



Department Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2022



The meeting of The Department Executive Committee meeting was held on January 8, 2022 at American Legion Department Headquarters, 103 Legion Plaza Rd, Columbia, SC 29210.

Dept Cmdr Ron Price	D-10 Cmdr Doug Dilleshaw
Dept Adjutant Nick Diener	D-11 Cmdr Jack Lonergan
NEC Michael Strauss	D-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis
Alt NEC Joe Lysaght	D-13 Cmdr-Rick Gibson
Imm PDC Walt Richardson	D-14 Cmdr Mike Brandt
Dept Historian Suzy Spurgeon	D-15 Cmdr Richard Dorman
Dept 1st Vice Cmdr Jim Jarvis	D-16 Cmdr Jim Defrehn
Dept 2 nd Vice Cmdr Jim Kvam	D-17 Cmdr Jerome Childs
Dept 3 rd Vice Cmdr Bruce Donegan	D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncey
D-1 Cmdr Darlene Walton	D-20 Cmdr David Mills
D-2 Cmdr John Coy	Dept Sgt-at-Arms Kevin Joy
D-3 Cmdr Kevin Brown	PDC Jim Hawk
D-4 Cmdr-Wayne Southworth	PDC John Britt
D-5 Cmdr Jack Smith	PDC Bob Scherer
D-6 Cmdr Tim Burnside	PNEC John Palmer
D-8 Cmdr Ed Courtney	PNVC James Holland
D-9 Cmdr John Comins	
Absent:	
4 th Vice Cmdr Jim Rabon	
Dept J/A Cody Mitchell	
Dept Asst J/A Stephen Lewis	
Dept Chaplain Richard Mullinax	
D-7 Cmdr Robin Rucker	
D-19 Cmdr Gerald Brown	

Also Present:

Dept C & Y Mbr: Russ Cantrell
M. May, Dept Exec. Dir
Kelly Griffeth, Dept Law Cadet Academy Director

Department Commander Ron Price opened the meeting and called on PDC Hawk for the invocation. Commander Price read Resolution 288, led the DEC in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble to the Constitution.

Dept Cmdr Price: Quite a good showing. I really appreciate all of ya'll being here on this bright, cold Saturday morning. It is our first DEC meeting of the year, hopefully we'll be able to get through it without any real issue and do some good business for The American Legion. At this time, I'm going to call on the Department Adjutant for the roll call.

Department Adjutant Diener called the roll and announced there was a quorum and added the non-elected members of the DEC present for the record.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, moving forward, I'd like to call for a motion to dispense with the reading of the previous Executive Committee meeting minutes.

D-20 Cmdr Mill: I make a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes.

D-4 Cmdr Southworth: I second that.

Dept Cmdr Price: I am going to ask you this and you know that we do this every time but it still needs to be said. If you're going to make a motion, second a motion or speak at all, please stand up, give us your name, your district and where you're from and continue with whatever motion or thing that you have to say, ok? Let's do that and we'll be good. **Ok, so we've got a motion and we've got a second to dispense with the minutes, all in favor, please say aye? All opposed, say no. (all present voted in favor of dispensing with the reading of the previous minutes)** Ok. Ok, moving onto the new business, I have the privilege and honor to introduce our new Law Cadet Director, Ms. Kelly Griffeth (applause).

LCA Director Griffeth: Well, first off, thank you everyone for being here and inviting me to come speak to you and allowing me to be the new Director for the Law Cadet Academy. This is something I am very excited about. First off, I'd like to tell you a little bit about me so you'll understand the goofiness of where I come from, ok. I am from Florida, so if any of you know about those Florida people, I came to South Carolina to try and wipe some of that off. No, I absolutely loved it, I was born in Gainesville and raised on the Gulf coast, right along the Suwanee River and Daddy always knew where his girls were at, depending on which boat was missing from the yard. If the bass boat was missing, we were on the Suwanee River, if the airboat was missing, we were out on the Gulf somewhere. So, out of high school, graduated from high school in that area, moved up, well, worked into the school system, went right into working in the school systems there, did 15 years working through the school system, substituting, teaching some. Ended up a school bus driver for the most part of it, I loved it, better than being in the classroom, all my problems were behind me. (laughter) And after that, I decided I needed a change so in 2000 I moved here to South Carolina. I began working for the Department of Homeland Security under a contract and worked all over the state in the federal buildings. Then along at that time I had joined the SC State Guard which is where I met Sheriff Lott, everybody familiar with the State Guard side of this? Ok. So Sheriff Lott just stayed on me, when are you going to come work for me, yeh, ok, whatever So finally, one day I said, I'm putting my application in, he said, ok. So I started six years ago with Sheriff Lott and he hired me to set up the new traffic court system, we were building a new traffic court system, building and courtrooms, and he said, you're going to set that up. Ok, never done that before but, sure, let's go. I did that and when into school resource officer, I love working with kid, absolutely love working with kids. More so the smaller ones because I feel tall (laughter), I do, enjoy working with the children. And what I did there, I had four years as a school resource officer, I went on the road for about a year and then the Sheriff moved me into the training division. Now, I teach all incoming deputies, I teach the legals department, any of their legals that they have to learn prior to going to the Academy, and firearms. So those are the two, my two main things that I teach. Now, I'm a wife, I'm married to state trooper, you know, one of these guys (laughter). I'm a mother, I have a son from a previous marriage and then I have two beautiful stepdaughters that are 14 and 15 about to drive me nuts, ok. I have two lovely grandsons that are baseball players and I'm telling you, this is exciting for me because one of them, yes, he's only 11, but one day I want to see him playing baseball out there at the stadium, what is it?

Dept Adj Diener: Segra.

LCA Director Griffeth: Yes, Segra stadium, I want to see him playing with ya'll one day there. So I am still in the State Guard, I am a 1st Lieutenant in the military academy and teaching and helping all of those that are coming in adjust to the SC State Guard ways. I say all that to let you know my background as to my love for teaching, my love for building of programs and working with people. I obviously don't have a problem standing up in front of anybody and talking, I can do that all day long. So now, let's get the meat and potatoes, Law Academy, I would love to have 60 cadets this year, that's my goal is to have 60 cadets join the Law Academy. Now, I've been doing my math and if it works out, we should if every post would make it their goal to sponsor at least three, we could meet the goal of 60 cadets, every District, I'm sorry, every District sponsor three. I would like at least 60 to join, minimum of 60, 65 is the limit. In talking with the SC Criminal Justice Academy, they can only house 65, its very tight on the amount of students they can house. Again, I would love 60, but if we can get 65 I am over the moon excited about that. The dates, let me give you the dates, these have been confirmed, they are June 18th through the 24th. Now, the exact schedule for each one of those dates has not been set up yet, I mean, we're working on it, I don't have a finalized schedule at this point but as soon as we do, we can push that out. We are looking for counselors, I would like to have a counselor for every three students, so if you know of anyone that would like to assist us in being counselors, mentor to these students while they are at the cadet academy, please reach out and let me know. I put them somewhere, oh, they're right here I've got some of my cards, it's got my phone number on it. It still says school resource officer, I haven't updated them but I will set these here. If you reach out to me, please let me know where you're texting or calling from, that way I can write it down. Any questions for me?

D-16 Defrehn: What's the cost?

Dept Adj Diener? It hasn't changed, still \$250.00

LCA Director Griffeth: The cost hasn't changed, we are looking to keep things at that amount, I really don't want to make it any harder on the Districts, so reach out, if these kids are anywhere near interested in fire, DNR, Law Enforcement, any side, EMS, talk to them, it will be a fun academy.

Dept Historian Spurgeon: Do you have a deadline of when you'd like to have the counselors by?

LCA Director Griffeth: I would like to have a meeting with all the counselors next month. So if you know of anyone, please reach out to them immediately. I do want to have a meeting mid next month, February, with all them laying out what we're looking for in the counselors, what we need for them.

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: What did you say the cost was?

LCA Director Griffeth: \$200.00

Dept Adj Diener: \$250.00

LCA Director Griffeth: Oh, I'm sorry, \$250.00, you said \$200.00.

Dept Adj Diener: \$250.00.

LCA Director: \$250.00, my bad.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: He started it. (laughter). About the cost, counselors, what kind of money can they be expected to pay? Zero? Ok, can you put out a list of responsibilities, what are they going to do, are they just going to follow the kids around?

LCA Director Griffeth: If they are interested, I would like them to come meet with me and then we'll go over the responsibilities at that point in time, is that feasible for you? Basically it will be a mentorship, you'll be in charge of those, that group of students and if they have questions, they have issues, you'll want to talk to them, encourage them, see how they're doing, do they have any downfalls, are they short in anything, are they needing some assistance, if they are, then that counselor would be able to reach out to one of the law or the teachers, educators, however we want to list that and say, hey, this person needs help on the DNR side so I'm going to a DNR guy and say, hey, I've got a student here that needs some help, can you go talk with them.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: What kind of background would you like for the counselors to have?

LCA Director Griffeth: I would like them to like kids (laughter). I'm going to tell you, I have seen school resource officers that don't like kids and I'm like what are you doing in this job? I would like them to have obviously, a clean background, I want them to have a heart for kids, compassion, being able to motivate, the ability to motivate students.

Dept Adj Diener: Law Enforcement would be nice, too.

LCA Director Griffeth: I would be but, I don't see that we'll, you know, we may not be able to get all of them law enforcement.

Dept Cmdr Price: When you're looking at someone that wants to be a counselor, think about that individual, would you leave your kid with that individual.

NEC Strauss: I would just say too, I have been a counselor in the past, the counselors are expected to stay from the start to the finish, you want a high quality person and what you bring back to your District meetings, ask them if they're willing to sponsor a lunch, sponsor a dinner, that will help reduce the cost this year, right now the cost of everything is up so we're trying not to raise the cost of the program so if you can go back and talk with your people, you're talking about 85 to 90 people that you're sponsoring a lunch or a dinner or a breakfast for, talk with Nick and we can set something up where either you can pay or you can cook, one of the two things. Somebody in Chesterfield might be able to cook because they're up in Chesterfield but somebody locally might be able to (inaudible) so get Nick on the actual cost of it.

LCA Director Griffeth: So, Mr Strauss, you are saying that you would like to be a counselor again?

NEC Strauss: I have been a counselor in the past?

LCA Director Griffeth: So you would like to be counselor again? I've looked at my sheet and your name's not on here.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: Jim Defrehn, don't volunteer, please (laughter).

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: I can't, it's a parole violation (laughter).

Dept Exec May: Kelly, can I just add, when they sent the applications in, please don't send them until they're complete, that's the biggest problem we have here at headquarters, there's things, the health forms aren't finished or the drivers license isn't on there so that it takes time for us to have to go back. Send all the money and the complete application no later than May 1st.

LCA Director Griffeth: The application is on the website, it is completed and it's set up and ready for you just to print out so go the American Legion website of SC and the application is there. I am new at this, this is my first rodeo on this, but believe me, I can ride so.

Dept Cmdr Price: There's no doubt in my mind that you can ride so thank you very much. (applause). If you'd like to slip out you can, it's going to be awhile.

LCA Director Griffeth: I'll hang out for awhile.

Dept Cmdr Price: First off, I will say, we are very, very fortunate to have Kelly step up the plate, you've heard about all of her background, she's been in schools, she's been in training for years. So I have no doubt that handling the Law Cadet program will go very smooth for her, and I do appreciate it. Next, I'd like to go over the membership report, Vice Cmdr Jarvis?

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I've been playing with the numbers and trying to look at this membership wise and I'm going to look at this personally by saying that we need to salvage, how I'm looking at this needing to salvage the membership year. Let me throw some numbers out at you, you're getting the report that was printed out on Thursday, we kind of color coded it to kind of give you an idea, we have a district that's doing really good percentage wise but when you turn around and you look at it and you'll see that one post is carrying that district. So I wanted you to see the yellow, the ones that are on the borderline, and the red, the ones that we need to be extremely concerned about, but that's what the color code is on that. Our goal is, does anybody know what our goal is for this year? 20,500, we ended it at 20,277 last year. I want to show you what I'm looking at and why I think we've got problems here. I'm comparing where we are now to where we were this time last year, we're really doing good on new members, we're actually up on new members by 368. Where we're falling on our swords, that's what we would say in the navy, is we're about 1150 behind on renewals from last year, that's catastrophic. We all know, lets say you have a post of 100, and you have a 90% renewal rate, now all you've got to do is go out and find 10 people. But if you have a 75% renewal rate, now you have to find 25 people and we all know how hard that is. And overall, we're 672 away from, correction on that, just got a new report, we are 231 according to National, from the 80% goal and that's, we got 12 days to make up those 231 people. We have at this point, nine of 20 districts have made 80%, which is the next goal. At this time, last year, we had 16 on target. We have 20 posts right now that made 100%, last year we had 36. Last year at this point we had 12 Districts above 85%, we don't have any above 85% right now. And we had one District above 100% at this point and we don't have any at that. Where we need to focus is the renewals, I've always said it's renewals # 1, new members # 2 and then we fill in the spots with DMS and 172. You've got to be careful with DMS because if you take all those DMS, we have DMS because they live and they're going to die by DMS, you got to get them to renew. National says 70 % if you get them involved. I don't believe that, it's closer to 45%, that will really hurt your renewal rate. Once you start it, you've got to keep it up, you got to keep the renewals, and that's where we're falling behind right now. And it's not because of the DMS from last year, those numbers play into that, right now we got a renewal rate of about 75%, National Commander's put a challenge out of 90% and that's what we got to work. We need to work the renewals, and you can look at your sheets there and you'll see the red, those are the ones that we need to help the most and the yellow are right there on the edge. Now, we have, I think we have nine posts at 80%, correction, nine districts at 80%, but we've got four or five right there,

right on the edge, and they've got 12 days to move that on over so can get in there at least to the 80% margin. We are not going to salvage the year, we are not going to get to 20,500, which is 4124 members away, we're not going to get there without this room, everyone in this room, me included, getting us there, it's going to take that. I have a meeting on Wednesday with the membership team, and some of you are on that in this room, but I have a meeting with the membership team. They can't do it alone and you can't do it alone. If you don't know who your membership person is for your district, you need to talk with me asap after this meeting because it's going to take both of you working it. Now, I've also talked to a couple of people prior to this, I've asked Commander Walton to help me on this, our intent is to get into as many District meetings between now and the end of April as we can with our membership hat on. Now, where I really need your help is that's (inaudible), I need to get one of us, Darlene or myself, into the red posts and I need your help to do that. You're the one that's got to get them to get us in there. We don't have the time to play around with that, so I'd like to get into as many red posts as possible. We have to make this work, between in there and the membership team, we should be able to do this, this is doable. But we're running out of time and you all know that is the down period but we got to make it an up period and we need to get into April in pretty good shape. Yes, we go the end of June but we need to get up there in the mid 90's by the end of April, May time frame. Anybody have any questions on that? Does everybody understand on that? Right now, we're way behind and we need to bring it forward and we've got get people in there. 20,500 is doable but it's only doable if we make it happen.

Dept Cmdr Price: You heard him talk about the membership report, you heard him talk about membership. As District Commander, I want you to look at those reds that are in your district, not look at that bottom that says, oh, I'm at 75% district wide or I'm at 85% district wide, I want you to look at the red, what can you do to fix that red, that's what we need to concentrate on so I really do appreciate your support in making that happen. So at this time I want to go over the finance report so Adjutant's gong to go over that.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, The Finance Chairman couldn't be here today so you're stuck with me on this, I'm not going to go over all the details on it. This is the, what you're seeing is the financial statement for November, we don't have Decembers, you know, all the bank statements and everything in yet to be able to finalize the end of the year, overall in a nutshell, that's some of it when you look at the bottom line, when you look at the very last page, we are a \$115,000 ahead for the year, which we budgeted to try and be \$82,000,00 but we're \$115,000.00 ahead. There's really not a lot that stands out in the report as far as anything to go on except the very first line, you see that net income for membership, ok, and it is, that number is down and that is because our renewals are down so, you know, that membership does have an effect on the financial statements, ok. But for most of the things we're setting good, one of the things that is not, one figure that is not reflect in here when you look at is the Fall Conference. We haven't believe it or not, we can't get a bill in yet from the hotel for what our Fall Conference is.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: Why?

Dept Adj Diener: We're asking and asking and we haven't got it yet. We're not happy with hotel on that, it's not a normal thing that you have to worry about. Those figures, when you take that, that's probably another \$15,000,00 of expenses that aren't in here yet, ok. But other than that, we're looking good, subject to any of your questions on it.

Imm PDC Richardson: What is the forecast from the Finance Committee on paying off the mortgage.

Dept Adj Diener: Right now, with where we sit right now, if we did nothing, if we just make the regular monthly payments, we've got five years, we will have it paid off in five years, ok. I know the finance committee is looking at, you know, with some of this surplus that we're going to have with what they want to do with that and whether they want to put any of that against the mortgage and that is still up in the air for discussion with finance committee. I still think they're basically trying to wait and what the end of the year figures end up being, ok. Because, again, that \$115,000.00 that we're showing right now, we need to do something with it, it doesn't need to be sitting in a bank account drawing zero interest, so that is being looked at.

Imm PDC Richardson: So what you're telling me is that we have \$115,000.00 extra.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: Almost.

Dept Adj Diener: Almost, for this year.

Imm PDC Richardson: Almost, for this year.

Dept Cmdr Price: We've got the hotel bill.

Dept Adj Diener: Yes, we've got to get the hotel bill and hit some other things. And this is just for everybody's information, what I always do with the finance committee at the end of every year, we sit and look at what is actually in the checking account for the General Fund, what have we got in savings, what have we got in the General Fund, and how much do we need to leave in there as a working balance, ok, to get us through until the new membership starts coming in because the first part of the year is always a little bit slow. And whatever that difference is, that's what we look at with the finance committee of what are we going to do with that money, either put it into savings or like right now, the normal would be of that \$115,000.00, you know, does some have to go into savings for membership so it all has to be looked at. But we look at the actual amount of money that I have in the checking account.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I think his real answer that in reality, knowing the numbers and everything, we're actually talking, Walt, probably three to four years, closer to three years, of paying off the mortgage. If we didn't do anything but pay the mortgage, it's five years but I think with what we do (inaudible) over the next two to three years, we can do this in three years, or close to three years.

Dept Adj Diener: Yeh, and I would concur on that, I mean, we've got, you know, I don't want to steal too much of the finance committee's thunder or they might not fully agree with me on it but, you know, we have \$309,000.00 sitting in the savings account, that's the emergency fund, which a few years ago, we didn't have anything in there. So we've got that built up, I think that's at a good level for us to have and if continue, you know, over the next couple years, like what we have these last couple of years, I think Commander Jarvis is very correct, I think that mortgage could be paid off in two to three years, if we dedicated the money to it and that would be a, that's a biggie, ok. Because now you're talking, all of a sudden, we get that paid off, and you've freed up a hundred thousand dollars a year for us to do something with.

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: The rental income, at previous meetings there was some discussion on one of the tenants having some issues, has that all been resolved?

Dept Adj Diener: No, it's not fully resolved, the finance committee and myself, what we did with them, was we left, because they were going to have a rent increase, is what we put in the contract. We gave

them, we left it at three months, for the next three months to leave it at what it is and then we would reevaluate it for them. And they promptly brought up the rent payment. Any other questions? While I'm up here, if there's nothing that has to be approved, we can do the budgets, that's the next thing on the agenda.

One of the items, this was just what we were discussing in case you wanted...at the last finance meeting, there was, the finance committee, knowing with all the problems with tornadoes and everything that they had up in Kentucky, one of the discussions was do we want to send any money to help them. The finance committee said rather than just trying to send something to Kentucky, why don't we give it to the NEF so that's the money that's available to send so not only is available to help Kentucky, there was some problems in Alabama, they have a whole system set up to be able to help posts and Legionnaires. And what the finance committee voted and what they would like the DEC to approve is they want to do an additional donation to NEF of \$3,000.00 from the Department of South Carolina to go out and help them replenish the NEF fund for being able to help these folks.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I make a motion that we do what the finance committee said and allocate \$3,000.00 to the NEF fund.

Vice Cmdr Kvam: I second that motion.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, we've got a motion and a second, all in favor say aye? Any discussion?

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: Any way possible to increase that amount? Because there's going to be a lot of trouble going on.

NEC Strauss: That has to go back to finance.

Dept Cmdr Price: That would have to back to finance for their discussion. Right now we've got a motion to approve their recommendation and we've got a second on that.

Dept Adj Diener: Can I add, there's nothing that doesn't say at a later date that we can't decide to do some more money. That's just \$3,000.00 now.

NEC Strauss: When would we make the payment, would it be at the National Convention or now?

Dept Adj Diener: Right away.

Imm PDC Richardson: Is there any way when we make this payment to the NEF that we can earmark it to go to Kentucky?

Dept Adj Diener: In the letter when we send, we can say something about it. Because at the same time those tornadoes went through, there were other states that got hit as well and NEF is out there helping those states too.

NEC Strauss: You've got Missouri and Tennessee and the Colorado wildfires.

Dept Cmdr Price: Any further discussion, questions? Ok, at this time, I'm going to call for a vote. So, all in favor say aye? All opposed say no?

Imm PDC Richardson: No.

Dept Cmdr Price: One no, move forward.

Dept Adj Diener: Alright, the next thing that ya'll have in front of you, we have four budgets that we have to get approved. What I want to do is kind of quickly go through each one of them and then we'll take a vote at the end on them. These are the other budgets that have to do every year. The first one is the proposed budget for the SAL, the reason is why it's just marked out at the top from 2021 to 2022 is because their budget is exactly the same is what they have submitted and asked for so they just marked out the top. This is right along the lines of what we do every year with them, they're expenses are all cut and dry. These were all sent out to you, by the way, ahead of time.

Alt NEC Lysaght: Did they match all the numbers, including the anticipated income?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes.

Alt NEC Lysaght: Ok.

Dept Adj Diener: The second budget that's in the packet is the proposed Law Academy budget. They're still looking at doing it off of 60 cadets, ok, and the question came up before on those. In the time that I've been here, there's been only one time that we've got more than 60 cadets.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: On the budget it's calling for 55 cadets.

Dept Adj Diener: You're exactly correct, I didn't change a line there.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: Thank you. Ya'll behave yourself out there.

Dept Adj Diener: One of the things that you'll notice on this budget, and you'll see when it gets down to the bottom when it says a net income of a -\$457.00. One of the things with the amount of the turmoil that's gone on is the amount of the donations that we have coming in, ok. And the ones that we listed on here are the ones that have a firm commitment on. We expect the number of donations is going to go up, we just don't have firm one on that. As an example, the President of the SC Sheriff's Association who happens to be my son-in-law, has said if we will send a letter to all the Sheriffs, that when they have the next Sheriff's Association meeting, that he will challenge all of them to match what his Department is going to donate. So that should help us with us some of those things. So we anticipate more donations coming in than what we show here but we only wanted to put down what was firm right now.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: On that ammunition you've only got \$1,200.00, is that based on last year or whatever because I know that ammunition has gone up.

Dept Adj Diener: That is an increase, the last time we did Law Cadet, we only had like \$500.00 in there for ammunition, ok. So that is significantly increased, we also bumped up the fuel cost to match what we anticipate as an increase. Ok, any other questions on that one? Ok, next one is the Legion Riders. Again, this is fairly consistent with what they have done in the past, the only real change is on the projected expenses for the Legacy Fund contribution, they want to donate a little bit more of their fund balance to go into that. I think the last time they did it, they did \$5,000.00, this time they've upped it to \$11,000.00 but they have the money to be able to do that, it still leaves them money to work with. Alright, any questions on the Riders budget?

Alt NEC Lysaght: Did they not have any money at the beginning of the year?

Dept Adj Diener: They had \$12,999.88 in the bank.

Alt NEC Lysaght: The first two columns are blank.

Dept Adj Diener: Because that's projected income and project expense but the balance was over.

Alt NEC Lysaght: (inaudible) What did they have in the bank?

Dept Adj Diener: The beginning balance was \$12,999.88.

Alt NEC Lysaght: Ok, because it just said projected.

Dept Adj Diener: Yeh, ok, that probably should just say balance but, ok. Last budget that you have there is the Americanism budget, that looks a little different to you than what we've put out in the past, in prior years when we did the Americanism budget we lumped everything together and it was just one line, ok, or one group of lines so you couldn't tell what was baseball and what was oratorical. When we did it this year, we broke each of out so you can see exactly what's going into each program. The total of course is over there on the right hand side. Like I say, in the past, that's what you all ever used to see is what was on the right hand side but it shows a little different picture on where the money's going on in the different programs. One, probably the biggest change on this overall budget, of course, we added some of the fastpitch softball in, as you can see, they have projected income expected to cover all their expenses. But the biggest change is in baseball and if you go about midway down on their expenses, it says SCALB website. They are wanting to create a statewide website that will be an interactive website, some of the Departments have been using it, but that's where the teams can go in and do their pitch counts that have to be updated, they can get scores out there, it's a pretty robust website that they're looking at doing. But like anything else like that, it something that cost money to do and it cost money to do a robust website. But again, with the funding that we, you know, that we know that we help kick in at the end of the year, it leaves them overall enough. I think it's interesting when you look at this budget it shows the picture it shows is that the biggest expense that they have is oratorical and oratorical is one where they is no income coming in. So in effect, you know, with the money they have coming in, have been covering other things. It's been that way for a number of years and will continue to be that way. But we think this is a very realistic budget to be able to match up what they're doing.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: I'm just curious why we're paying for insurance and hats for the committee for baseball but not for softball and paying for scholarships for baseball but not for softball. With everything that's going on with the NCAA, (inaudible) women's tournaments not being treated the same as the men's tournaments and the lawsuits, shouldn't we be equal with our baseball and our softball program?

Dept Adj Diener: And as the softball programs develops to where we can start looking at giving scholarships then that's something to be added but this will be the first year of the softball, ok. Same way as they start getting their committeemen, don't know, I'm sure that's something that will eventually get added into their budget but we're not there yet to be able to consider any of those items. The baseball ones, those scholarships have been going, and I don't know if ya'll remember but it's been an off line request to get a new shirt for the committeeman as they go around and we finally go them to put that into the budget this year so we didn't have to back and re-ask. But the fastpitch softball, I'm sure, if

I was standing here next year at this time, those figures are going to look a lot different as it starts to grow. But right now it's not big enough to warrant those things yet. Ok, any other questions?

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I make a motion that we accept all four budgets.

Vice Cmdr Kvam: I second that motion.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, we've got a motion and a second to accept all four budgets as read. Any discussion on this, any questions? No discussion, no questions, I call for a vote. All in favor of accepting all four budgets as is, please indicate by saying aye? All opposed, please indicate by saying nay? So forward.

Dept Adj Diener: That's all I have, thank you.

Dept Cmdr Price: Appreciate it. The other thing I forgot to do a few minutes ago was some of you have them, I believe, that indicate how you're doing district wise in membership, and I will say, Commander Dorman, congratulations, you're leading the pack, ya'll have been leading the pack for a little while. I understand now, that Jim Defrehn is back, that may change, (laughter), so stay on your toes. Between him and Rick Gibson, they're going to be after it, so congratulations. (applause). At this time, I'd like to bring up PDC Hawk to discuss Constitution & Bylaws.

PDC Hawk: Thank you, Commander, once again, good morning. Everybody's received copies of this right? The email and we've got some being passed out, I understand. There's seven of them, the Constitution & Bylaws committee met to bring forth as required to the DEC, this is what we have received. I know there are others coming in, this is what we've been reported as of this date and time. As they're being passed out, we've met two times, once in August and in the Fall in December to go over these. And we're going to take them individually, except one group, and I'll explain that group. We'll take each one individually and vote up or down on that one to go forth, ok? Has everybody got a copy now? Ok. So, preliminaries should have been done already when you got the email from the Department Adjutant. The "P", down at the bottom, where it says amendment #, don't panic, that's proposed # 1. If you approve it, then the "P" will be gone, there was confusion last year and the year before on what the "P" is, so we're going to get that out of the way, ok? So the Proposed # 1 amendment that we're going to look at, concerns, ARTICLE V, DEPARTMENT COMMITTEES and I'm going to read the proposed wording and changes. As you see the current wording is in the current Constitution as **(inaudible)**.

The proposed wording: The Department Commander shall annually appoint the following committee items:

1. The general chairpersons of all committees unless already specified in the Constitution.
2. The sub-committees: chairperson of all committees.
3. Appoint one third (1/3) of committee members of all committees for a three (3) year term, unless otherwise specified already in the Constitution.

The General chairperson/sub-committee chairperson, unless otherwise provided for, term of chairpersons coincides with that of the appointment Department Commander.

What's new: **With the exception of the chairperson of the Baseball and Boys State committees. The chairperson of these committees will serve until the end of their respective yearly commitment (Baseball Tournament and annual Boys State). At that time, the newly appointed chairperson of the Baseball and Boys State committee will assume their dues as chairperson.** Did everybody

understand that? The talk was, we have our convention in June, Baseball has not started yet, the idea was it was really not fair with he or she coming on board really not understanding what the previous committee had done so it idea is to keep that chairman in place until that program is over with, same with Boys State, etc, Law Cadet, our summer programs. Oratorical is over with, so that's not an issue.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: We sanction Ladies Fastpitch, should that be in there right now?

PDC Hawk: Should be but its not in this proposed Constitution & Bylaws change.

Dept Adj Diener: Can I comment on that? One of the things that is going to have to occur is a constitutional change to add softball into the overall thing, ok. So what's going to need to happen at this point is there's going to have to be another amendment, adding softball, but until we solve this part, that amendment is going to need to match the wording in this one, ok, almost exactly. Or else going to convention, we'd have two different wording, ok. So that is going to have to be worked and come back in before we go to convention.

PDC Hawk: And Jim brings up a good question that everybody, District Commanders and Vice Commanders, softball has been approved by this body but it hasn't been approved by the delegates to have as a committee to oversee it. Once that is accomplished, that will fall in place, like Nick said, to be on this, which will have to be an amendment to this one for next year. But right now, we have no ladies softball as an approved committee under the department listing of Americanism programs, ok? Did that explain everything for you? Ok. Mr. Commander, we bring this to the DEC for approval to go convention and we need a motion. The committee makes a motion, do we have a second?

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I second that motion.

PDC Hawk: Do we have any further discussion?

Dept Cmdr Price: I hate to throw a wrench into this, but this has left out what I consider very important and that is Baseball tournament and annual Boys State. I see nothing in here about the Law Cadet program. And the Law Cadet program, as we just said, indicated a little while ago, there graduation is after our convention, it's in June, ok. So, I've got a chairman of the Law Cadet program that can be replaced in May but we're having the program executed in June. So the only thing that I would like to do is see the Law Cadet program added to this.

PDC Hawk: Good point.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I amend my motion that we accept it as written with the exception that we add the chairman of the Law Cadet committee.

Strauss: Director.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: The chairman of Law Cadet committee.

Dept Adj Diener: Who seconded that?

PDC Hawk: I made the motion originally.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: Oh, that's true.

PDC Hawk: He amended that.

Dept Historian Spurgeon: Not chairman, chairperson.

PDC Hawk: We'll get the grammatics. The main thing in our committee, we bring forth what we have as written. Now, we can make the additions, and the recommendations for consideration but we didn't on this one, hoping that ya'll would catch it, which you did. That gets back to adding softball, can't do that because it's not an approved program. Ok, you have a motion, you have an amendment to the motion to add Law Cadet chairman. It will be in parentheses, Baseball Tournament, Boys State and Law Cadet, ok. Does everybody understand? Ok.

Dept Cmdr Price: Any further questions?

NEC Strauss: I have some comments, just to be clear, because I know we are on the record, when you say Law Cadet, you're referring to the overseer of the Law Enforcement Cadet program and not the Law Enforcement Cadet committee?

PDC Hawk: No, we're talking about like, Russ.

Dept Adj Diener: The chairman of the Law Cadet committee.

PDC Hawk: The Law Cadet committee chairman.

Dept Cmdr Price: That's what we're talking about. Not talking about the Director. So, any other discussion?

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: Doesn't it have to go back and be written again so we can vote on it?

Dept Cmdr Price: No, that's what we just did, we just made that change, ok, with the amendment. It will go back and be added but we've already recommended that change. So that will be corrected, ok? Any other discussion? Ok, we've got a motion and we've got a second, with one change, and was to add Law Cadet chairman into this. All in favor say aye, all opposed say no? So move.

PDC Hawk: Ok, thank you, the next group deals with the Vice Commanders, and there's "P2", "P3", "P4", all the same. But due to the positions, the 1st Vice, 2nd, Vice 3rd & 4th Vice, you have to bring in a change for each of them to amended, ok? So the proposed wording for "P2, "P3" and P4" basically are the same.

The Department Vice-Commanders will not hold any other Chairmanship or positions on other committees on the Department level.

Explanation: This amendment will allow Vice Commanders to serve as Chairman/members of non-permanent committees as necessary and appointed by the Department Commander. i.e. Ad-hoc committee or a study committee that is not an approved standing, sitting Department committee. And you know, every year we usually have something that the Department needs to investigate, it could be an investigative committee. But these are ad-hoc, once it's over with

they're through, right now the vice-commanders cannot sit on those committees. And they're asking they can sit on an ad-hoc committee or non-permanent committee. Does everybody understand it?

D-1 Cmdr Walton: I make a motion that we approve this amendment "P2" "P3 and "P4".

PDC Hawk: Ok, the committee recommends approval of this, we have a second by D-1 Cmdr Walton, any further discussion?

Dept Cmdr Price: Any further discussion on this? We'll take a vote at this time then. All in favor say aye, all opposed say nay, approved.

PDC Hawk: That's for "P2", "P3" and "P4", ok. "P5", ARTICLE VII, DEPARTMENT OFFICERS. Ok, under the proposed wording:

The annual Department Delegates will elect the following Department Officers:

National Executive Committeeman	Alternate National Executive Committeeman
Department Commander	Department Historian
Department 1 st Vice Commander	Department 2 nd Vice Commander
Department 3 rd Vice Commander	Department 4 th Vice Commander

No two Vice Commanders shall be chosen from the same post. No persons shall be eligible for re-election to the office of Department Commander or First, Second, Third or Fourth Vice Commander.

All newly elected officers will be sworn in during the Department Convention and assume office immediately after said convention is over, except the National Executive Committeeman and the Alt. national Executive Committeeman. These officers will be sworn in during the Department Convention; however, their term of office shall not begin until the National Convention.

Explanation: This change will bring the term of office for the National Executive Committeeman and the Alt. National Executive Committeeman in line with National. We're saying National, National Constitution and Bylaws

And just for the record, on page 7 of the National Constitution and Bylaws, Section 2, under Article VII, "The term of office of such National Executive Committee member and alternates shall be two years. The term of office of each National Executive Committee member and alternate shall commence immediately after the adjournment of the National Convention next succeeding annual National Convention." Even though we have ours in May, their offices don't start until the National Convention. There's been some confusion on that, blue cappers don't understand it either because it is confusing to a certain degree. **The committee recommends approval of this.**

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I second that.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, We've got a recommendation and a second, any discussion? With no discussion, all in favor say aye? All opposed? Motion approved.

PDC Hawk: "P6". ARTICLE VIII, ELECTION OF DEPARTMENT OFFICERS.

Proposed: In the event there are more than two candidates for a Department Office and no candidate receives a majority vote of delegates for the position he/she is running for, then only the top two (2) candidates for said position will advance to a run-off.

Explanation: This amendment is needed to ensure a timely election of officers. Currently if three or more Legionnaires are running for an office and no one received a simple majority of votes, and no one drops out, then elections could last an extremely long time. This amendment will ensure that there will only be two rounds of voting for any office. Ok, the committee recommends approval of this

D-1 Cmdr Walton: I make a motion that we approve this, second it.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, is there any discussion on this amendment? Does everybody understand that we're only going to, it's going to wind up with just two. You may have three, you may have five, but it's going to come down to just two. Now, when I say just two, that third person may have only missed that cut-off by .05% between that one and the second person. So just realize that we're going to go from whatever, three, four or five, six, down to just two.

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: I object to this. Strictly because the number two, throwing that in there. If I'm out there and I'm considering running for office and I look at (inaudible) and only two is going to move forward, then that's going to be a discouragement to me. You say, well, no it's not, yes it will, because I've been there and done that, for 30 years I've had to deal with this similar situation. I have an alternate proposal to that, which I'd like to read to you, and it states:

“When there are more two nominees for the same office, the one receiving the least number of votes on the 1st ballot, and on each succeeding ballot, shall be dropped, until election is accomplished. You're accomplishing the same thing; you're eliminating the possibility of it being a popularity contest (inaudible) qualified. You can have a popularity contest when it comes down to two candidates, and one of those guys be the popularity person and not the qualified person, and actually come out the winner. This amendment would insure a timely election of the most desired elected officer by the electing body, we're not restricting those candidates. Currently there is no requirement for any candidate to withdraw when no candidate receives a simple majority. Thus the election could continue endlessly. This amendment would help insure that the most qualified and worthy candidate would be elected from a possible large group of nominees. We need nominees for office, we don't need to discourage them, we don't want to throw a number out there and limit (inaudible) or limit it to two to move forward after the 1st ballot. This would eliminate, I've been in a meeting (inaudible) in Greenwood, when we wanted to elect a District Commander, we had six different elections. No one was ever elected for District Commander for Greenwood (Inaudible). Very discouraging to have got that far and not accomplish anything. So this being in place, this has been something that we've been working on, I have had it and I have discussed it in the past with the some of the officers and they say you could not do that. Well, now, here it is, (Inaudible), now's the time to make it right without making a mess out of it and putting a number two in there and limiting it to two being moved forward.

PDC Hawk: Read your first statement about the least amount?

Exec Dir May: Ask him to take his mask off, please?

Dept Adj Diener: One of the things we're noticing here, especially ya'll in the back, when you stand up and talk, the mask is making you muffled and we're not picking you up on the recorder.

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: Do you want me to repeat all that?

PDC Hawk: Stand up, If you have four people running, what did you say?

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: You want the proposal? (District Cmdr Gibson brought the proposed amendment to PDC Hawk

PDC Hawk: Ok, his proposal, "When there are more than two nominees for the same office, the one receiving the least number of votes on the first ballot and on each succeeding ballot will be dropped until election is accomplished.

Dept Cmdr Price: The only thing I can say on that is if you have seven people running for office, you're now going to case those votes seven times, because you're now going to drop one each time. And that can be a long day.

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: And I say, Praise the Lord, because you've got seven people that were seeking a nomination, seeking a position, isn't that great?

Dept Cmdr Price: That is great, and you can still have seven people seeking the nomination, even though we're dropping it down to two, but we're dropping it down to the two highest numbers. So those seven people, they could be one of them too. It doesn't change, you still have seven people whether you're dropping it down to two or whether or whether you go through each one, it's just the time frame that you're doing it in.

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: Right, are in a hurry?

Dept Cmdr Price: No, we can spend all day.

PDC Hawk: Alright, his explanation on this, ok. The amendment will assure a timely election of the most desired elected officer, by the electing body. Currently there is no requirement for any candidate to withdraw when no candidate receives a simple majority. Thus, the election could continue endlessly, that's what he was saying, the Commander was saying. This amendment would help insure that the most qualified and worthy candidate would be elected from a possible large group of nominees. So basically, what's he's saying is, if we have five candidates, and the one that gets the least votes drops out, down to four candidates, right?

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: Right, that's correct. But, the number four person, he may drop out also, even if he did, that's ok. If he doesn't, he may be the one that should be elected by the voting delegates, by the body. He may be the one that's most qualified, he not be the one that's most popular, but he may be the one that's most qualified and he'll gradually work his self up, cream's going to come to the top. So that's the reason for it.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: I understand what's he's saying, you're painting the worse scenario, like different rounds we'd have to go. It's a possibility after the second vote, the simple majority will be reached, or even after the third, ok. So, that's all it is, a simple majority we need to get. But it's fair, what's he's saying, you get more guys involved.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I think his main point is we're, it's the same thing but getting to it at a different point and I think his main gist of the whole thing is the fact that you're not discouraging the candidates.

Imm PDC Richardson: Before last year, I would have wholeheartedly agreed with this. However, last year when we had a run-off, our run-off took, how long, Nick, 30 minutes? You said something in your explanation, you said this amendment is needed to insure a timely election of officers. Do we want a timely election of officers or do we want a just election of officers? With our new system that we put in last year, if we have five candidates, then it's going to take an hour and a half to do our elections, one the initial election is done. Simply because, hey, you go on in there and vote, the computer calculates them and you (inaudible).

D-20 Cmdr Mills: I agree, if you have five candidates there, what you're talking about is what's going to take place is the votes are going to swing so if somebody drops off, then they might not necessarily vote for those top two, they might change from that fifth person down to the fourth person down, just like Rick said, then that's going to change the end result. So I think I disagree with this and add it the way Rick said.

Dept Historian Spurgeon: I agree with him. You can have the total sum of the fifth, fourth and third person votes equal more than the first or second place did at the end so I agree with Rick, that dropping off one by one is probably more fair and you might get the person who is more wanted or more qualified by whole Department.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: I wish you people would stop saying more qualified because it's going to be the popular person, not qualified.

PDC Hawk: Ok, what the committee is hearing is that the concept is ok, but we've got to amend it. So I propose that you all not approve this and refer it back to committee and then add that you brought up, Rick, and re-submit it.

NEC Strauss: Mr. Chairman: I would also like to make another suggestion when you bring it back to the committee to think about if you're down to three, say for instance, and two bottom persons in that calculations are tied, how would you drop the person were it become a tie?

PDC Hawk: Ok, right now, proposal # 6, representing the committee as the chairman could not be here, ya'll reject it and add the proposal that Rick sent up, put forth as an addendum to this one or to be considered. Does everybody understand that? Any other discussion?

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, no other discussion, all in favor of rejecting this back to the committee for a change?

Dept Adj Diener: Jim made the motion, Darlene needs to...

D-1 Cmdr Walton: I make an amendment to my motion that we table it, no, return it to committee.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, you've heard the proposal and the second to send it back to committee for further wording, all in favor say aye, all opposed say nay. Send it back to committee.

PDC Hawk: Thank you, good job, Rick. **Alright, last one, “P7”. ARTICLE IX, PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

Proposed wording: Add Article IX after Article VIII, Section 2.

Explanation: The wording Article IX was omitted. The wording on the Constitution and Bylaws will not be changed, we’re just adding Article IX. Committee recommends approval of this.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I second that.

Dept Cmdr Price: So, clerical correction here, we’ve got a proposal and a second, any discussion on that? All in favor say aye, all opposed say nay? Carried.

PDC Hawk: Thank ya’ll. That’s the conclusion of the current Constitution & Bylaws recommendations.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: Can I ask a question, before you leave?

PDC Hawk: Yes, sir.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: You were the one making the motion to accept these, right? I never heard, I just heard seconds, but I never knew you were making the motion.

PDC Hawk: The chairman can.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: I’m just asking.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: See, that’s why you’re not popular (laughter).

Dept Cmdr Price: Thank you so much, Jack, what would we do without you. Ok. let’s move on, next we have ladies fastpitch, chairman Scherer.

PDC Scherer: At the DEC meeting, ya’ll approved the patch for the ladies fastpitch softball. But National came out and said from now on the little emblem that you all see on your hats can only be used for official business, official letterhead and so forth. And they’re asking that everybody that uses, play baseball or uses an American Legion symbol, use the one that they put on the car that they use for Nascar. So the one they’re asking you to approve is the one that’s being sent around now (inaudible). So the change is that we made is we put The American Legion on the left side and a softball on the right-hand side. If this is approved it will go to emblem sales for their approval, if they approve it, then it will come back to us and then we have to send it out for bids, and it goes back to Emblem Sales again and then back to us. It’s a process that needs to be taken care of as fast as possible because softball season is about ready to start, we’re having our first meeting on February 26th to get all our teams ready and in line. So this is one that we’re proposing and we’re asking that you approve it as presented.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, can I get a motion to accept this new....

D-1 Cmdr Walton: I make a motion that we accept this new emblem for ladies’ softball.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: I second that motion.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, I have a motion, I have a second to accept the new ladies fastpitch softball patch. Is there any discussion on that?

Imm PDC Richardson: Question, I sit here, and I look at this patch, and it's a good looking patch, but why are we using the crescent, the swoop, the crescent here? If you look at the front of every one of our hats, you have a palmetto tree, shouldn't we have a palmetto tree on here?

PDC Scherer: That's the motion of the arm throwing the ball.

NEC Strauss: I would just make a recommendation that an outline be put around the crescent/swoosh, the colors resemble....I think it would stand out more.

Dept Historian Spurgeon: Can we see the darker version?

Dept Cmdr Price: Yeh, when you look at the darker version it stands out more. Ok, you through, Mike?

NEC Strauss: Yes.

Dept Cmdr Price: As you can see it's much better defined than what we had. Any further discussion? With no further discussion, I'm going to call for a vote. The recommendation and second was to accept this patch, all in favor, say aye, all opposed say nay? Move forward. Ok, so we've got some updates coming here, some information we're getting ready to put out, if you would, please pay close attention to it, the Adjutant's going to give you some new updates.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, I'll try and make these quick and dirty here. One of the things I wanted to, Baseball Chairman, Legree Oswald, asked me to remind you all that next Saturday they are having their state baseball meeting and they are inviting everybody to come to try to make a good showing and they'd like to see a lot of these caps there. They're going to have a couple different speakers, Bobby Richardson is going to be there, he's got a pretty good program that he's got put together. The meeting is going to be held, like I say, it's next Saturday at the Alice Drive Baptist Church in Sumter, SC. That address is 1305 Loring Mill Rd if anybody wants to know it.

(someone asked if the address could be repeated)

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: It's not on Alice Drive, it's on Loring Mill.

Dept Adj Diener: I just said that. I just said, the address is 1305 Loring Mill Rd, that's in Sumter. 10:00 is when they're going to have coffee and doughnuts and the actual meeting will start at 10:30 am.

Exec Dir May: And that's been on the calendar.

D-1 Cmdr Walton: It's on the calendar.

Dept Adj Diener: It's on the calendar, they'd like as many of these caps as we can get there, they would like to have there to show support for the program, ok. Second thing I have is National Commander's visit. We had to make some last-minute adjustments because the National Commander's testimony on the Hill, the Hill changed it and they changed it to the 8th of March which is when he was supposed to be in South Carolina. So, this year the National Commander's visit is going to be cut down, he's going to

come in the night of the 8th of March, we will have the get together at the hotel like we always have, the morning of the 9th of March, he will address the State joint session of our State Legislature on the 9th of March and then he will depart on the morning of the 10th of March to go to his next visit. So there will not be, other than going to the Commander's Homecoming, there will not be any post visitations for this visit. Having said that, that means that we need to try and get on the morning of the 9th of March at the Springhill Suites, and we'll put more information out on this as it gets closer, but and we need and try to get a good showing of folks to come to that. That's going to be the only chance that he's going to have to get to talk to us and our Legionnaires. That morning session has normally been, the Riders have come and got a lot of their Legacy Fund Plaques that they have, and we won't have those plaques this year for that. And we need to get a good showing going over to the State House and sitting up in the balcony as he addresses the Legislature. Because that makes a difference, those State Legislators, I'm on the floor and you see them look up and see who's in the gallery for the different speakers?

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Are they going to be there this year?

Dept Adj Diener: I can't guarantee you on that, but they take note on the number of Legion caps that they see sitting up in that balcony, and that kind of, again, they equate that to that's my voters up there.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: Two years ago you should have noticed that there was a lot more there, somebody talked to them about that. It's all out of our control.

Dept Adj Diener: Anyway, put that out to your folks, we need to try and get some good attendance on that. And the last thing, I'm going to just remind ya'll that we have the oratorical contest that's coming up on March the 12th. We just happen to have the oratorical chairman sitting here, Bob, would you like to say a couple of words on what's happening with oratorical?

PDC Scherer: Do I have to come up all the way up there? As ya'll know, nothing was sent out to the schools this year, so I sent out two emails making sure that you told your post making sure they go out on our website and take out the necessary forms to the schools. So that being said, hopefully you've done that, February 5th all the posts must have their contests done, February 19th, our District, or our Quadrants, whatever you want to call it, and of course, March 12th. (Inaudible) please get with your posts and see how many people are actually going to be participating and get it to us because we have not been able to track how many posts have how many contestants and we'd like to start tracking.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: You said February 10th, it's not February 10th.

D-5 Cmdr Smith: You put on there February 2nd.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: The second's a Wednesday and the 5th's a Friday.

Dept Cmdr Price: The posts are February 5th.

Exec Dir May: It's the 5th, the 5th.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, another correction on there too, the contest will not be held here, we will hold it at, what's your church's name?

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 1715 Bull Street.

Exec Dir May: It's on the calendar, the address and everything's already there.

Dept Adj Diener: One last comment and to encourage you all, in the past few years, for the most part, the only District Commanders that show up for the oratorical contest are those District commanders that have a contestant out of their district that have made it. The number of Legion caps sitting in the audience at the oratorical contest is always very disappointing to me. And it's noticeable from some of the contestants is put that on your calendar and try and come down that day and see those. One, you will not regret it, these kids, especially these final four contestants, they are amazing on their presentations. Anybody's that sat through one would all agree with me on that. But please try to check your calendars and set your calendars aside and as many of ya'll as possible make it to that contest. Ok, Commander, that's all I have.

Dept Cmdr Price: The oratorical, as he mentioned, is extremely important. The information did not get out to the schools like it should have. Hopefully ya'll have been in touch with the schools and you're looking for candidates to participate in that oratorical contest. We put a lot of money in it with zero return other than what it does for our communities and these children. And that return is tremendous, we should work on that, if we don't, we wind up with less than what we want. So please work to get the oratorical. I'll also give you a quick update, the Rifle Raffle is moving along ok, it could move along a lot better. Remember the amount of money that you can make, a lot of you have been shut down, or you need repairs and need things fixed. Encourage the Rifle Raffle, realize last year there were a few posts that made over \$8,000.00, and that's a lot of money, that's nothing to shake a stick at. So think about that, get that going, if you're not moving that, help to move that, I appreciate it very much. Ok, at this time, we need to move into Executive Session so if that doesn't include you, you need to excuse yourself.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: I make a motion that we go into Executive Session.

Alt NEC Lysaght: I second the motion.

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, I've got a motion and I've got a second that we go into Executive Session. Ok, before we go into Executive Session though, under general discussion, is there anything that we need to discuss? For those of you that need to take a break, let's go ahead and take a break and get back here in five minutes if you would please.

Meeting continued:

Dept Cmdr Price: I've got a motion and I've got a second that we move into Executive Session, I'm looking at everyone here and everybody here is authorized to be here, so we don't have to worry about anybody leaving, the two people that needed to leave have already left so with that left we're going to move into Executive Session. Any discussion on that? Ok, If all in favor say yes, nays? Move forward

EXECUTIVE SESSION BEGINS

EXECUTIVE SESSION ENDS

Dept Cmdr Price: We are now out of Executive Session, would you ask Mike to come back in, please?

Dept Adj Diener: And anybody else that's out there.

Dept Cmdr Price: Yes, and anybody else that's out there. It's been a long road getting here, ya'll know that we started this last September time-frame.

DEC applauds

NEC Strauss: Well, I'm really glad that we have three past Adjutant's here today, I'm acknowledging them because they've been big mentors of mine over the years. And I'm glad the Past Department Commanders are here, I know a lot of them have also been big mentors of mine. I really appreciate the confidence you have in me, I will be announcing my retirement as a police officer come Monday. It's been a tough secret to keep a secret (laughter). But I really, really look forward to having a lot of input with all of you. I can't wait to get started and I know that Nick was a good side-kick of mine when I was Commander, and I look forward to learning from him and James and former Adjutant Hawk. I know they've got a lot of things that they want to teach me and tell me about and I appreciate Nick. Nick has done a great job for us, I know that's he's going to have a lot of recognition between now and the time that he retires but I do appreciate him giving us the time to make the transition. And I think it's going to be a good transition and I don't think we have anything to worry about it. We all believe in the red, white and blue here and I look forward to working with each and every one of you, thank you (applause).

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: It can't be any worse, the bar wasn't really set high (laughter).

Dept Cmdr Price: Ok, again, we appreciate, Michael. It will be have you as part of the team here. Is there anything out there for the good of The American Legion?

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Two things I have. One is on February 5th at Lake Wateree Recreation facility, I'm going to have a District meeting, it starts at 10:00 in the morning, it goes pretty much all day. We'll have lunch, it's more or less training from State agencies that deal with veterans programs and then in the afternoon at 1:00 I have a mental health provider (inaudible) suicide, recognizing signs of PTSD, how to approach a person if you recognize signs of suicide but, and those types of things. She'll speak for about an hour and a half. And I'll feed everybody lunch that day, if you spend the weekend at the lake then I'll feed you breakfast in the morning and then that night as well. Second thing, if you're interested in coming in even just for the day, please let me know so I can make sure that I have enough lunch for everybody. Second thing, is on April 2nd and 3rd, (inaudible), on April 2nd and 3rd, Shaw AFB is planning an Air Show. I don't know how many new members we got at Darlington for the race but I can promise as one of the Air Show coordinators that we will have booth for The American Legion to do membership from. It's a big day or a big weekend, we expect over a hundred thousand people there for the weekend, April 2nd and 3rd, so we need some help out there doing that. I will not be able to work a booth, I will be, I'm pretty much for about 35% of the Air Show so I will be around but I won't be able to stay in one particular place. But if the Post, or Department wants to bring out the 10 X 10 tent that they have, we can set that up, I'll make sure there's a table out there and some advertising for you. That's all I have.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy (inaudible) space, freeing up our meeting room, it's too...we need more space now, we need to think about putting it up under study.

Dept Cmdr Price: Well, I'll just break out that hall right there, that wall, we can just go back into there and extend this.

Dept Adj Diener: This is a load bearing wall.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: It's congested in here.

D-16 Cmdr Defrehn: Two things, I've collected a lot of Baseball uniforms, baseballs, and bats from my District, post 9 is no longer having baseball and all that there. So I'd like to redistribute it, it's all fairly new stuff. If anybody has any interest, you can contact me, Jim Defrehn, D-16. And secondly, are we talking about an American Legion sign out here in the building? Getting it?

Dept Adj Diener: We never approved one. One, and we have, and through the pandemic and everything, we have talked about wanting to do that, ok. Quite frankly, I haven't been able to get a company to come over here yet and draw something up and give us a proposal, ok. Now, some of that has been, you know, as the pandemic hit, I haven't been hitting it as hard. But that's basically what it ends up taking and all I can say, is business must be good out there because right now, one of the things that we're experiencing on that and other things, is it's hard to get anybody to even come out and give you a quote on what they're doing, you know, for any new work. So it's not in the budget, I think that almost everybody agrees that is something that we need to do but we just don't have a design yet.

Dept Cmdr Price: With that said, I'm going to talk about baseball, since you brought that out, and the extra equipment you've got. Jim Defrehn said he's got some extra equipment, we should take advantage of that, you might want to send that on 15 January to the baseball meeting. Where we're holding that will hold 800 people, is what I've been told. So, we're encouraging you, as District Commanders, to get your Post Commanders there. Even if right now they don't have a baseball team, they can come in and they can learn an awful lot that's going to be put out. There's going to be a lot of information put out there, baseball coaches are all supposed to be there, how you form a team, and so on and so on. And all that's going to be gone over at that meeting on the 15th. So if you have equipment and you don't intend to have another team, then bring it to the meeting. I guarantee there will be enough coaches there that will be happy to take that off your hand. We need to get that done, we need to encourage members...I understand also, they're going to go to a...they're looking at starting a younger group of baseball players, I don't know if they're called Junior or what.

Dept Adj Diener: A level below Juniors.

Dept Cmdr Price: A level below Juniors, they're looking at starting that up this year and you call it little league or whatever. But with that said, we can get these younger kids started and move them all the way up and that's what we're hoping to do with The American Legion Baseball program. But you need to be there, you need to have your post commanders and or adjutants at that meeting on the 15th if at all possible, ok. So I just want to leave you with that. Our Fast Pitch Softball, they've been working that hard, there's a lot of teams out there that are interested. There's a lot of scholarships that are now being put out by Universities for our females, so please get involved with that, and if you don't have a team sponsored, try to get one sponsored. I think it'll be a great thing. Alright, any other comments for the good of The American Legion

D-13 Cmdr Gibson: Is Boys State still on? I know we had a good report previously, is Boys State still on go?

Dept Cmdr Price: Yeh, it's still on the go and a lot of this information we've put out here. Maggie & Nick work real hard to make sure this information's on the website. If you don't know how to get to website, ask, everything's on the website. All you got to do is pull it in and you'll find it, if you can't find it, give us a call and we'll get you there. Any other?

NEC Strauss: I want to talk a little about the American Legion history book, Volume IV. As you know it's a work in progress. As we have these meetings at your Districts, I'm going to start getting with you about which posts in your Districts have not submitted anything to me. I know there are people in here whose posts have not sent me stuff back for the book. And we have some very, very historic posts in there that go all the way back a hundred years. And I want to see your Commanders and Adjutant's in the book. So if sent this list to you, please, please get with me. And please, if I sent you something, please follow up in your Districts to get these posts to fill out the form and get it back to me because we want to preserve this history. Think of 400 years from now, we want to know the post commanders and adjutants were in your posts. Its going to be a great book so we just want to make sure that everybody, you know, when the book comes out and there's blanks in there, we don't want those people coming back angrily saying my name wasn't in the book. It's really something that we've got to those names in and take it serious so if you get that email, please take it serious and try and reach out to the posts and ask why we haven't heard from them, thank you.

Dept Historian Spurgeon: Can we get an update as to who you still need information from?

NEC Strauss: Yes, I can do that. More people have not turned it in than have turned it in.

Dept Cmdr Price: Right, so get your information in so he can put those in the book. If you don't, last thing we want to do is hear something from you about name not being in there, ok. If your post didn't make it, district Commanders, look at yourself, find out what posts needs to send in information. If you're not sure, contact Mike and get the information from him again and he'll tell you what he needs. So let's double check our posts and make sure they're in there. Also, with that said, I'd like the Historian to kind of give us a progress on how she's doing with the history as far as this year and the book?

Dept Historian Spurgeon: I was actually going to sit down this month, really working on it this month. I do have some pictures that really need help identifying who else is in it on some of them. I don't actually have a lot from a lot of things that have gone on so I need people to send in information of what's gone in their Districts and individual departments, or individual posts around the state. I know a lot of people have done things but...some things get posted on social media but a lot of things don't.

Dept Cmdr Price: So if you've had parades, you've done different things this year, you want it in this years history book, please send it to the Historian, Susan, and she can put that in there, ok? Last thing I've got is if I can get Russ to bring up, come up here and tell us what we've got?

Dept C & Y Cmte Mbr Cantrell: I've got a total of \$120.00, Children & Youth. Does anybody else want to give? (after the close of the meeting, D-9 Cmdr Comins brought an additional \$20.00 donation for the Veterans and Children Foundation collected during the DEC meeting)

Dept Cmdr Price: \$120.00? Alright, thank you. And I appreciate ya'll providing donations to that. It's very important, going to our Children & Youth Program, appreciate the vote on the funding on the NEF,

that's awesome. That will go out and that will help not only Kentucky, but it has helped and will help South Carolina if we are in need, so I appreciate you looking at that.

Vice Cmdr Jarvis: Please help me and the Department, contact those red posts so I can get into them, thank you.

Dept Cmdr Price: Those red posts are very important, as a District commander, you should be looking at that and saying, what the hell is this, this is killing me, so let's get it fixed. Ok, have we got any other information good for The American Legion? If not, I'm going to ask the Chaplain if he would put one on us.

PDC Hawk gave the benediction and Department Commander Price closed the meeting.

For God and Country,

Nick I. Diener
Department Adjutant

ND/mm

