



Department Executive Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
June 2, 2019



The Department Executive Committee met on June 2, 2019 the Columbia Marriott, 1200 Hampton St, Columbia, SC 29201.

**Executive Committee Members Present:**

Dept Commander Walt Richardson  
Dept Adjutant Nick Diener  
Department Historian Russ Cantrell  
NEC Michael Strauss  
Alt NEC Bob Scherer  
Imm PDC John Britt  
Dept 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Cmdr Roberta Poulos  
Dept 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Cmdr Ron Price  
Dept 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Cmdr Robin Rucker  
Dept 4<sup>th</sup> Vice Cmdr Jim Kvam  
D-1 Cmdr Jim Jarvis  
D-2 Cmdr Chuck Blankin  
D-3 Cmdr Bridget Lewis  
D-4 Cmdr Wayne Southworth  
D-5 Cmdr Carroll Kelley  
D-6 Cmdr Vacant  
PNEC Bud Hennis  
PNVC James Holland

D-7 Cmdr Michael Calcutt  
D-8 Cmdr Chuck Shaffer  
D-9 Cmdr Doc Sweet  
D-10 Cmdr Tommy Sinclair  
D-11 Cmdr Jack Lonergan  
D-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis  
D-13 Cmdr Jimmy Wilson  
D-14 Cmdr Michael Brandt  
D-15 Cmdr Jamie Rumbaugh  
D-17 Cmdr Jim Thrailkill  
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy  
D-19 Cmdr Bob Gibbons  
D-20 Cmdr Dave Mills  
Dept Chaplain Bill Quarles  
Dept Asst Sgt-at-Arms Kevin Joy  
Dept Asst Sgt-at-Arms Peter St. Onge  
Dept Asst Sgt-at-Arms Steve Goulet

**Absent:**

JA Steven Lewis  
Asst J/A Anthony Livoti  
D-16 Cmdr Defrehn

**Also Present:**

District 1Adj D. Walton  
Exe Dir. M. May  
P-215 Cmdr Kimberly Gooden  
P- 215 Adj Matt Gooden  
P-111 Historian Bruce Donegan

Cmdr Richardson asked everyone to rise and salute the colors in place. He called on Department Chaplain Quarles for the invocation, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Cmdr Poulos to read Resolution 288, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Cmdr Price for the Pledge of Allegiance and 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Cmdr Rucker for The American Legion Preamble to the Constitution.

Dept Cmdr Richardson called on Dept Adjutant Diener for the roll call. Adjutant Diener informed the Commander there was a quorum present.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: **Reading of the minutes? Do I have a motion?**

**D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: I make a motion that we do not read the minutes of the last meeting.**

**D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: I second.**

Dept Cmdr Richardson: **A motion's been made and seconded by Bobby Gibbons that we suspend the reading of the minutes from the last DEC meeting. All in favor say aye, opposed? One down.** (Motion passed and so ordered) Before we go on. Now, they couldn't be at the swearing in yesterday so we're going to take care of that right now, short, sweet and to the point, gentlemen? (Commander Richardson swore in NEC Michael Strauss and D-5 Cmdr Carroll Kelley). We're going to have a finance report from my finance cmte chairman, Jim Jarvis.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: Thank you Commander. Real brief, because basically everything was put out Friday (inaudible).

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Jim, come over here please so we can hear this.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: We're about \$196,000 over all into what I call the general savings and the membership savings. Membership is about \$74,000, the remainder \$122,000/\$123,000 is general. Expenses are on track as per the budget, we're doing well, actually we're doing better. We haven't expended as much as we should have or we would have at this time, we're about \$40,000 to the good so in that aspect, we're doing well. The Rifle Raffle, we expect, and everything looks like it's going to be a banner. Income, the last number I have is \$32,000 for the sweepstakes, is that right? \$32,000 is low for the sweepstakes, so that's going to be an interesting outcome. And I think we had an ad-hoc committee before, you've got that covered? Ok. But they're going to work on that issue, we're going to try and figure something out on that. It's either got to go away or we got to make it better. Commander, I have one last item, and this is, we had more of a windfall from LIT, the Legion Insurance Trust, than just what we what did on Friday, the \$2,500. We had \$25,000 more, it was actually \$65,000 of which \$20,000 goes or \$25,000 is usually what they give us each year. So they really, I understand Ohio got almost \$200,000. It's something they have to do every three years, they got to do the (inaudible) and give it to the Departments. **That's a windfall so that \$25,000, the finance committee makes a motion that we take that \$25,000 and put it toward the principal of our mortgage which is now a 10-year mortgage instead of a 13-year mortgage. And that's our motion that I'm going to need you to get a second on.**

**Dept Cmdr Richardson: I have a motion on the floor to put \$25,000 from the LIT to the principal.**

**D-8 Cmdr Schafer: I recommend that we do what Jim just said.**

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

**Dept Cmdr Richardson: Seconded. Any questions? Any discussion? None? All in favor say aye? Opposed? Two down.**

Dept Adj Diener: Thank you Commander. It's at this point in the DEC meeting after the convention that I get to read to you the Dept Cmdr's recommended appointments to the various committees. If you'll bear with me, I'll (inaudible) and read through them. (Adj Diener read the list of appointments previously sent to all DEC members on 4/23/19 with the minutes of the 4/6/19 DEC meeting)  
**I'd like to get a motion to approve the Commander's appointments.**

**Vice Cmdr Price: I'd like to make a motion that the DEC accept the Department Commander's recommendations and allow him to fill any vacancies throughout the year as they come forth.**

**D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: I second the motion.**

**Dept Cmdr Richardson: All in favor say aye? Opposed. Number three.**

Dept Adj Diener: Sir, ok, next piece of business that we have to do every year, The American Legion Riders and the Sons of The American Legion as they have elected their new officers, but this body has to approve those officers. For the ALRSC, the Director will be Alan Osborne, the Asst Director is John Siemers. **Do I have a motion to approve the election results and accept the Riders recommendations?**

**D-1 Cmdr Jarvis : I make a motion that we accept the Riders recommendations.**

**D-19 Cmdr Gibbons Second.**

**Dept Cmdr Richardson: Motion made and accepted, made and seconded. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Number four.**

Dept Ad Diener: Next for the SAL officers,  
Cmdr: Jason Yodice                      1<sup>st</sup> Vice: Dan Rollins  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice: Ryan Henderson.              3<sup>rd</sup> Vice: Fred Kiley  
4<sup>th</sup> Vice: Robbie Rucker                  NEC Alternate: Mark Cannito  
Historian: Boyd Comer                    Adjutant: Bob Thompson  
Sgt-at-Arms: Jim Jacob                    Chaplain: Steve Forsythe,  
NEC: Mike Nanney                          Finance Officer: Bob Thompson

**Do I have a recommendation to approve the slate of officers as elected by the SAL?**

**D-2 Cmdr Blankin: I make a motion to accept.**

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

**Dept Cmdr Richardson: A motion's been made and seconded that we accept the slate of officers. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Number five.**

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, Cmdr that is all of the appointments.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I'll be going through these rather expeditiously, (inaudible) but I do want you to know that, um, we're going to be making some changes and I'll get these out to you in an e-mail. Now, first thing is, this was started about four years by Commander Lysaght, and we've kind of drifted away from it. And so we're going to reinstitute it that all committee meetings are open. Now, that being said, I understand that sometimes committee meetings have to be closed because of the nature of the subjects going on. If that happens, what you need to do is either get approval to close it from your Vice Commander with oversight, either from me or from this body. Now, if the committees can do that, hey, we're good to go. Alright, next will be the fundraising Ad-hoc committee. Commander Britt appointed uh, Tommy Sinclair, Jack Lonergan and David Mills and I think that was an outstanding selection and that's what I'm going to do, reiterate that. So, now on an Ad-hoc committee, do we need a second and a, no, I think we need a motion on that. Ok, alright, dates for the DEC meeting. Now, I will get these out. Yes Michael?

NEC Strauss: What's was the name of that Ad-hoc committee?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yes Mike? Fundraising Ad-hoc committee. Yes, ok, the dates for the DEC, these are preliminary to say the least but go ahead and put them down because we're hoping that they'll stay...now, I'm going to mail these out in an email because I know how hard it is to write like you're sitting right here. Make sure that you shoot me an e-mail so I can get your e-mail off of your e-mail. Ok, alright.

First one will be August the 17<sup>th</sup>, next one will be August the 5<sup>th</sup>, whoa, whoa, whoa, October 5<sup>th</sup>, next one will be December the 7<sup>th</sup>, next one will be February 29<sup>th</sup>, and the last one will be April the 18<sup>th</sup>, and they will commence at 10:00. Ok.

NEC Strauss: Commander, when was the first one?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: August the 17<sup>th</sup>. I will be sending this out to everybody in an email. Ok. Now, understand, on the agenda, when we have business come before this body, the way this is going to work is the only people that can bring business to the DEC, this committee, is going to be this committee, plus the Adjutant, for obvious reasons. So if you've got one of your post commanders that needs something done, he brings it to you, you give me a call, I will put it on the agenda, ok? Now, about a week before our DEC meeting, I'm going to send you the agenda so you will know what is going to happen at the meeting. Any questions on that. I understand it's a lot said fast, if you don't understand it, let me know. Alright, very good. Office hours, I'm going to try my best to be at the Department Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, ten o'clock to two o'clock when possible. Now, with that being said, this coming Tuesday I'm going to be in Charleston in the morning so I'll get there as soon as I can, ok? That's when I'm going to try and be there, alright? Commander Bridget Lewis will be in charge of all our social media. We're working now on a plan where we can integrate our Facebook, our tweetie and our Instagram (Laughter).

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Twitter, close enough.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Whatever, and I will get that plan out to you within, by July 4<sup>th</sup>?

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Yes

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, by July the 4<sup>th</sup>, that will be put out to you. Ok, now, here comes the big one. One thing that has always irritated me is we have always done it that way or we have never done it that way. What I want to do is I am going to start a policies and procedures manual. And in that manual, we're going to take, and we're going to break it down into sections. Like um, like the DEC is going to have a section, fundraising's going to have a section, programs is going to have a section, and anything else that you can come up that when something comes up that is not covered, we're going to take and put it in that policies and procedures manual so we'll have a record of it of how we can do it. So when somebody comes up and says oh, how did you do that? We flip to page 27 in the policies and procedures manual and say, there's how it is. Now, what I'm going to need from you, is by the next DEC meeting, it's not real hard and I know it's like assigning homework. But all I need for you to do is to sit down and think what all would we need to cover in that manual. I know the DEC needs one, finance needs one, programs needs one, um, and the rest of them. So, if you would, by the next one, at least have a, a, a, something to work with. Now, please understand, the advantage of having this over changing the Constitution is, this thing next year, if this isn't working, if it works one year and it doesn't work the next year, we can change it, boom, and go on. We don't have to wait for an entire year to have an amendment to change it, ok? So be thinking about the different units that we can put in that policies and procedures manual. Alright, here we go. What I'm going to do is, I have been told that I have

\$2500 as a discretionary fund. Here's what I'm going to do with it. For every District Cmdr that reaches 100% by the cut-off date, and I can't remember for the life of me what that date is and, and, and we'll, and we'll put that, I'm going to give you a hundred dollars. Now, next, for every District Cmdr that submits 100% of their Post's CPR, I'm going to give you \$25. Now, and they can track this on the computer. So all you go to do is go to the Posts and get them to fill out that CPR because I think Cmdr Strauss will tell you that they use those, is that correct?

NEC Strauss: Absolutely.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: They are very, very important. Now, I wanted to do more but 20 X \$125 comes out to \$2500, that's all I have. So, nothing in this world would suit me better than to spend every bit of that money at next convention giving you your checks. Are there any questions?

NEC Strauss: On that policies and procedures, is it going to be policies and procedures for the DEC or are we talking about everything, like the staff, the....

Dept Cmdr Richardson: We're going to, that is going to be a, a work in process. The DEC, will they have policies and procedures? Absolutely. Will the staff have policies and procedures? Absolutely, Will the, will the.....

NEC Strauss: I mean, what, the one's that you're gathering, I'm just trying to get a, make sure I got my hands around the....

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Right.

NEC Strauss: ... what I'm supposed to be looking at. are we looking at a policies and procedure specifically for the DEC?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: No! For everything. No, what we want like if um, if um, if the finance cmte, let's say the finance cmte wants to have at least five meetings per year, write it down.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: Like a continuity folder.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yeh. Yes, that's right, a continuity folder, that will work, ok? Questions? And the best part about it is, if something ain't working, guess what we can do?

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Change it.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Change it.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: We can change it. If something, if we need to add something, we can stick it in. We have a record of what has been decided. But if it's not working for now, then we can always take in one fell swoop, just take and change it, ok?

Alright, next, we do have a complaint from Post 22 about the Baseball, which I thought was settled but it has reared its ugly head again. And so what we're going to do, is since Vice Commander Price is over that Committee, Vice Commander Price, if you would please, handle that?

Vice Cmdr Price: I will.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I would appreciate it very much. And please keep the committee informed as to what's happening.

Now, next thing, is, when I don't understand something, I want to know what's going on. First thing is, Distinguished Public Service Award. How many people in here know what that is? That is unacceptable. We are the DEC. We are the governing body of this department and we don't even know what kind of award we're getting? Somebody tell me something about this. You know, who selects, what's the criteria? Very good.

NEC Strauss: Its, are you asking the question?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yeh. I mean, if you've got an answer.

NEC Strauss: It's a committee of PDC's, it's the highest award that the Legion gives on the State level and it doesn't necessarily have to be a Legionnaire that wins the award. It can be a civilian or a veteran or military person, it can be anybody. Past people have won it such as Governor and Senator Strom Thurmond, some very distinguished people have won the award over the years. It's considered the highest award that The American Legion gives on the state level.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Thank you, you just enlightened me and a number of other people, that's something that quite frankly, we didn't know, or I didn't know.

Vice Cmdr Rucker: My question is, where is that written down? Getting back to policies, where is it written down?

NEC Strauss: When the award was established, I mean, you'd have to go back, that award goes back into the 20's I'm pretty confident of that. It is in our, if you go into our history book, if you read the three volumes of our history books, it talks about the establishment of that award back in the 20's.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok. Alright, very good.

NEC Strauss: Ok.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: They...what is the criteria for the committee that selects them?

NEC Strauss: It's based on the write-up. It's based on the write-up that the, the posts submit, then they read the write up and then they vote, select.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Who selects them?

NEC Strauss: I believe that the committee is made up of PDC's.

Vice Cmdr Rucker: That....

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok.

Dept Adj Diener: The committee goes exactly in order on the PDC's. Every year one drops off and the next guy in line comes in by order that they were Department Commanders. This, this last year it was initially Gary Mitchell.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright.

Dept Adj Diener: Ok. and so what will happen is the bottom person on that drops off and Gene McDaniel who was the Commander after Gary Mitchell will be the one that goes on and there will be more than one drop on there this year because of deaths.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, so this is...this is a rotating basis, once you become like, Commander Britt, well, he will be on the committee for three years. And then in three years he drops off.

PNEC Hennis: He'll eventually be the Chairman.

Dept Adj Diener: He'll eventually be the Chairman.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: On this third year he becomes Chairman?

Dept Adj Diener: No, the first year he becomes Chairman.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: So he's the chairman now?

Dept Adj Diener: No, not next year. No, its, next year, next year it will be...

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Next year, after Immediate Past Department Commander?

Dept Adj Diener: Next year it will be Gene McDaniel, and then after that John Collins, there's some removed, it's not the immediate ones, it's four or five years after they've been in office.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, I can understand that.

Dept Adj Diener; But it just keeps going in order like that.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, I will, we'll...we'll get this worked out and we will send out so everybody knows exactly what's happening. Ok.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Actually, my question was what's the criteria? My question is what's the criteria and if there's an example of how to fill out the package.

NEC Strauss: Mr. Commander I'll help you with that, if you'd like some of the history on that, I can get it for you.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Absolutely.

NEC Strauss: And then I'll cut you an e-mail (Inaudible).

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Thank you very much, I appreciate that.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Is there a cut-off date, when do we have it submitted?

NEC Strauss: Yes, it's in the Adjutant's manual.

Dept Adj Diener: No, no, there's...no, it's not. That committee goes out and selects an individual somewhere in the state, there aren't applications that get sent in. That committee goes out and selects an individual in the state that they want to recognize as the Distinguished Public Service, so there's not a...

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: I'm confused.

Dept Adj Diener: ...a form to submit in.

Dept Adj Diener: The committee goes out and looks and comes up with somebody in the state that they think needs to be recognized and given this award that's been out doing it. Last year, Mickey Taylor was the Chairman and he wanted... and the committee looked at it and they recognized the folks that were doing the PD LIVE from here in Columbia.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok.

Dept Adj Diener; Ok, but that committee goes out and looks and is constantly on the look-out, I guess is what I'm saying, ah, for somebody that has done something, for outstanding public service.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: So it doesn't have to be a Legionnaire?

Dept Adj Diener: It does not have to be a Legionnaire

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, very good.

PNEC Hennis: National does the same thing. They have a Distinguished Public Service Award. The Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders won one year. I remember that very well. (laughter)

D-20 Cmdr Mills: Under the trophies and awards ceremonial manual is where all the medals are listed, and criteria.

Dept Adj Diener: That's National's.

D-20 Cmdr Mills: Ok, we can still draw from that, that's a starting point so if anybody wants a reference to go by, they can look it up.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, alright, thank you. I'll get with NEC 'man Strauss and, and we'll get this ironed out and we'll make sure it's right and we'll disseminate this information so everybody's on the same playing field so if somebody asks you, you'll know what's going on. Ok? Next thing is this Legislator of the Year. I'm sitting up in the State House and The American Legion is awarding this Legislator of the Year, and hell, I'm 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander and I don't know what in the world's going on! And I ask my other Vice Commanders and they don't know what's going on. So what we need to know is how is this one selected? What's the criteria? How is, you know, what's going on? Once again...

NEC Strauss: I think I can answer that.

Dept Adj Diener: I can answer that too.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, Adjutant? Nick ?

Dept Adj Diener: Ok, each year the Department Commander gets to make that selection. And normally it is made based on Howard Metcalf from the Governors Office making a recommendation of the Legislators because he knows, he knows them and works with them best and the Dept Cmdr gets to select the winners of those awards.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: May I make a comment?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Absolutely!

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: When I was Dept Cmdr we had the issue with the Nursing Home in Walterboro and so the Senators that were active in getting that approved, weighed heavily on the decision for those individuals to be recognized.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok.

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: They're doing things for the veterans.

Dept Adj Diener: But it is the Dept Cmdr that gets to make the decision.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: The way I understand it, we're one of the only states or very few states that are doing this. And we're out there in the public view so we're trying to show some support for those people that we want to hopefully get politicking for us, and that's all we're doing with that.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, well the main thing I want is I want everybody to know what's going on.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis; Being that you put me on social media, we need to put stuff like this out so people know that we do it. So you ought to let us so can let our Districts know who won it, why they won it, you know.

NEC Strauss; It was on our Facebook page.

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: This is the stuff we need to let the blue-hats know, they don't know this.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, that's what we're working on right now to make sure this gets out.

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: Transparency.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: So we'll find out and, and, and we'll send you a update on the, on the, on the DPS Award and the Legislator of the Year Award, Cmdr Strauss, of course the Historian, we'll sit down along with the Adjutant and make sure we got everything right and then we'll send it out so everybody knows what's going on, ok? Any problems?

Alright, next, I am upset, is the only way to say it. I am upset about the eight disappeared amendments. There were eight amendments submitted by posts that just disappeared. Now, we need to find out what happened. Now, that's, that's cut and dry right straight to the chase. We need to find out. Commander Strauss, you were on the committee, so I'm afraid you're going to get some questions here. Now, I want, first of all, I want to see the amendments. Do we, do we have copies of the amendments?

Dept Adj Diener: Yes, sir.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Are they here?

Dept Adj Diener: I did not bring them with me today.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, alright, very good. Ok. I would, I would like to see them and you know, and go over them. You know, the first thing I want to know is, why were they removed? Why were these amendments removed? They were submitted by a Post. And I know in the sub-committee report it says that, ah, they were removed because they conflicted with our Department Constitution & Bylaws, National Const & Bylaws, they were poorly written, they were vague, um, and, and they gave a plethora of reasons. Well, lets' see what happened with them. And the next thing I want to know is why wasn't the Post that submitted them notified? I mean, all of a sudden, you know, you come expecting to see your amendments and boom, they're not even there. Now, you know, you know, I got a, I got a problem with that. And, and you know, and we need to find out exactly what's going on, you know. Now, I've been able to track down and find out exactly what's going on. One of the amendments was electronic voting. Now, Nick will tell you, last year didn't nobody in this world fight harder against electronic voting than I did. Why? Because it wasn't in the constitution, we tried to put it in the Constitution and it got pulled out.

The baseball, I mean we got problems with baseball right now. When I was 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander, you know, all hell was breaking loose with the baseball up in Union County. You know, we go up there and we did a...a...a what I think is a workable solution and, and, you know, and we tell them that we're going to submit an amendment that gives them the option to change the baseball structure, that's all. They just want a chance to so they can be heard. We submit the amendment, poof, it's gone! Next. Next, there was an amendment that limited...that limited the Executive Session to the DEC to...to voting members, elected voting members. Now..now, that amendment was gone but at the same time there was an amendment approved that gave the Past Dept Commanders the right to vote, that gave them the right to be on the Executive Session, that gave them the right to make amendments, that gave them to motions, that gave them the right to second motions but they didn't approve, poof, it disappeared, the other side of the coin. Why? Why did that happen? Next, two years ago... two years ago, we got into a tussle because the Immediate Past Department Commander, it might have been, or was it last year? And there was a contingency, we'll use that word, a contingency that wanted to do away with the Immediate Past Dept Cmdr because there was no, um, you know, requirements, you know, what do you have to do, what (inaudible), what was their responsibilities? And all of a sudden, boom, we submit one, and it's gone! You know, what we're doing is we were submitting, submitting problems, submitting solutions to problems and every time we'd submit a solution to a problem, it just disappeared. And you know, and..and..and..that's...and that's just, you know, that's, you know, these are some questions that need to be answered. Now, the big question was. the big question was on amendment twenty. Same amendment that this body right here voted down twenty-two to one, the exact same amendment got submitted by a post and approved! The floor is yours.

NEC Strauss: Do you have a specific question? (Laughter) That's a lot of questions to be answered. I can tell you this.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yeh.

NEC Strauss: First of all the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander has oversight of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Right.

NEC Strauss: It's up to that 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander to have contact with the Chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I was never informed when they met. Not the first time.

NEC Strauss: Did you contact Jim Hawk to ask him any of those questions of when the meetings were? And at any time did you contact Jim Hawk?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: No, I didn't.

NEC Strauss: You failed, Mr. Commander. Your oversight is the Internal Affairs Commission.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok.

NEC Strauss: If you don't contact your people on your Commissions with your oversight, you failed this Department! So if you want to call me out, don't come back, you had every right to contact that Commander or that, that oversight person in your area!

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Fair enough.

NEC Strauss: You could have asked him when those meetings were. You did not.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Correct.

NEC Strauss: Correct?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: You are correct.

NEC Strauss: You could have been there for yourself! You could have gotten the report.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Were the...were the dates for the committee meetings on the calendar? I don't remember seeing them.

NEC Strauss: What meetings?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: The dates for the Constitution and Bylaws meetings, on the calendar?

NEC Strauss: They don't go on the calendar...they don't go on the calendar.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Well, maybe we might...

Dept Adj Diener: We don't put any of them on the calendar.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Let's eliminate that and we'll have them put on the calendar.

NEC Strauss: The DEC meetings go on the calendar.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok.

NEC Strauss: But each Vice Commander as you come through the chain has an oversight responsibility for committees. It says it in the book. They have to look at each individual, make sure within thirty days that those meetings are held, number one.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright.

NEC Strauss: Number two is to stay in contact with them. Their oversight is to make sure that they meet!

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yes.

NEC Strauss: Is that correct?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: That, yes, you are correct.

NEC Strauss: So that's what I'm saying....

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Now, I did contact....

NEC Strauss: I'm getting a lot of the blame here...

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I understand.

NEC Strauss: But I'm one-third of three.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I understand.

NEC Strauss: But you have to look at the broad scope of things.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yeh.

NEC Strauss: If you have a question on an individual amendment, I can tell you from my memory, I don't have the minutes with me.

Dept Cmdr Richardson. Alright.

NEC Strauss: But I can tell you, some of them, you know, if they, just based on what they say individually, but we had many, many. But every post has a right to submit a Constitution and Bylaws amendment.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Correct.

NEC Strauss: Right?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yes.

NEC Strauss: After the DEC turned that amendment down....

Dept Cmdr Richardson: You mean the Constitution and Bylaws committee?

NEC Strauss: Correct, the Constitution and Bylaws... No, the Constitution and Bylaws submitted it the DEC and the DEC turned it down. We're talking about the Vice Commander's one?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: The last one, yeh.

NEC Strauss: So if the DEC, remember, they met in January.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yeh.

NEC Strauss: They pushed off the date until the second.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Right.

NEC Strauss: During that period, one of the people on the DEC took it back to his post, the post submitted it through their post. Submitted that one that eventually failed at the DEC. Submitted it before the deadline to his post and it came up through the committee just like everybody else's do and it passed the committee.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Right.

NEC Strauss: Ok. If it passed the committee, it can go to the floor.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Right.

NEC Strauss: The DEC when they voted on it, killed it.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Correct.

NEC Strauss: Does that make sense? So a post has a right to submit a resolution even though the DEC killed it.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yeh

NEC Strauss: So sometimes you can have two of the same resolutions by two different (inaudible).

Dept Cmdr Richardson: And they combine them.

NEC Strauss: And they combine them.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: And so what the Constitution and Bylaws committee...

NEC Strauss: They wouldn't combine them if the DEC killed it because if the DEC one got killed then the Post one would go forward.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok.

NEC Strauss: Does that make sense? Any other....there was a lot of questions there.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: It sounds to me like... it sounds to me like what was happening was that the Constitution and Bylaws committee did an end run around what this body wanted.

NEC Strauss: Not the committee. Now, you're being....

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Oh, ok, well. I stand corrected.

NEC Strauss: They have that right though. It's not going around, if he goes to his post, a post has every right...

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yes.

NEC Strauss: ... to submit that thing, even though for you to say the committee, you're wrong.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, I stand corrected.

NEC Strauss: Because Jim Hawk had nothing to do with....

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I stand corrected.

NEC Strauss: ... what that member did, and I had nothing to do with what that member did.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok. I stand corrected. So somebody did an end run around.

NEC Strauss: Somebody did an end run.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok.

NEC Strauss: But it was before, that was submitted before the DEC had made that final decision. Because it went between, it was before March 1<sup>st</sup> and we met March 2<sup>nd</sup> so that actually went in before the 1<sup>st</sup>.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: So that member did an end run around.

NEC Strauss: Which means nothing.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Now.

NEC Strauss: It had to get to the DEC eventually, somebody had to submit that to the DEC, so I mean, you could say it's an end run around but I mean, he was being safe, he wanted it passed through.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, and I understand that. Just as long as everybody understands what's going on.

NEC Strauss: I just want to make sure, it's not members of the committee, it was a person.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, now, let's go back to the electronic voting. Why was that one shot down?

NEC Strauss: Incomplete, I think. I'm going off, it didn't detail, I know the adjutant has been and is still looking into the process of electronic voting.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok.

NEC Strauss: I don't really feel comfortable, there was one there and I remember the discussion on it. But I don't have the detail, I don't even remember if it was rejected or....

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok. It was disappeared. It's gone.

NEC Strauss: Well, I mean, if something just says we want electronic voting, there's no stuff to it, I mean if it, you know, or it directly conflicts with something on the National level or something to that effect. Like I said, I'm not looking at it right now, I'm not looking at minutes so I'm not comfortable saying for the record exactly what happened. I remember discussing it and I remember discussing with our Adjutant about implanting but as you know we have a lot of things that have to be fine-tuned and looked at. So I think electronic voting, in my opinion, should be studied by a committee, get all the particulars together and then submit a resolution.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok.

NEC Strauss: So you have....before you put it in our document, it needs to be clarified, as we all have learned.

So to submit something that you know, is too vague, you know, the committee has a number of options. To disapprove, reject, refer to committee, so I don't know if it was referred to a committee or something to that effect. It may have been referred to a committee.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: What committee?

NEC Strauss: Like I said, I don't have the minutes here.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, alright.

NEC Strauss: So we had so many...if was one or two resolutions, we're talking about a lot of resolutions that we had.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Yeh, I understand.

Dept Adj Diener Any of the amendments that were rejected I have a signed copy by the Chairman of that committee of what they rejected and all that. I just don't have them with me here.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, I understand, the one last question here is why weren't the posts notified?

NEC Strauss: That's the chairman's obligation to do that, Commander, that's not the committees. We submit our, we have our discussion. I don't know if he's obligated...he has a, if you read the officers or the committee reports in your manual, that came out in your packet, there's a report from the Bylaws Chairman in that report. I don't know, I don't know if it's his job, without looking...

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I understand.

NEC Strauss: ...to contact individual posts to tell them why. (inaudible) I would like for you to look at this, this this and this. But that's the chairman's obligation to do that.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I understand.

NEC Strauss: Any other?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: No, I'm happy.

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: I'm the new guy on the block so I have a question. Where can I read the minutes?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: The minutes are online, aren't they, Nick?

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: No, of the committee, the committee.

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: No, the committee minutes where they discussed all this? Mike referred to all the minutes. And how can I go back as a District Cmdr so I can go to all my posts and say, here's what happened in the meeting, here's what the minutes said. How do I do that?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I'm going to, I don't know, I would imagine they're kept in a file someplace.

Dept Adj Diener: I can tell you, the last meeting that they had, that they actually did the voting on, ok. was done, they went into Executive Session to do it, ok. Because I wasn't even in on it because they did an Executive Session and they do not publish those minutes. When you go into Executive Session, just like when we go into Executive Session, we don't put those minutes out.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: I guess my question is, why do these committees not submit a report, even if it's just a little paragraph, to the DEC after every meeting to update us on what they discuss if we don't get to see their minutes?

NEC Strauss: There was, he did have a report to the DEC, a live one, and he did also submit a report in the packets at the convention. He did come and they presented it.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: But my question is after every meeting, not at the end, if you guys meet three times a year, why did we not get a little report?

NEC Strauss: We met way more than three times a year. It's up to the, to be put on the agenda.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: And I don't just mean you, I mean Baseball and all these committees, why do we not get some sort of report?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, it's Sunday and its getting to the point where I think we might be beating a dead horse. The most important point that was made was the dialog that we had. Me and Mike obviously don't agree on it but we both stood up and stated our point. Michael, still a friend?

NEC Strauss: Yeh.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Absolutely, so there's nothing wrong with that, there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. If something happens, you stand up and you state your point and you listen, and you go from there. Ok, Now, is there, hold on. Is there else for the good of The American Legion.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Jack Lonergan, District 3, excuse me, District 11.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Commander, if you would, please come up here and face them when you're talking.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: For those of you that don't know, I work on Shaw AFB, I'm a Recreator, I run the club and programs for our Airmen to regain their resiliency. Commander Strauss, excuse me, NEC 'man Strauss, PDC Strauss talked on Friday about suicide and how there's help for people and how they have to reach out or there's help available for people and it's all over the place. Two weeks ago, for those of you that don't know, we had a young 25-year-old airman take his life because he didn't feel there was any help for him, or any hope left for him. This past Sunday we had another airman that died from a useless act, she was doing PT, which is not useless, but she was also taking Detox and drinking ((inaudible) energy drinks and protein shakes at the same time. And she had medical complications, heat stress and other medical complications and it killed her. This past Friday night, early Saturday morning, we lost another airman to the same issue and that airman happens to be in the same squadron that airman that lost their life on Sunday. Tomorrow there's going to be a Resiliency Day at Lake Wateree for 110 people of that organization. And I just placed a food order for Friday night and for, not Friday night, Monday night and Tuesday morning for breakfast. The day is going to cost that unit about \$3,000 and Chaplain Quarles, by the way, sir, you do very good and you don't need the practice, you do very good. He mentioned what we do for veterans and he also mentioned what we did good this week and he talked about doing the right thing. I would like to make a motion that this Department pays the \$3,000 that it's going to cost that unit to have Resiliency training, to have their Chaplains, our Chaplains go up there, our airman family readiness people go up there, our grief counselors, to help this 110 people heal.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Sounds good, I'm sure it's a (inaudible) program. But requests like that...

Finance Chairman Jarvis: It's got to be in writing to the finance committee. I've got to have an outline or something that I can turn around to justify to the auditor and this crew why we did it.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: It sounds like a good thing, but we have steps that we got to do.

Finance Chairman Jarvis: And I have to get the committee together as soon as you give me something.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: Then I ask for everybody's prayers.

D-20 Cmdr Mills: I'm a presenter for Quilts of Valor. A lot of you know what Quilts of Valor is, it's a very good program but they're in peril right now, I know Anne Mixon, the SC State Director is going into her pocket to pull money out to buy batting and thread. A lot of stuff gets donated from the Flag Company because they have the messed-up pieces that they don't designate as flags but it's sad when the Director pulls money out of their pocket and a lot of us are receiving the wealth of the benefit with those things either by requesting for our posts or we're getting them ourselves. But what I've been doing is I'm asking for \$10 donations; we're giving out bracelets and we're going to take that money and present it to her. Last week I picked up a \$500 check from the Submariners. But if you know anybody that wants to donate or whatever, please get with me so we can get that, those donations there because it helps this program that we go around and utilize.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: Do you want me to come up? I came here early to affirm you this morning Chaplain and I think this whole body ought to affirm you for 47 years for what you have done. (Applause) Second, there's a lot of heroes out of here. One of them was given a National award recently, there's heroes among us. Stand up Ron. The American Heart Association recognized him for saving a life, you kept a guy alive until EMT got there. You said what's good for The American Legion

and that absolutely is good. (applause). Ok, one would of have to been comatose Friday to not feel the confusion, the contention, and the chaos that maybe continues somewhat today in this Bylaws Constitution business. You'd also have to been comatose not to understand what the blue-hatters said without reservation. They rejected the process, and to some degree rejected whatever was written, maybe because they didn't understand. But for whatever reason, they spoke. We often say we need to hear from the blue-hatters, if you were there Friday, if we were there Friday, and we were, we heard from the blue-hatters. I don't have a, Doc Sweet, are you here? I don't have a blood-pressure problem, much. But my wife, after I talked to her last night, she took my blood pressure, it was up, she made me take some extra medicine, you can see by my trips, it's been very effective, if you understand. But I think I (inaudible) said this, if you do what you've always done, you're going to get what you always got. To expect a different outcome is kind of stupid if you do what you've always done. The blue-hatter didn't have a chance to vote on that committee leadership Friday. But had they, and it could have been inherent in their feelings, I suspect they would have sought a change of leadership. I ain't going to say beat-up but you've had some questions about with what happened with the committee. And I'm from Post 22, so they're attempted resolutions got put aside. My last phone call was 11:00 last night, I got beat up in the hall or outside the hall, I even told the Adj...I mean Sgt-at-arms if I could get out here and get me a drink, he wouldn't let me back in, I'd go home, did I tell you that? Because I'm telling you, the contention, the climate in that room Friday is not what we're supposed to be about. So the blue-hatters spoke. I don't even know if it's acceptable to this body to do this but I'm going to make the effort that there be a change in leadership or change in membership of that committee. Because if we're going to try and get it back right next year, there has to be some radical changes. And the blue-hatters are going to look to see what did we do to fix what they consider repugnant. The committee Chair I think was Joe Lysaght, is that, am I right about that? Who was it?

Dept Adj Diener: No.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: Who was it?

NEC Strauss: Jim Hawk was the Chairman.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: Jim Hawk? I recall from the DEC meetings that those two were very vocal, that's why I figured they were at least the leaders. So, and I heard the committee appointments a while ago, will continue, so I'm going to make this motion then. Because of the confusion that occurred Friday which resulted in the convention not being able to really conduct its business of updating the Constitution and Bylaws, and I think it even carried over to the elections Saturday. **I'd like to make a motion to remove Jim Hawk and Joe Lysaght from the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.** That's my motion.

Dept Adj Diener : They have to be able to show cause....

Dept Adj Diener: And notify them and a trial.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Just to remove them from the committee? They appointed them to the Committee. The DEC appointed them, they can remove them.

Dept Adj Diener: We can check with the Judge Advocate, but they were appointed for a three year term and to remove them you have to be able to show cause. I'm not saying they can't be, but they have to be able to show cause.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Well, alright. We have a, we have a motion on the floor, do I have a second?

### **D-13 Cmdr Wilson: Second.**

Dept Cmdr Richardson: We have a second, Jimmy Wilson. Alright, is there any discussion?

NEC Strauss: I would like to ask the Parliamentarian. That's a violation, that motion is out of order, it's a violation of the Constitution and Bylaws. The incoming Commander gets to appoint one person to the committee, one can be removed from the committee if he fails to show up to the meetings or has to show cause. This is not, this motion is not in order. You can't come in and replace an entire committee just for the sake of doing that. The reason why this book is in place is because dictatorships don't put all their people in there at one point in time and be able run roughshod over the Department. The Commander gets one appointment out of the three each year so it keeps a balance they don't put all their complete buddies on there so they can get everything financially approved and that kind of stuff. That's the reason why the book has it. So you made an appointment, you removed me from the committee, and you put your new appointment on there. But there's no authority to remove Joe Lysaght. I got removed, Lysaght stays on there as far as I'm concerned because he was an appointment by John Britt. Therefore I'm just saying, I'm asking for a clarification, but I would say that motion is out of order based on what our Constitution says.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Any more discussion?

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: I would like to reiterate what the NEC Strauss has stated. I also think that it is out of order at this time, it needs to be verified that it can be done instead of making a hasty decision today.

D-8 Cmdr Schaffer: NEC 'man Strauss answered 90% of my questions that I had but I think we got to ask ourselves one thing as District Commanders. And there (inaudible) that have been in this organization longer than I have, I've got 25 years. And we have our obligations to the blue-hatters. How many of us make five visits a year to our posts? How many of those attend our District Meetings and pass that information on to our blue-cappers? You know, there's a lot of stuff coming out of here this weekend that makes the District Commanders look pretty bad. Because when we stand up and put this stuff out to the blue-cappers, whose fault is it, it's the people that take that position of District Commander. And I tell you what, I'm getting pretty well fed up with it. And I think before we start throwing a whole lot of changes, we got to look at our self and say and say, well, maybe we need to change some of the things that we're talking about. Thank you, Commander.

D-9 Cmdr Sweet: I've got a few questions. One is about transparency. It seems like that some of things that are being done, you know, it never gets back to the blue-hats. They're asking me questions and telling me they don't

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Doc, speak up a little bit.

D-9 Cmdr Sweet: They're telling me that they don't agree with certain things about (inaudible) reports, one of them is the financial report. And you're in sort of a quandary because when I have a District Mtg I have people that are fidgety. They don't want to be, you know, more than an hour. And yet they're requesting all this kind of information. I'm glad to provide it, and I told them that, I'll provide it if you want it, I'll give it to you but it's probably going to be an hour and a half, maybe even longer than that. So, you know, we're sort of between a rock and hard place, if you will...any recommendations.

Vice Cmdr Rucker: You're talking remove for cause; I believe with the blue-hats there was a lot of cause. Amendments disappeared, amendments were too wordy and too confusing, the blue-hats voted to

do away with this process because they were very unhappy and I can tell you I had over 22 people come to me and tell me, don't let this happen again. So, with the proposal, I believe there is just cause to clear a slate and to start over with new people to look at what we're doing.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: You alluded to the new kid on the block, you know, I'm two years in the Legion and one day on the job and when I was kind of asked to take this role on there was a lot of thought and I decided to do it. And when I came up here, I wanted to be unbiased so I didn't ask a lot of questions to get swayed, be swayed one way or the other. But to be perfectly honest what I saw the last two days is a cluster.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Amen.

D-7 Cmdr Calcutt: Not you but this turned me off. Not to the point I'm going to tuck tail and run, and I can't speak to the parliamentary procedures, but something needs to be done. I heard membership was 30,000, it was down to 15,000, now it's back to 19,000 and all I hear is new younger blood. My attention span is not that long, a 25-year old's got it of a gnat and you say we need younger folks in here to deal with that, it's not going to happen. So how you change it, I don't know that but one thing I know for certain, it needs to change. And, you know, anything I can do to support that, I will.

Dept Adj Diener: Quick, my recommendation, and again on the discussion on this, I understand this body, you know, for when there's just cause they have, ya'll have the authority at that point when there's been just cause shown. But what I would also say, and we talk about transparency, a lot of things are being thrown out here at two individuals on that committee that are not present, and they don't have a chance to present their side or defend it. If we're going to do, take an action like that, they ought to be notified of it and be given the opportunity to be present to answer your questions and identify themselves, that's all I have to say Commander.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: You was over that committee. You was over that committee, what responsibility do you take?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Do I take?

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Yeh.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: I should have, I should have checked on them but, that also, excuse me, that also works both ways. I was negligent, absolutely no question. I was negligent in keeping track of the committee, but they were also, didn't perform how I feel they should have done by notifying the post.

D-15 Cmdr Rumbaugh: I have to reiterate what Robin said, I met one of my posts yesterday and they put me in a corner and asked me questions about what happened and why did they have all these constitution and bylaws, they didn't understand, they weren't explained, they had resolutions that were gone, that's my introduction to one of my posts. And they're asking me these questions and I don't have an answer.

Vice Cmdr Price: One thought for question, I'd like to reiterate that everybody has an opportunity to be here this morning. Because somebody's not here, I don't think we should delay our decision when we have just cause. Everybody had a chance to be here. I call for the question.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Hold on here, Anybody else got anything to say?

D-20 Cmdr Mills: I'd like say a happy note, I want to commend the NEC for what he did on the committee, I know he had a struggle with what he was trying to do, he's always trying to do it right so I'd like to commend him for the actions that he did regardless of what everybody thinks about the committee. I know the type of person that he is, and I know the love he has for this organization so I want to thank him.

NEC Strauss: There was a lot of confusion there that I'm not going to deny. And I talked to Commander he was the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander, backstage, but he's now the Commander. I talked to him backstage about something that's happened to me as the Commander, and I know it just happened to Commander Britt. One of those things, when you're the Commander of this organization on the State level, you are the Spokesman for this Department, ok? You're the Spokesman, so we are the Executive Committee, we make things and our Spokesman puts out the (inaudible), ok? That's the way it works. You can look in the book. We had problems right before the convention where a person put out an email.

Vice Cmdr Rucker: I sure did.

NEC Strauss: And the email was very incomplete, and it did not come from the Spokesman, it went to people that were not in that Vice Cmdr's oversight area. It did not have all the information that needed to be in that. He failed to establish a lot of things, it did not go through the Department Spokesperson, and as you saw, the result of that led to a lot of confusion. People stood up on the floor and were wondering about the things. Some of the things were accurate but did not put all the information that a Spokesman would, into that thing. So, by the time that e-mail went out, there's no way that our Spokesman could have handled that. So you need to know that, that's the way it went down. That person was out of line. It happened to me as Commander too, somebody mailed out something that was inaccurate, and it happened right before the election. It was wrong. It was wrong, Commander. You know, some of the stuff that was in the e-mail, if you know what the assignments were for that Chairman, they have the right to approve, disapprove, reject and all that kind of stuff. If they knew that, in the email, they would have been notified of that. And if they disappeared, well, find out what the committee's job is to do, find out what their supposed to do on the National level and like I said, it was a breakdown in communication. It's not my fault, but there were breakdowns in the communication but most of that's covered by our Constitution and Bylaws.

Those items, you know, that's why we have oversight people, to make sure that information gets out so to blame it all on one person or another person is wrong. Because, you know, things disappear because that's part of the process, you know, like I said, we had so many things, I don't have the list in front of me, but that information is available. I'm just here to tell you, that misinformation was not John Britt's fault, it was a lot of people's fault. We can't tell you who those e-mails went out to because when the Departments mail something out, it goes out to everybody, generally, and all the information is there whether you like it or not.

That's the bottom line, when people stand up, that people that have been on the DEC for a long time know, that posts do not submit their mailing addresses in a timely manner sometimes. Sometimes we get those membership reports that say information not provided because the posts don't send it to the Department. The Department can't mail them something, they change their PO Box, they got to get that information to us. As District Commanders we've got to make sure we're getting that information so we can mail that stuff to them. And then we also got to let the Commanders know that when they get their mailing, they have to get that stuff to those Delegates. So, because the Department's sending that information out but it's up to those posts to make sure we got the correct mailing address. So there was a lot of miscommunication there. I wish I had a checklist of all the stuff that, you know, I don't think

there's any one person responsible for the miscommunication but there's certainly a lot of actions that went into this Cluster and I hate it for everybody. I certainly think that we lost a lot of momentum this weekend and I mentioned backstage to the Commander, whatever it is that we need to do to get this (inaudible) or whatever so we don't have to sit in there for hours and hours and hours for absolutely nothing when it should be cut and dry. We got to get that fixed this year before the convention, even though we won't have it fixed but we can certainly work on the rules and have that fixed by the convention. That's all I have to say (applause).

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Commander, this whole weekend, the whole weekend, this election, it was (inaudible). And my recommendation is we hold off on this, removing those two comrades and let's go back to the drawing board. Let's go back to the drawing board and try to fix it because you failed on your job. And it's not right to punish two, when the leader failed. You see, it's not right. So I feel (inaudible) go back to the drawing board and let's start all over again and stop this business (inaudible). Because if we don't stop it, we'll come to our convention again, it's going to be the same thing. You got to fix it; we need to fix it. Thank you.

Vice Cmdr Rucker: I'm the one that sent out the email. And I stated facts as I knew them. And I put them in bullets. And if you read the letter, it said that you want to ask why, and I left it the Commanders and the Adjutant's to do just that. Because the blue-hats run this organization. And they should have all the information available to them. And there shouldn't be anything that's not available to them. And if we forget that, then we don't need to be here. Thank you, and I call for the question.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: NEC 'man Strauss, I agree with you on a lot of things. And I didn't care for the letter that Commander Rucker sent out, there was a couple things in there I didn't care about. And I talked to my posts about it, but he was not the only one that sent an e-mail out to a limited amount of people. There was an e-mail sent out by one of the members of the committee on May 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2019, I'm going to read part of that email. "I've got several e-mails in the last 48 hours asking about the voting procedure and amendments, it seems that those on the dark side are spreading falsehoods about the voting and the amendments. Trying to confuse and scarce, trying to confuse and scarce anyone that will listen. Please make sure that all of your post Commanders understand, we need the understanding and full support so that the convention floor can be given back to the blue-hat Legionnaires. Let me know as soon as possible what your Post, District will register, their full voting strength and how many Legionnaires will come for the Friday vote from each Post." I'm not saying what he did was right, but he wasn't the only one that did it, that's what I'm saying.

NEC Strauss: I agree. We've got one Spokesman.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: I was shown a print-out yesterday and I'm not going to say from whom or where, but it was basically a piece of paper and it had all the amendments telling whoever which ones to vote yes or no for, what to do on Saturday and Sunday and who they were going to put up against, they were trying to force votes. So it was going around and that was only shown to me right before the vote, so this stuff has got to stop. I mean I can make my own decision and I'm not going to call out who showed it to me or why it was shown to me, but we got to quit fighting each other. Or it's going to be like we're going to fall completely, all this he said, she said crap.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, we got a motion on the floor, Commander Strauss brought up a very good point about we have to show cause. And as governing body of the DEC, first thing we have to establish is, was there cause? Now, you've heard the...you've heard the motion. Um, so I'll...I'll, first

thing what we're going to have to do is, we're going to have to vote on was there cause to make this motion?

Dept Adj Diener: No, that wasn't, the motion was to remove them. Unless they withdraw their motion.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Commander Strauss said we have to have cause, and he's right. WE have to have cause.

NEC Strauss: I asked for a ruling from the Parliamentarian.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Well, you also said there was cause and that is correct, there's cause. Alright, what we have to figure, and everybody's heard the motion. We are the governing body, so what we're going to do is if you think there was cause then...we can't do that.

Imm PDC Britt: You've got a (inaudible) motion on the floor Commander, you've got to deal with that first.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, we've got a motion on the floor, we've got a second. The motion on the floor is to remove Jim Hawk and Joe Lysaght from the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. It has been seconded; it has been discussed thoroughly. Now, we're going to do is because of the importance of this vote, we are going to take a roll call vote on this. We are going to take a roll call vote on this.

NEC Strauss: When am I going to get my ruling from the Judge Advocate?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: And he asked us yesterday if he needed to be here.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: How would we remove, let's say, a Post Commander. You're sitting in your Post and you have a Post Commander, or you have somebody who's done something wrong. How would we in The American Legion remove them? How about a letter, how about notification, how about a chance for appeal? How about all of this stuff. There's a right way and there's a wrong way. And two wrongs don't make a right. And I think we're making two wrongs here. This is your...as the Department Commander, this is your introduction to the DEC to give us brief policies and here we're going through all this crap, that's what it is. Right now, that's crap. And you're trying to railroad something. And it's not being railroaded in the format. I want the two of them here. I agree that there's cause but I'm not going to turn around and remove somebody when they're not here and they can't defend themselves.

NEC Strauss: And they were never required to be here.

D-1 Cmdr Jarvis: So, I mean, this is out of control and this is a hell of a tone to set for a year.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Commander Sinclair, will you modify your motion? They brought some good points up.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: Modify it to do what?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Postpone it or withdraw it. That's one hundred percent up to you.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: I don't mind withdrawing it. The primary purpose is get this on the table, and it's on the table. The blue-hats put it on the table Friday, and we can sit here and put it off but I'm not going to be part of that. I can withdraw it but to postpone it? To what? In my mind, if you vote for it, you

believe there's cause, if you vote against it, you don't. It's perfectly...in my mind, so that point that there should be cause, cause has been, in my mind, delineated. I don't know what happened to the resolutions or whatever, I don't know what happened to this and that, but it shouldn't have. It shouldn't have.

NEC Strauss: You don't know the whole story.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: Huh?

Unidentified person: We don't know the whole story.

D-10 Cmdr Sinclair: Ok. That's all that matters to you (inaudible). Let me tell you something. A lot of the meetings before the meetings and meetings after the meetings take place. A lot of them one on one, a lot of them four or five, hold on, let me say what I want and then I'll say (inaudible)

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, alright, what we've got is we've got a problem, we've got good points and you've got call for a ruling and quite frankly, I don't know. I'm not going to stand here and blow smoke at you. I do know this. I do know that we have a motion on the floor, and it's been seconded, it has been discussed. Alright, very good.

**D-14 Cmdr Brandt: Can this motion be tabled until our next DEC meeting so we can get a ruling from our Judge Advocate and get a better understanding of what's going on?**

**Dept Cmdr Richardson: Are you making a motion that we table it until our next DEC meeting?**

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

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Do I have a second? Hold on, motion to table does not require discussion. It requires a second and a vote. I have a motion to table Commander Sinclair's until the next DEC meeting. Do I have a second?

**D-8 Cmdr Shaffer: I second that motion.**

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Very good. All in favor of tabling the motion until the next DEC meeting? If you vote in favor, raise your hand. Hold on.

NEC Strauss: Let the Sgt-at-Arms count.

**Dept Cmdr Richardson: Raise your hand. All opposed raise your hand? Motion has been tabled until the next DEC meeting which is August 17<sup>th</sup>.** Alright, is there anything else, I hate to say this, for the good of The American Legion?

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: I'd like to make a motion to try and change that whole voting mess. Maybe bring in something or re-work the way we do this.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: That don't need no motion, that's going to get done.

D-3 Cmdr Lewis: Ok.

**Alt NEC Scherer:** I already talked to Mike Strauss on this and he has a job to do when he has to assign all these members to the National Convention and sometimes its touchy the way it goes so **I would like to say or make a motion to that help him along that the Alt NEC be assigned to the National Committee so anybody doesn't have to spend his money to do that so whether its me or the next person whomever, or whomever takes his spot don't have to go through this every time. That's what I'd like to have done so as to relieve you that it automatically goes that way so whether I'm there or not or you're in the there or not they'd have it. And I would also like you to think about maybe sending the Vice Commanders. They're our leaders and they need to know what's going on up there too. But there's a second thought like you just said, responsibility, everybody's responsible when they go to these National Committees to bring back in writing what you learned and talk about it. Now, I've learned (inaudible) at the last two National Conventions (inaudible).**

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Commander Scherer, was that a motion?

Alt NEC Scherer: Yes.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, we have a motion on the floor to assign the alternate NEC to a position and can we do that? He wants the Alt NEC to be assigned to a committee, so he gets to go to National Convention...I don't think that's within the....

Dept Adj Diener: I'm just trying to confirm, there are committee appointments that are made, that doesn't mean that any of those committees are going to automatically going to have an automatic call-in. I mean there aren't automatic call-ins. I mean we can go back and say it, but does that mean that we are going to keep switching the Alt NEC position to a committee that they say gets a call-in that year? I'm not sure what, is it a specific committee that you're talking or what, I'm not sure?

Alt NEC Scherer: There's certain committees that meet every time at Washington in February in Washington, DC and that if you just look it up then you'll see that they're there. I'm just saying that to make sure that either he gets it one way or another or gets there. I keep saying National Security, put him on that. We need to start taking care of our leaders, not just me but the Vice Commanders also.

Dept Adj Diener: But are talking the Washington...just those people get call-ins for Washington, but then other committees meet in Indianapolis, I mean, I just think we need to get it clarified.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Commander Scherer, I'm not really aware of how these committee assignments are made. We need to get with Commander Strauss and find how what the criteria is, what the selection process is an so on and so forth. However, we do have a motion on the floor. Do we have a second?

Alt NEC Scherer: Commander, I'm going to withdraw it.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Very good.

Vice Cmdr Rucker: I'd like to make a motion that the minutes beginning to end be available as soon as possible for the viewing of any member in good standing.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Do you mean available to read on the website?

Vice Cmdr Rucker: No, just be available at the Department or whatever.

NEC Strauss: We're going to have to wait for that.

Vice Cmdr Rucker: I understand that, you have to wait until it comes back. I said when they come available, they're available for our members.

Dept Adj Diener: They're available

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Ok, they're available.

Dept Adj Diener They always are, last years, all of them are in there for anybody to see.

D-14 Cmdr Brandt: We've had a lot of talk today about things not being said to the blue-hats. I want to say that's the District Commanders responsibility. To go see their Posts and tell them everything that's got done. Also, the Vice Commanders position what went on (inaudible).

D-19 Cmdr Gibbons: Commander, I'd like to share what I do at my meetings if I may have a few minutes. My agenda, when I have a District Meeting, is very in depth of all the information that's out of the Adjutant's manual, that dates and stuff that needs to be turned in through the year. And it keeps updating at each meeting throughout the year. And we have quarterly meetings that are scheduled. (inaudible) I also identify the hand-outs that I get from the Department and if the Posts that are represented want to have discussions, they have a chance to look over them and they have a chance to discuss what is presented to them. It seems as though a lot of the delegates have not been identified as to the issues that we needed to discuss. I had four delegates that we paid for, three did not show up, however, they had the information. They knew what the amendments were, they knew what the resolutions were so if they did show up, they had the information they needed to make a decision how they wanted to do. They don't always agree with me; I don't hold that against them because we share information and we learn from each other's input. So that's all I needed to say, for District 19, we're not good in membership, we're down at the bottom but the one, I had seven of my ten post that attended that attended the last District Meeting and I had one Post that invited their members and their members spouses and we had over 28 to show up for it, where normally we have three. Anyhow, I thought that going through the normal process of opening and closing the meeting on a quarterly basis is a lot but people are coming out. So it is available if we get it out to the Commanders. Sometimes it may not go any further.

Post 215 Adj Gooden: I just wanted to let it go on record that I am protesting or contesting the election process for yesterday. All I've wanted since I joined The American Legion was to have a fair shot. I (inaudible) grown up with the military is what I'm used to. All I wanted was a fair shot, my wife wanted a fair shot, my post just wanted a fair shot, you know. But yesterday, regardless of whether I win or lose, but it was an embarrassing situation yesterday, it really was. Lost a lot of members yesterday, it was really, really embarrassing for a very first time first person member coming here, you know. And I also want to (inaudible) we had the National Commander to come and visit last year, he comes every year. And I tell you, after winning, motivating our Post, we got Post of the Year last year. The National Commander came in to Columbia and didn't spend five minutes in our Post but you got to pass our Post several times. I don't know how who set that itinerary, whether, ah, or his schedule. But I look at the Post that he went to, you look at the Post that he visited and the Post, that my Post have done that particular year. (Inaudible) I don't understand it. But I just want to go on record and let it be said that I am contending the election process.

Dept Adj Diener: Commander, that appeal has to be put into writing.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, last one.

Dept Adj Diener: Commander, he has to put that in writing.

Post 215 Adj Gooden: Excuse me, excuse me, is that in the minutes right now?

Dept Cmdr Richardson: We have to receive it.

Post 215 Adj Gooden: I understand but I just want it to be on record.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, last one, Doc?

D-9 Cmdr Sweet: Well, I'm no longer the new kid on the block, it's been several months since I became a District Commander. And there's confusion with me. As I understand my job, it's to be a conduit between the Department and the Posts and give them information that comes down from the DEC meetings?

Vice Cmdr Poulos: Yes, that is correct.

D-9 Cmdr Sweet: I'm having some trouble, and I have an agenda each time that I do a meeting, an agenda that I host but I'm up there trying to run the meeting, and I don't have an Adjutant and it's very difficult to me to write down what transpires and run the meeting at the same down. I would like to make the motion that the District Commanders have a designated Adjutant. I mean we have an Area Commander but we don't have somebody that's designated as an Adjutant.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: It's my understanding and I'm sure there's people that know more about it than I do but it's my understanding that you can appoint your own Adjutant and you can do your Chaplain and your Area Commanders, you know, County Commanders.

D-9 Cmdr Sweet: I had a guy that said he wanted to do it and he came to two meetings and then he didn't come anymore. But if you're running the meeting then it's hard to do your own Adjutant work. And I don't see any reason why we couldn't give a little patch to put on their cover that says cover.

Dept Adj Diener: The only ones that are authorized by the Constitution to have the patch is the Area Commanders.

D-9 Cmdr Sweet: Well, maybe the Area Commander could be the Adjutant too, I don't know what the answer is, but I know that I need an Adjutant.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: Alright, last one.

D-11 Cmdr Lonergan: We've talked back and forth a lot, he said, she said, what's not right, what is right, there's one thing and Nick was taking to a couple of us the other night, he talked about was it the last four years, the last five years, we've only done five things to help the veterans. Something like that. That's something we need to change, we need to do something to help the veterans at every American Legion meeting, we need to do something to help the veterans at every DEC meeting. So instead of five times in four years, how about it we do it five times every meeting. That's all I've got to say.

Dept Cmdr Richardson: No, we're cutting it off, we've beat this horse until it's dead. Alright. Contentious, yes, hard yes, controversial, absolutely. Our job next year is not to let it happen again. We

cannot let it happen again. It's Sunday, we've been here long time, Chaplain, put a short one on us please.

Chaplain Quarles gave the Benediction and Commander Richardson closed the meeting

For God and Country,

Nick I. Diener  
Department Adjutant

ND/mm