Pouncy’s actually talked with them and we’re working on that.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: We’re working on it.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, we’ve got that.

Dept Mbrship Chairman: Ok, I need one last thing on membership, if any of you need membership pins after the meeting, and the sweepstakes drawing, I will take and meet you and give you whatever extra pins you need. On the veterans…

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Hold on one second. Alright, I want to end this on a good note. As you know, a lot of you receive phone calls from me and I’m going to save myself some time right now, because I just got my list, and everybody’s got it right here. Commander Blankin, damn good job, 150 of where you were, not Blankin, Shaffer! I’m sorry, I was on the wrong line, I’m sorry. 150 ahead of where you were last year. That’s great! Wayne Southworth, he’s not here, he’s 127 ahead of where he was last this time last year. And Bones, good job at 112, that’s fantastic. People, keep plugging, we’ve got to keep this thing going.

HA/VB/VA Chairman Walton: Now, on VA. Tomorrow at Dorn at 2:00, they’re having their charity ride. Any of you and all of you are welcome, whether you ride a motorcycle or not. Also, I’ve got the
final word that Fort Jackson will be accepting anyone with a VA ID, that has service-connected disability can now use their facilities. One thing that I will caution you though, if you go for the first time, make sure you have that card. Also, that you have your registration and insurance on your vehicle and if you carry firearms, from what I understand, they will hold them for you at the gate. Also, another thing I got word on yesterday was anyone who is getting VA compensation, we’re getting a 1.6% increase at the end of this month. And if you want to know what those figures are, I did pull up that chart, so you can stop in and see what kind of Christmas money you can have. And as far as Dorn VA is concerned, like I said, there’s a lot of things going on out there, right now things are kind of quiet with the holidays because they’re more concerned about taking care of our vets that are in the hospital, if you get a chance, go by and say hello to some of those guys. Anybody have any questions?

Vice Cmdr Rucker: I have just have a comment. Also, your Tri-Care recipients, the closing date to change your insurance is the 9th so if you’ve got Tri-Care for life and you want to change your dental or your vision, you need to do that before the 9th.

Asst Sgt-at-Arms Joy: Everybody is aware that the new VA cards now, do have an expiration date on them.

HA/VB/VA Chairman Walton: Yes. Ok, sir, that’s it, thank you.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Thank you very much.

NEC Strauss: I’d just like to make a motion that we take the membership committee’s report, received and recorded.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: Second.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: A motion’s been made and seconded that the membership Committee’s report has been received and recorded, discussion?

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: Yes, those who are receiving some sort of disability compensation from the VA, and get treatment from the VA, of any kind, do not need to have other insurance because that VA coverage will cover the (inaudible) for having be insured.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, all in favor say aye, opposed? (The motion to accept the membership Committee’s report as received and recorded passed and so ordered). Ok, Adjutant?

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, the next thing on the agenda you’ll see, is the Rifle Raffle. And if you wonder why I’m up here instead of Darlene who’s the chairman, some of the events have kind of transcended and moved up above her and Commander Richardson and I have been tag-teaming it now, for lack of a better term. Here’s the situation, and I’m going to go a little into the past for those of ya’ll that may not be aware or need to be reminded of some of it.

When we set up the Rifle Raffle up for this year, everything was in place, we’d gone through FN Firearms, and gone through what they call their Pro-Shop, which was an outlet type thing at their plant. When we hit, did the first drawing and the first person went over to pick up their weapon on there that they had closed the shop. Which caused us to start scrambling. In short, they had problems with the person that was running it in there, they closed it up, we went through a lot of gyrations because there’s nobody at the plant that knew anything about what he’d been done, so we were dealing with corporate headquarters which was a nightmare, even getting somebody to talk to us. What we found out at time,
once we got hold of corporate headquarters, is the individual there had not ordered any of the weapons that we were supposed to be giving away, ok. Now, this was back in July, ok? The FN, those…a majority of those that were from FN themselves, weren’t a problem. Because they could get those in within 30 days or so, ok? The problem was the ones with Browning and Winchester. Even though they’re a subsidiary, they’re different factories and plants. But what they told us was that those weapons would be in in October. Well, we hit October, we notified the people, still did the drawings and everything else, and notified those that had the Browning’s and Winchesters, and then in October it turned into, oh, we still don’t have them, ok. And there two of the FN weapons, 30-06’s, that they didn’t have. So we’ve been fighting back and forth with them, trying to get corporate headquarters to even call us back, that’s been one of the biggest challenges on it. Finally reached the point back on the 31st of October, we had a conference call with their corporate rep, Commander Jarvis, Dept Commander Richardson, Darlene, were all on it, at that point they came back and said, and what we told them was look, just give us a refund for those weapons and we’ll go out and buy the weapons ourselves, because we can’t keep waiting. They needed to go check on that and make sure they could get approval and all, it took until yesterday afternoon, or yesterday morning before I finally got the guys from corporate headquarters to call me back. I mean, we were at the point where I’d already been contacting Stephen Lewis, our Judge Advocate to see what was going to be our next step to do. Alright, so that’s kind of the background of where we’re at. Because where that, or what’s gone on it, between the Browning, the Winchesters and the two FN weapons, ok, of the 52 weapons we’re giving out, that accounts for 20 of those weapons. And of those weapons, eight of them, we’ve already drawn and notified the people, so there’s eight people sitting out there that have been told that they’ve won a weapon could not pick it up. We’ve had a bunch of people picking up weapons but there’s eight of them that have been told that they couldn’t pick them up. And that’s basically unacceptable.

So where we stood with the conversation with Bucky Mills, I’ve got to be careful, I keep wanting to call him Bucky Dent for some reason, Bucky Mills from their corporate headquarters, finally got back hold of him yesterday afternoon, he has told me that they are going to give us a, that they’re in the process of cutting the check for $9,800 refund for the weapons. We paid $490 for each weapon, ok. They’re going to give us that refund and that that refund is on the way and we are looking at going out and purchasing those weapons. Commander Richardson has been doing the dealing with Palmetto State Armory (PSA). Commander, I’ll let you fill them in on what you’ve found on the weapons on that.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, I went to PSA yesterday and I talked to Bryan Burkett, and he’s the general manager, and I’d talked to him previously and given him a list of weapons that we needed, and he’s got, with the exception of six, and these are six shotguns, and he says all we need to do is bring them over there and they give them the weapons right then. Now, the six that they don’t have are not in production and PSA does not have them in one of their five stores. So, I asked him, what about a comparable, comparable, gun.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: Comparable.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Thank you very much, I stand corrected by Jim Defrehn (laughter), geez. But anyway, they’ve got a gun that’s just as good as the ones that we advertised we had. And what they’re waiting on right now is for us to bring somebody to get the guns, so the buns are there. And we’re ready to go.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: From the finance side, we have the money to do this. If you don’t realize how important the Rifle Raffle is, you can look at that line right below the red. And image is everything and I’m hoping that we haven’t damaged that image going into the next Rifle Raffle.
We have that money; I make a motion that we just go and do it and we’ll worry about their check when it gets here.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: I second it, credibility, if it can be salvaged needs to be started.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: It should have already been started.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: A motion’s been made and seconded that we go ahead and take the people that won the weapons and take them to PSA and buy them those weapons, it was made by Commander Jarvis and seconded by Commander Sinclair. Do we have any discussion? Commander Calcutt?

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Ok, I’ve got questions, basically that’s 23 draws to date, eight of them are problems, 30%. The problem that I’ve got, I don’t want to say personally, some of you know, a lot of you don’t, and I’m saying this to ask some questions, I had a guy from Post 160 that won a weapon on October the 1st. As of Wednesday of this week, he still doesn’t have the weapon. He came to the Department, he picked up the paperwork, he was sent to FN, Joe, I think was the guy’s name.

Dept Adj Diener: That’s not totally accurate, he was told to contact FN and he went instead.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Let me, let me get through this, he contacted Joe at FN. He went to meet Joe at FN, Joe was not there, Joe was at home with a contractor, oh, sir, I’m sorry, I forgot about you. I’m 70 years old, I’m retired, I got some time, but I wish I’d have been notified before, I wasted a trip to Columbia. Why don’t you just call me when you get the weapon. No, sir, you keep calling me until you get the weapon. We’ll have you come back and I promise we’ll take care of you. Well, we’re two months into this. The gentleman was never called back. I don’t know what conversations you guys have had since then but from October the 1st, no one has informed me. The first time I hear about this is through a 3rd party. Man, what the hell ya’ll do to Curtis? We sold these tickets, we bought these tickets in good faith, the man don’t have his weapon. Now, keep in mind where I come from, this was sold out of Post 160 in Effingham. Small, rural farm community, all these boys hunt and fish. I stop in the store, and get a cup of coffee, all I do is get beat up about the ticket. If a man spends money in good faith, he don’t have his weapon. Perception is reality, what is the perception at Post 160? The gentleman that bought this ticket was friends of a guy that’s friends of mine that sold 25 of the 140 that we sold. All I’ve heard for the last two months; I won’t never buy another damn ticket from you. Now, I’m dealing with this, I’m living this every day. Now, when you say FN’s the problem. Well, we’re FN’s customer, FN should have took better care of us. If FN didn’t know how to take better care of us, it’s our fault, because we didn’t hold their feet to the fire to take care of us. I spend spent 30 years dealing with contractors and developers and I made a good living at it because I kept my word. The customer isn’t always right, the customer’s always the customer. If we spend $25,000 up front with these people, there is no excuse they didn’t have these weapons ready for us. Why weren’t we following up until this problem arose?

Dept Adj Diener: First of all, we were, and Darlene, I don’t see her now, like a week before we did the first drawing, when we talked with them, everything was still ok. It was never mentioned to us…

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: But it wasn’t ok. And I like your comment about the JAG. If it wasn’t ok and they told us it was, I’m not a sue happy person, that’s breach of damn contract. And the reason I’m so mad about this, guys, I’m living this every day.

Dept Adj Diener: Do you realize the cost of us taking on a lawsuit with a corporation the size of FN?
D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: How big is FN? I’ve dealt with corporations like American Standard, Koehler, Delta, I promise you, a hell of a lot bigger than FN. And American Legion is 2.2 million strong, we don’t have to sue them.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Mike. Mike, Mike, you got a good thing going, stay to the point.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: The point being, we’re the customer, I’m not saying sue the guys. If they won’t pick up the phone and answer, send them a letter. We like to do mail and postage, send them a certified letter. If it don’t carry weight from the Department Adjutant, Department Commander, the DEC, send it from the JAG officer. Say huh, somebody’s upset, maybe I need to reply. Ducking the problem and hiding under a rock don’t cover this. Back to the issue, 30% of what we’ve drawn to date, I want to know where you’re successful with those numbers in baseball, one out of three? So what I’ve done for Curtis Nealey, couple of you know about it, it was offered that he would come back to PSA and get a comparable weapon, well, he’s past that point. I said no, Mr. Nealey, what you do is I’m going to get fair market retail value of this weapon, it was between $700 and $800. I understand we paid $495 for what we bought. So I said the only way I know to be fair is I’m going to write you a check for $750, I’ll meet you at your house, you come to my house, we’ll meet at a coffee shop, at your leisure. So Tuesday of this week I wrote him a check for $750, he said man, thank you, you’re a man of your word. I’m a happy, shouldn’t of went down this way, never buy another ticket again, I don’t mind giving you a couple bucks for The American Legion, but he is one of several hundred in that community of just a few thousand, that basically, I’m done. I can’t raise any more money on the Rifle Raffle, if I beg, plead, borrow and steal, they’re not going to be receptive to that. And I’m not blaming anybody in particular, no I’m not. And nothing I say is personal so please God don’t take it that way. I’m saying the procedure from start to finish was flawed. We should have done a better job. Use people (inaudible) their strengths and weaknesses. If you’re not understanding how this process should work, we need to put people in there that do. And if we say that we’re going to go spend this money, $490, $495 per weapon, is PSA going to sell them to us for that or do we have to pay the difference?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: They’re working on the prices right now.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Ok, in the event they don’t, who’s going to pick up the difference? The Department?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yes.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Ok, and that goes back to another issue with FN, you guys promised this, we paid you in good faith. You’re not delivering on your end, so we got to foot the expense for it? Why shouldn’t they foot the expense back to us? We should in no way go in the hole one this, we already got a black eye. We shouldn’t go in the hole financially.

Dept Adj Diener: And are you willing to go to a lawsuit?

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: That’s not my decision, this is the decision.

Dept Adj Diener: That’s the point where we’re at.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: What was Nick’s question to you?
D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: If I was willing to go to a lawsuit.

Dept Adj Diener: That’s the point that where we’re at in dealing with these guys.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: (Inaudible) I believe it, but I cannot believe it. And nothing can be said to make it all right, (inaudible) or nothing but you’ve already spent your money.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: I wrote a check out of Post 160 budget, with their blessing, and I told them if we can’t get it resolved, I’ll put it back in the Post 160 budget.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: We just heard a Sunday School lesson about, have you done all you can by (inaudible) calling the post? If somebody asks you that question, did we do all we could to make this right? The answer has to be no. With as much enthusiasm as (inaudible) the post. That’s the issue.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: When it comes down to it, when it comes down to it, I sold the ticket. I’m responsible for it.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: We are Not just you.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Well, I’m talking about right there in the crossroads of where I’m at, when they walk in and look at me, you sold Curtis that ticket, pal. I mean, that’s way I look at it.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: So, my question is was somebody from the Department in touch with these people all along or did we just call them one day and say, well, you’ll get your weapon when you get your weapon. Or have there been contact, so we know there have been, or it stopped at The American Legion.

Dept Adj Diener: We have contacted several.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: We’ve been contacting them since July and every time there’s a roadblock we’ve tried to get around that roadblock. The bottom line is we’ve got 52 weapons to get out, we’ve got to follow through as much as we possibly can without putting a knife in the back of FN, let’s get this through, and fix the ones that we’re missing. We’ve decided already to fix those, let’s get them going and get them in. The only thing I would have done differently than Mike, I would have waited until today and then paid him tomorrow if that were the case, but.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Well, personally I think somebody from the Department needs to make sure they talk to all these people, they’re happy, do the customer side of this, make sure The American Legion does not look as bad as we’re looking, at this point.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: One thing for absolute certain, Jim’s right, is we’ve got to get this thing fixed and we got to get it fixed right now. Bottom line is the most important thing is the integrity of The American Legion. That is paramount to anything else. And if we have to spend money to do it, then we have to spend the money. Our reputation for The American Legion, the integrity of The American Legion cannot be questioned. We have to do what is right.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: I think it would be good if you call the people. And say hey, we know there’s an issue, just want to…

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I got no problem with calling people, you know that.
Dept Adj Diener: At this next point, as long as this body gives the blessing, the call needs to be here’s how to come pick up your weapon.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: I’m just saying, again, from my customer background, call them and say, hey, you know, I’m the State Commander, I know there was an issue, we want to let you know we fixed it, something, something, something, you know.

Dept Adj Diener: I can’t deliver it to them because we got to do the background check.

D-13 Cmdr Wilson: At this point, has everything been taken care of for the weapons that have been drawn for?

D-Cmdr Lewis: No.

D-13 Cmdr Wilson: From this point on, we still got weapons we got to give out. Has anybody looked at from this point on or are we still going to have this problem next month?

Dept Adj Diener: No. What is going on is, of course, the FN weapons, the weapons that came from them are still good to go. All the ones from Browning and Winchester, FN is sending us a refund for all the rest of them all throughout the end of the raffle. So from this point on and this is what Cmdr Richardson checked with PSA on, any Browning and Winchesters and those two 30-06’s, we will go buy them.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: We got it covered.

D-13 Cmdr Wilson: Ok.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: Commander, I have a question. Does anyone from the Department call before whoever is going to issue the gun, before they notify the individual before their name has been drawn to make sure the weapon is going to be there?

Dept Adj Diener: The difference now, and you’ve got to remember how some of this went down. A week out from when we started the first drawing, Darlene was told everything was there, by FN. So initially, it wasn’t a gee is it there or is it not. Have we been doing that now on the others of making sure of is there a weapon there before we call them? Yeh. Because I know now what FN has on hand and what they don’t for all this problem and then as we work through PSA we will have all that information so we will make sure that the weapon’s there before we do the drawing because I know what weapon I’m going to need.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: And when they call, we notify them that, ok, hey, you’re a lucky winner, you’ve won this Browning, you come here, we’re going to take you to PSA to get it.

Dept Adj Diener: And those that are FN, we’ll take.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, the motion has been made, what was it?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: I made the motion that we pay this, get these weapons out asap and handle the refund when they send it back to us.
Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, and Tommy Sinclair seconded it. Is there any further discussion?

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: Nick did you just say we’re still dealing with FN?

Dept Adj Diener: I still have the other 32 weapons that we bought through FN and they’re there.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: We have no choice.

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: What are we doing to ensure those weapons are going to be delivered?

Dept Adj Diener: They’re already there. We’ve already checked it; they have those weapons over there.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: They’re there.

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: Ok.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, we do have one thing that needs to be brought up and that is the $750 for Post 160.

Dept Adj Diener: You have to take a vote on this first.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Oh, oh, thank you, thank you. Alright, we have a motion and it’s been seconded, all in favor say aye, opposed? Carried, spend it. Alright, next, we got to decide what we’re going to do with Post 160.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: I make a motion we give them the post their money back.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: Second. It’s pretty obvious.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Are we in discussion phase?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: We got a motion that we give Post 160 their money, we’ve got a second, and while I see and I agree with the motion, the rules state no cash prizes. But that is left up to the common sense of the DEC. Ok. Any discussion?

NEC Strauss: I’ll remind you that the bylaws say that all money motions need to go through the finance committee.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, very good, David?

D-20 Cmdr Mills: I understand that there should be no cash prizes. There was no choice with this Cmdr, it was something that they couldn’t get a hold of so they couldn’t make good on so that’s kind of a little bit different.

Dept Adj Diener: My feelings on this while I fully understand where Post 160 and Cmdr Calcutt were coming from on it and I understand his feelings on it. I know, in my e-mail correspondence to you, I asked you to wait until this meeting, that was just this week, so we’re about a matter of two or three days, I believe Cmdr Richardson asked you to wait and hear what we were working out for this meeting.
Your decision was not to wait and see what the DEC was going to do. I now have a problem, I guess we don’t go buy that weapon or whatever, but, let me finish, my problem is, if members of this body because they don’t want to wait to bring something to this body can go take an action, whether they’re right or wrong, ok and then we turn around and reimburse it or re-cover it, ok, what keeps anyone of the rest of ya’ll from doing a transaction on another issue?

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: This vote. That what prevents that, this vote.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: That’s what he’s saying.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Any further discussion?

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: We should stick with the bylaws, Mr. Commander. He went overboard, he was asked to wait, and he didn’t wait so it’s not the Departments loss, it’s his loss. And he didn’t listen. Now, if it was up to me and I did the same thing, it would be my loss because I didn’t wait so we can’t cover my loss. It’s not by listening. If the department advice was to say wait and I didn’t.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: I have no problem with what either one of you said, We had the conversation, you did both ask me to wait. Why didn’t I wait? Because for two months the Department didn’t do their job. The gentleman even asked if he could get cash in lieu of the weapon. He was told, I don’t know. He was never contacted.

Exec Dir May: Told by who?

Dept Adj Diener: Told by who, I don’t know?

Exec Dir May: He wasn’t told by me.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Ok, as far as the $750 goes, I could give a….I’ll eat that money. It’s doing the right thing. I’m not trying to circumvent anybody’s law. But you had two months to resolve this issue. You knew it was in issue, you stated you knew back in July there were issues. Nobody was proactive with it. So I got a few hundred bucks, if it cost me $750 to get out from under it, so be it.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: The only…this has been an issue and they’ve been working this issue constantly, since July. The real screw-up was you didn’t, we, those that knew, didn’t explain it to you or at least try to explain it to you back in July. But this issue has been worked on continually since then.

D-7 Calcutt: Well, thank you for that.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: In these smaller communities, if one individual has heartburn over something we do, it spreads like wildfire. And sometimes I think I would do the same thing to keep the fires under control because it could affect not only the next raffle but it could affect several raffles or anything that we try to do at the local post or at the Department level, so that’s my feelings on it.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, any discussion, we have a motion on the floor to reimburse Post 160 the $750 for the Rifle, for one that they gave to Mr. Nealey.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: Let me say one thing for the record, before the vote. Using his analogy, I’m glad you put the fire out my man.
Dept Adj Diener: Walt, you need to get something from the finance committee that they are in agreeance with this for the record.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: The finance committee is in agreeance and I did check with the other two.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, all in favor of reimbursing Post 160 say aye, opposed? Please note the motion carried with one nay, that would be Cmdr Defrehn. Ok.

Dept Adj Diener: We will have the issue of a 30-06 that we’re getting reimbursed for. Do we not buy that weapon?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Is that one of the ones that they don’t have?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes,

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Then let’s not buy it.

Dept Adj Diener: I need this body to say that, is what I’m saying.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I think the question has been brought that what are we going to do with the weapon that we get reimbursed for. And I think that we can turn that over to the finance committee and let them make the finance committee and let them make the prudent decision where the $490 can be best spent?

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: We could use it for another raffle?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: No.

Dept Adj Diener: Or we can use it to cover the $750, I just need them to say that.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Do we have a motion to let the finance committee decide?

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: I make a motion to let the finance committee decide what do with the money.

D-20 Cmdr Mills: Second.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, the motions been made and seconded we let the finance committee decide what to do with the $490. Everybody in favor say aye, opposed? Alright, Commander Price?

Vice Cmdr Price: Alright, I’m going to talk real quick about Ladies Fastpitch softball. Some of you have heard this going around, at this point this is not a program of the Department with this being a great additive to the Department. I certainly think so and I would hope you would also. As you know, we have boy’s baseball, that represents all of us as veterans, but we also have female veterans, but we have no ladies fastpitch softball. So I think this would be great for the Department, yes, down the road. But right now what I’m giving you is some information, and that’s all this is. And that is that girls deserve the same change to play American Legion as the boys do. Do I think it would build a sense of community through playing with local players? I do. It would be a flexible schedule; the season would run from June to July. How would it help us? I think it could possibly give us an increase
in membership, be it Legion, Auxiliary or Riders. I also think it would be a possible increase in funds to
the post that participated in this. So what I’m asking you to do is take this information, go back to your
posts, see if you can garner an interest in it. I know that the Adjutant’s been working with this, Bob
Scherer and a few people worked with this, Legree Oswald, he’s worked with this. But what we need is
we need the interest at the posts. We need the posts to go out there, find their ladies fastpitch ball games,
see if they’d be interested in working under the guidelines of The American Legion, establish their
teams and once we know that it’s established at the post level, then we at the State level can get a little
bit more involved with the support of that being a program. But we can’t do that unless the post has
done their part. We need the post to their due diligence in making this happen. This is a good thing for
The American Legion. It does happen in other states, it just has not became a program for our state at
this point. So if you have questions on it, please don’t hesitate to get with myself or the Adjutant, Bob
Scherer, we’d be glad to help you with that. Yes?

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: How many teams would be required to get started?

Vice Cmdr Price: Right now I think in upstate, we’ve got right at five teams that are ready to go. But
there has been really no set limit of teams that I know of. Have you heard anything about a set number
that we have to have? I don’t believe there’s a set number.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: Technically it’s a least six teams to start a (inaudible) of play.

Vice Cmdr Price: Right, and they’ve got five teams already so if we can get a couple posts to get the
interest, then we could make this happen. This would be a great thing, bringing in ladies fastpitch, I
think, will be a great thing I think, for our state. But we’ve got to, we’ve got to have the posts do their
part in getting it established first.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok. I need you to understand that this right here is for your information only.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: For post information?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yours and to spread it out to the posts to make sure, like Ron said, the posts
have got to get in on this and they’ve got to start building it from the ground level. We’re not going to
start at the top and work our way down. They’ve got to stop at the bottom and work their way up. Now,
I would like, and I’m going to surprise him, (inaudible). We’ve got an individual in here that is well
versed with ladies softball. Commander Strauss, would you give us an elevator speech on the benefits
of girl’s softball?

NEC Strauss: (Inaudible). As you know, I do have a daughter who plays college and I am in the circuit.
I’ve gone through travel ball and I think this is a great idea, Commander. I do have a couple questions.
When is the prospective start time, I mean, when will we begin play of softball?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: That will be determined…. 

NEC Strauss: If we get the minimum.

Vice Cmdr Price: If we get the teams, we could start this June.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I know I was talking to; I can’t remember who it was, I think it was either
Florence or Charleston, and they said they could get six teams, boom, right now. So I think, I think it’s
win, win, win situation.
NEC Strauss: I think there’s a big market for it, I really do. I think we could really do something in that. Because I know personally, I’ve probably spent $15,000 on college ball. Because if you go to a tournament that’s three days, that’s you and the family and for meals, for hotels, you’re spending it to travel to all different kind of states. And it’s a very expensive deal so you know. It’s a great thing, talk to travel ball teams, there’s a lot of travel ball teams out there, talk to them about, hey, The American Legion is going to pay for your insurance, The American Legion is going to pay for your entry fees, all you go to do is this, this and this.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: All you do is play.

NEC Strauss: That’s it. I mean, The American Legion is going to cover your uniforms, those are a huge expense, usually by the parents. The parents pay the cost of the uniforms and you don’t even get to keep them.

Vice Cmdr Price: But these are expenses that’s got to be borne by the post to get this started, ok. Because we haven’t got insurance, we haven’t got any of that stuff yet and all those things have to be incorporated at the post level first.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, thank you for that. Commander Poulos:

**Vice Cmdr Poulos:** While these are being passed out, let me give you a little bit of background. These two have already been passed by the National Executive Committee (NEC). So the National Organization has already changed these, this is just bringing our Constitution up to date with the National Organization. The first one is Article III, it’s the eligibility. There’s two different pages, the first one is Article III. You will get one page with two of them that will say Article III. This is what it is today, the second page of that is what we’re proposing to bring us up to the National level. The other one will be Article XV. And on Article XV you will have two pages. Once as it is today and one as the proposed that’s already passed, we just have to become compliant with National.

Alright, currently the eligibility for The American Legion was the member of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Cost Guard or Air Force of The United States assigned to active duty during any of the following periods, which were the old periods, which we all know, they’re all in here in dark letters.

All the dates being inclusive, or who, being a citizen of The United States at the time of his/her entry therein, served on active duty in the armed forces, then you can finish reading the rest of that. That’s what it has been and that is what it is in our constitution right now.

The proposed change is very short. The proposed change is:

“An individual is eligible for membership in the corporation (The American Legion) only if the individual –

1) Has served in the Armed forces of –
   A) The United States at any time during –
      (i) The period from April 6, 1917 through November 11, 1918 or
      (ii) any time after December 7, 1941; or
   B) a government associated with the United States during a period of time referred to in subclause (a) of this clause and was a citizen of the United States when the individual entered
that service and
2) Was honorable discharged or separated from that service or continues to serve honorable curing or after that period of time.

Explanation:

On July 30, 2019, President Donald J. Trump signs S. 504, the “Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service (Legion)” Act. This change to The American Legion Department of South Carolina’s will bring our Department in line with the new requirements as stated in the new line.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: Are there any changes that need to be done to this? You’ve got “the Let Everyone…” , does that need to be changed “to Let….”?

Dept Adj Diener: The wording that the committee put into this was the wording put into this is the wording that National used to change the National Constitution.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: I think he’s just talking about the word, “the” It’s just a typographical error, thank you Bobby. That’s why I stumbled on that, thank you.

Dept Adj Diener: What’s going on with this, just to make sure realizes it, the constitution and bylaws committee came up this amendment, putting it forward, ok. For it to go to our convention to vote on to make this actual change to the constitution, the first step is they have to bring it to this body and this body has to say we approve this going to the Dept Convention.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: And then it becomes us as sponsoring it because the committee cannot bring one.

NEC Strauss: Just for clarification, it approved it to come to the committee.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Do I have a motion to approve this?

D-6 Cmdr Simpson: I make a motion to approve.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Second.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, I have a motion by Commander Simpson and a second by Commander Lewis, any discussion?

D-13 Cmdr Wilson: They’re still leaving the period 1918 to 1941.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: Because there’s no one alive.

Dept Adj Diener: Nothing we can do about that; they got the other piece.

NEC Strauss: I can answer that. Because those are the dates that Congress has set. We’re a congressionally chartered organization.

D-13 Cmdr Wilson: You got times listed from 1917 to 1918.
NEC Strauss: That’s WWI.

D-13 Cmdr Wilson: That’s true, I mean, there’s no WWI veterans left.

NEC Strauss: Those are there because the Auxiliary still can be eligible for those dates for the Auxiliary.

D-13 Cmdr Wilson: (Inaudible).

Vice Cmdr Poulos: They originally were talking about making it from 1917, I know what you’re saying, all the way through until today. But they determined that there would be no persons left at that time. The Auxiliary, I don’t know, we don’t really, I mean, we govern that, but we don’t. All we’re doing is bringing it up to them, you have to take that up to Congress.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Call for the question. All in favor of moving this amendment to the convention say aye, opposed? Very good. (Motion to forward amendment to Article III, section 1. to the Dept Convention was approved and so ordered).

Vice Cmdr Poulos: Now, your second one is titled Article XV. The Subsidiaries and this is the Auxiliary. Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary is limited to mothers, daughters, sisters, granddaughters, great-granddaughters and grandmothers of all men and women who were in the armed forces of the United States during any of the following periods. And it’s the same periods as it was before.

And the proposed as it was at the National Convention was, the new proposed wording is: Membership in The American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to the mothers, daughters, sisters, spouses, granddaughters, great-granddaughters and grandmothers of members of The American Legion, and to the mothers, wives, daughters, sisters granddaughters, great-granddaughters and grandmothers of all men and women who were in the armed forces of the United States during any of the following periods and the periods are the same that just changed.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: I make a motion we accept it.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: Second.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: A motion’s been made and seconded that we accept this and move it on to the convention, do we have any discussion?

NEC Strauss: I just have a correction, I think she just misspoke, but it was approved at the Fall Meetings of the NEC, not the National Convention.

Vice Cmdr Poulos: And I just misspoke on that one, I apologize.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, anything else? All in favor say aye, opposed? Passed. (Motion to forward amendment to Article XV, section 2. to the Dept Convention was approved and so ordered). Commander Lewis, we need a very brief update on social media.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: It’s going well. I believe it’s going well, I’m getting some things from some posts, I’m not so much from my vice-commanders though, hint, hint. So please if you have anything, get it to
me, we can get it out. I know Mike’s doing a good job putting some stuff out, helping me. So we are going to try to start doing some video, Walter is calling them podcasts.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: What we’re looking at, is we’re looking at doing a ten-minute podcast and getting it out on, on…

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Social media, you tube, website.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: On social media and so far we’ve already interviewed Commander Mills, we’ve interviewed Alan Osborne for the Riders and we will be calling more people because we want to try to do is get one out approximately every one to two weeks, it will be about a ten minute interview. We tried to show you one this morning, but we couldn’t get no sound do it and we’ll put it out. I do know that Palmetto State Armory wants to do one with us, and the podcast, just to let you know, we’re trying to get this going.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Yeh, and you know, if your posts do something, we might could interview them, you know, just to let everybody in the state know what’s going on. And even some training videos, that’s a thought, that’s all I got.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Thank you very much, appreciate it. Adjutant Diener?

Vice Cmdr Rucker: Oh, Commander, I’ve got a question on the media, I’m sorry,

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Go ahead.

Dept Commander Richardson: Oh, I’m sorry

Vice Cmdr Rucker: The Connector, what’s the status on the Connector?

Dept Adj Diener: I’ll handle that as part of my update., I hope to get one out this month.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Yey.

Dept Adj Diener: The reason I say that, is, you know, the way we were getting the Connector out in the past was Maggie was coming in on the weekends and doing it. I couldn’t keep asking Maggie to come on weekends and do the Connector, I’ve been trying to educate myself on using Publisher to be able to do that and I’m hoping to have one back out this month. I’ve been working Rifle Raffle, all these other, Auxiliary and all that so I can’t tell you an exact date, but I will promise you it will be out before we close for Christmas. I won’t say how pretty it will be, but I’ll get it out. I’ve got just a couple of things, and I’ll try to make it short because the Oklahoma/Baylor game starts in five minutes, and that’s important to some of us.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Go Baylor.

Dept Adj Diener: First I want to give you the easy part first, couple of National Convention updates. We’ve got two things that are going to go on at National Convention. We just got some information on that we got some dollars on, I’ll be sending something out on this, for the Commander’s banquet and there’s a dinner cruise that will possibly go on. I’ll be sending it out to you, and you’ll need to get it out to some of your folks, because in the January, February timeframe, I’m going to have to pre-buy those tickets.
Exec Dir May: Early January.

Dept Adj Diener: Early January, ok, so ya’ll need to be thinking on it. The Commanders Banquet at National Convention, the price is going to be $51, why they came up with $51, I don’t know but they’re telling us it’s $51, ok? Again, I have to pre-order those tickets. Second part of it is, the Department of Montana is working up and is inviting the Dept of Nevada, South Carolina and Wyoming, they’re seeing up a dinner cruise on Saturday night, August 29th, a two-hour dinner cruise that they’re trying to set up. The cost is going to be $45 per person and it includes dinner, dancing, and dancing is with a live band and they have a cash bar. And they’ve got a bunch of other stuff, you can get a single rose with vase and photo for $20, but I won’t go through all those. But what’s going to have to happen, is again, I’ve got to lock in with the Department of Montana of anybody that’s wanting to go to that and I’m going to have send payment in on it, ok? So those of you all that are looking at going to National Convention, be looking for that as I send that out later this month and….

(Unidentified person asked if Nick knows how much the National Convention rooms are)

Dept Adj Diener: I didn’t bring all that in.

Exec Dir May: We covered that in the last meeting, it’s in your minutes.

Vice Cmdr Price: You’ll put that in the Connector as well?

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: On page eight.

D-3 Lewis: With pictures.

Dept Adj Diener: The next thing is a little harder, one of the things that I’ve been working on with our hotel, with the Marriott.

Exec Dir May: The rooms at National Convention are $127.00 plus tax. Which is $50 cheaper than this year.

Dept Adj Diener: $127.00 plus tax, by the way. Back on the other. Ok, I’ve been working with the Marriott on getting our contract set up for our Department Convention and Fall Conference. For 2021 and 2022. We already have our 2020 contracts; we did those last year. The 2021, and I’ve got to go through some parts here, the 2021 convention, and you have to remember, because of the way we had the contracts done as far as our main cost on those being the set-up fees and the food and beverage minimum that we have to meet, ok? And that really hasn’t changed much for the last three years, because of the contracts that we had. Coming up to the new contracts, so I expected some increase there. Well, they came in for the 2021 convention, without going through all the details, the total increase that they’re looking at is $1400. Ok, to our overall bill, and that’s $400 for set-up and an additional $1000 for food and beverage. I kind of expected it and I can tell you that last year we went to the Doubletree and the Marriott and I’ve got Doubletree’s figures from last year and those figures are still less than what Doubletree wants to charge us. So on that piece of it, because that one kind of needs to be, we need to get that locked in to have those dates, because they work that far out. And my, I guess what I’m asking for from you all, recommend that you all approve us going ahead and signing the contract just for the 2021 Department Convention.

D-6 Cmdr Simpson: I make a motion that the Executive Committee do that.
D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: The Adjutant does that.

D-6 Cmdr Simpson: I mean the Adjutant.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: I second that motion.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: The motion’s been made and seconded to give the adjutant the authority to sign the contract for the convention for 2021.

NEC Strauss: Was this discussed by the finance committee?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: No.

Dept Adj Diener: It’s not as part of the budget.

NEC Strauss: It’s new spending.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: Is there any reason why we’re just going through one?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: You need to hear what he’s got to say about the Fall one and the following ones, that’s why he’s going through one at a time. I don’t think this needs to go to the finance committee. I mean, I have been involved with the process.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: It’s in the budget, he’s just bringing this and keeping us informed.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: He’s just keeping us up to date on this.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, let’s go ahead and give a quick vote, all in favor, say aye, opposed? Sign the contract (The motion for the Department Adjutant to sign the contract for the 2021 Department Convention was passed and so ordered).

Dept Adj Diener: The next one is where it gets a little dicier and I guess I’m asking for some of ya’lls advice. They also came out with the new total proposal for the 2021 Fall Conference and this one, I’m not happy with them. They basically came out with an increase on us on that for $3100.00. That figure, the total figures that they’re wanting to charge us. Although that’s still about the same as what Doubletree would charge us, bottom line comes down to it, my opinion, in Fall Conference, we can’t afford to pay that.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Fall Conference is always traditionally are biggest loss type deal, if you want to look at it that way. We don’t have as many people, so we don’t have as much income, but yet the room cost, the set-up, the food costs don’t really vary, and we have lessor people. The problem he’s going to have is, we’ve got to get that date ironed in but before we say we want to do this, him and I need to talk to them, face to face. Want to get an explanation of why is the conference one going up as much as it is compared to the convention. But, taking that in mind, we know we can’t wait until the next DEC meeting to authorize this, so my recommendation is, him and I get with them, try to figure this one out and then do this one, the conference only, by e-mail.

Dept Adj Diener: Some of this is to inform you all because for the Fall Conference one, to me, we’ve got to get that increase, we expected some increase, but we’ve got to get it down at least under
$2,000.00 of increase on there. But once we get that, we’re not going to be able to wait until the next DEC meeting so we’ll probably be sending it out to you all for an e-mail vote but I wanted to bring it up now so that you all could know about it. You know, the bad part on all this is, if we can’t get the prices down someplace else, because we’re going to be hitting comparable anyplace else that we go, we may have to re-look at how we do Fall Conference, ok. Because Fall Conference, like Commander Jarvis said, we don’t have the income coming in. I don’t think we’re at the point where we want to raise registration fees a whole bunch to try and cover all this. So just informing you of that because it’s a problem.

D-20 Cmdr Mills: Why are we not attracting the, more people during the conference.

Dept Adj Diener: Historically, we’ve been going up. Got to remember, when we did Fall Conference or Winter Conference at the beach and the Convention at Greenville, when we changed it here to Columbia, our attendance jumped dramatically.

D-20 Cmdr Mills: Is that because it’s centrally located?

Dept Adj Diener: Because it’s centrally located, ok, so you know.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: And our problem is we really only have two options and they almost know it.

Dept Adj Diener: And that’s it. There are basically two hotels that can handle us here, ok, and that’s the Doubletree and the Marriott, as far as handling everything all in one location.

Vice Cmdr Price: Why don’t we use the Doubletree for the Fall Conference, this would at least put the Marriott on notice that we are looking around, if they’re that comfortable. It might be a good idea to use a different one.

(Unidentified Speaker) It could also bite you on the butt.

Dept Adj Diener: Yeh, it could also bite us if we go out, again, what we will look at, our plan is going back to talk with the Marriott, if I can’t get them down from that $3100.00, then I think we seriously need to go back to the Doubletree but I don’t think Doubletree is going to be much less so it still runs us a problem. But my point on it is, once we hit all those pieces, we’re going to have to hit something out to you all for a vote on that, ok. And then we’ll hit all those pieces but that’s what’s going to be coming out and why we’re doing that. I want to let you know so I don’t have to write a book in the email.

Second piece to it is now for both the Fall Conference and the Department Convention for 2022 and this one upset me even more. They came in and wanted to increase each one of those by an additional $2200.00, ok. That now puts us above that threshold.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: We got to get this first step and try to figure out this next year and see where that gels out and tackle both of them basically at the same time.

Dept Adj Diener: So the 2020, even though it would have been nice to get it locked in for out there, I think we may be looking at the possibility of looking for a different location.

D-13 Cmdr Wilson: Are we look at the money from room loss on some of this?

Dept Adj Diener: We still have a room minimum.
D-13 Cmdr Wilson: What is the minimum on rooms.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Room nights I think is 175 for the conference.

Exec Dir: We made our block at conference and convention.

D-13 Cmdr Wilson: We have to guarantee them?

Finance Chairman Jarvis: They take no loss; the loss is us.

Dept Adj Diener: The year before last we didn’t have enough rooms at the Fall conference, and we ended up making up the difference to them. So the blocks that we have as far as the rooms, I don’t have a problem with what they came back with us on, it’s just those increases. And I don’t have a problem with what they came back with on the set-up fees because we’ve modified some of ours needs too so there’s going to be some increase there. I’ve got big problems on what they’re changing on food and beverage, that’s adding a bunch. And I don’t how I feed all ya’ll that much. So both of those, we fight those but ya’ll also need to be aware, we take a little chance on it too.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: You’re babbling.

Dept Adj Diener: Commander Jarvis, I didn’t bother you. You’ve got to know, that we delay this, any of these hotels sign a contract with somebody else, we lose our dates. So we can’t push the can down the road for very long, ok?

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: Do you need a motion?

Dept Adj Diener: Not for the other pieces. The second part of it was an FYI.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I know that Clemson’s on the line, Oklahoma’s on the line, grab hold of your chairs, this is going to be fast. Alright, policies and procedures, we’ve got a manual coming out and you can expect here, probably somewhere around the middle of January is I’m going to be contacting people and asking them to help us to construct this policies and procedures manual. Now what we’ve got here is we went to the Constitution & Bylaws committee and we did it for them, because it’s what they do. Right there, boom, boom, boom, boom. Now, when we go over this in the DEC meeting, we can change it, we can change it, that’s all it is. It’s not hard, but the bottom line is you’ve got to have something to start with. Once we get these things started, we can make the changes as we go.

So be prepared, it’s coming, probably be somewhere around the middle of January, ok? I will tell you this much, Adjutant Diener has already volunteered to do the convention and the conference and then we will go from there. Alright, next thing is our Consolidated Post Report (CPR), and we got word yesterday, I think it was yesterday or the day before, that we got 6% of our posts have already started doing their CPR’s and they’re doing them online. We cannot end up being 44 out of 55 again, that’s just too, that’s just too damn embarrassing. So let’s keep working on that CPR and let’s go from there.

Alright, next, the Emergency Management Plan (EMP), I thought when the first of November rolled around that I could have met with these people and talked with them. Well, guess what, they said no, they wanted a vacation and I can understand that. They’ve been on a bubble ever since the first of June and so I asked them when and they said the first of the year and so that’s going to be another one we’re going to put off and we’re going to try and have one meeting before our next DEC meeting. What’s going to happen I’m going to send out a notice to the District Commanders and let them know that
anybody interested in the EMP can attend that meeting. I know that we’ve got people from Sumter, Peter St. Onge, he’s going to run the distribution center, Legree Oswald has said he will help us with the trucking and Dave Goodman down in Conway has said he will help us with the communications, so that is coming, that is coming. Ladies and Gentlemen, do we have anything else for the good of The American Legion? David, quick.

D-20 Cmdr Mills One thing, Commander back in September, there was a Gold Star event and I reached out to the DEC for the Gold Star event and the certificate of appreciation is awarded to the DEC, American Legion Department of SC. The SC Survivor Outreach Service Coordinators wish to express our sincere appreciation for your selfless support to the “2019 Gold Star Mothers and Families Day Event” Your support was instrumental in ensuring the success of this event. We are proud to recognize your ongoing efforts as we continue to honor the fallen service members and their surviving family members, signed LTC Marion A. Bulwinkle. Commander, I’d like to present….

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Hold Commander, hold on, hold on. (Photos were taken).

D-20 Cmdr Mills: I’ve got the other one, real quick. This is the same certificate to Anderson Post 14, I’d like to have the District 3 Commander come up to receive this. It is the same certificate; they did their own donation to it. But Commander, I’d like you to pass on our congratulations and thanks, so. Commander. (Photos were taken). I want to thank everybody for their involvement. The Gold Star Event is near and dear to my heart, I appreciate everything, the Vice Commanders as well. Thank you, Commander.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, couple things. Item number one, If you want to, we’re going to do the drawing for the Rifle Raffle, not the Rifle Raffle, the p right after this. And I’ve got closing remarks here, this won’t take me long at all.

1) Membership, up.

2) Finances, we’re Rock Solid.

3) Policies and Procedures Manual, we’ll think about it.

4) American Legion College, we’re getting that going.

5) Our EMP program, first of January we’re going to be having our first meeting and we’re going with that.

6) Our CPR’s hey, they’ve already started them, that’s good.

7) We’re going to meeting with the Columbia Fireflies on Tuesday to start working them.

8) We’ve already talked with Palmetto Boys State, (unidentified person said Palmetto State Armory), to, thank you, Palmetto State Armory, to get our Rifle Raffle going so we can run this thing every year.

9) And we’re going to find out exactly what a Purple Heart School District is.

Members of The American Legion, we’re on the right road, and we’re going. All we got to do is we got to be careful, we got to be careful. We cannot get satisfied. If we get satisfied for down home talking,
we’re screwed. We got to keep pushing, we got to keep getting these members in. We’ve got to keep being seen out in public. Please if a post in your District is doing anything, send those pictures to Bridget. She’ll get them on there. Last, I just want to let you know, we got a lot of confidence and a lot of this would not have been possible if it hadn’t had been for the four Vice Commanders. I cannot tell you one thing, one thing that I’ve asked them to do and done successfully. (Applause). Anything else?

Dept Cmdr Richardson called on Chaplain Mullinax for the Benediction, called for the Salute to Colors and closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

Nick I. Diener
Department Adjutant

ND/mm