



Department Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2022



The meeting of The Department Executive Committee meeting was held on October 16, 2022, at the Columbia Marriott, 1200 Hampton St, Columbia, SC 29210.

Dept Cmdr Jim Jarvis
Dept Adjutant/NEC Micheal Strauss
Alt NEC Joe Lysaght
Dept Historian Tim Taylor
Dept 1st Vice Cmdr Jim Kvam
Dept 2nd Vice Cmdr Bruce Donegan
Dept 3rd Vice Cmdr Jim Rabon
Dept 4th Vice Cmdr Jack Lonergan
D-1 Cmdr Darlene Walton
D-2 Cmdr John Coy
D-4 Cmdr Wayne Southworth
D-8 Cmdr Mark Cannito
D-9 Cmdr John Comins
D-10 Cmdr Doug Dilleshaw
D-11 Cmdr Peter St. Onge
D-12 Cmdr Charlie Davis

D-15 Cmdr Richard Dorman
D-16 Cmdr Courtney Peeples
D-17 Cmdr Jerome Childs
D-18 Cmdr Larry Pouncy
D-19 Cmdr Mark Thompson
D-20 Cmdr David Mills
Dept Sgt-at-Arms Kevin Joy
Dept Asst Sgt-at-Arms, Daniel Stover
Dept Chaplain Richard Mullinax
PDC Jim Hawk
PDC John Britt
PDC Bob Scherer
Alt NEC James Holland

Absent:

Dept J/A Cody Mitchell
Dept Asst J/A Stephen Lewis
Imm PDC Ron Price
D-3 Cmdr Kevin Brown
D-5 Cmdr Jack Smith
D-6 Cmdr Bill Simpson
D-7 Cmdr John Galloway
D-13 Cmdr Rick Gibson
D-14 Cmdr Michael Brandt

Also Present:

Tom Yarborough, Dept Finance Chairman
M. May, Dept Exec. Director

Dave Hare, Post 126 Member

Department Commander Jim Jarvis opened the meeting and called on Department Chaplain Mullinax for the invocation. Commander Jarvis read Resolution 288, led the DEC in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble to the Constitution and called on Adjutant Strauss for the roll call. Adjutant Strauss called the roll and announced that there was a quorum.

Commander Jarvis called for a motion to dispense with the reading of the previous Executive Committee minutes. A motion was made by D-8 Cmdr Mark Cannito and a second was made by

D-9 Commander John Comins, all present voted in favor to dispense with the reading of the previous DEC minutes.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: Let's start with old business first and I don't want to beat a dead horse, the VEAC. I stressed that I needed, we needed volunteers. Please get it down to your deck plates and if you have someone that wants to volunteer, then you need to get that information to Commander Walton, our coordinator for volunteers. That's the big thing at this point is we start building that volunteer list and work on other issues at the same time. We have another meeting for the VEAC on Wednesday and we're going to take the next step in at the same time. But volunteers right now is what you guys and ladies can help us the most with, ok? Any questions that you have on that VEAC at this point? Ok, great.

New Business, we have one more finance meeting on Tuesday and what I intend to do is go ahead, finish that up, tweak the numbers, we have a few areas that we want to tweak at. And then we're going to turn around and we're going to email it to you. Please acknowledge the email so that we know that you got. Everybody understand that? Please acknowledge the email. With that will be the Legion overall budget, it will be what I call our satellite ones, Americanism, the SAL, the Riders, that kind of thing, as well, ok? I'm going to call on...oh, any questions on that? Ok, I'm going to call on PDC Scherer, he's got a couple of items he wants to talk to you about.

PDC Scherer: Morning, first of all I want to thank Commander Jarvis for allowing me to be here this morning. I'm not going to say a lot because you heard a lot yesterday. The main thing I want to do is bring it home to you. These programs that we have are in your hands. If we want them to succeed, they're going to succeed. If we don't want them to succeed, they're not. Why do I say that? Because most of us that have committees, do not have access so the post commanders or adjutants or who to call. You are our link. If you don't take it down to them, and let them know what's going on, we can't do our job. So it's up to you to make that happen. On softball, I'm just going to quickly say that I failed to mention yesterday that you don't have to be just one post to have a team. You can have two three or four, Darlington last year had four. You can have a district team if you want it too, we don't really care. The main thing is we give our girls the opportunity to play softball and have a good time, (inaudible). I spent last night sending out emails to three or four people that are interested, I got a commitment last night from Darlington, they're going to have two teams this year of their own (inaudible). I think right now we're going to have about 16 or 17 teams that have already said they're going to play this year, my goal is 30, Commander Jarvis said 25 and I'd like to go five higher than him, so we're trying to do it that way.

I'm going to switch over to the Oratorical contest, I think I've said enough about softball. One thing I forgot to mention yesterday, I think it would really help our oratorical contest if we had our State winner come to the conference or convention and give his speech so that they really know what it's about. I go around the state and they look at you and say, what's the oratorical contest (inaudible) scholarship program and they look at you like, I don't know what you're talking about. But I think it would be a real good idea at one of our future conferences or conventions. Being handed you see a sheet at all those I've contacted or have contacted me that are interested in the oratorical contest. Last year for the state of SC we had six contestants, three from Jim Defrehn's area. Right now we're sitting at 16 people, I got one again last night, (inaudible) from Darlington. As you can see, I've given the District Commander's the name of the person and also the I think the post they may or may not belong to, that would be up to you. 215's already been notified; they've already contacted their contestant and so had 193 and they've set up the contest for the 14th of January for their post contest. Remember they have to be done no later than February 1st. Look these over, please see if you can or call me to let me know that these are the right posts that these are going to. If that post isn't going to do it, let's shift them to somewhere else. But there's no reason that these 16 people that reached out to us and National reached out to them that they can't be in there. Because I'm going to be calling you in November or December or maybe even in

January to make sure you've contacted your post commander (inaudible) to call him. Because I don't want to see one of these 16 boys or girls that are on this list not be in this contest. Programs, that we have, for Boys and Girls State, for Softball, for Baseball, Shooters Program, every program that we have lies on your shoulders, it could make or break it, let's put it on the line. You're the first line of...first line of correspondence to our posts. If you don't give it, they don't get it, if they don't get it, our programs fail. So I'm asking you, please, take care of this list and let me know what's going on. There may be more, but this is the 16 that we already have. Thank you.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: I want to add one thing that I got hit with. I see two lines where things don't happen, one is with us in this room, getting it down. But the other is that Post Commander. You may be getting to the Post Commander but is he doing anything with it and that's a hard one for you to figure out, but you need to try and keep that in mind. The other thing with the oratorical specifically, and I got hit with this three times already in the last two months. Somebody had called the post and the answer was, we don't so the oratorical, and that's it, that was there answer. We got to fix that. If they don't do it, great. But we need to get it to somebody else. The only way we can do that at this moment in time is get that person to me or PDC Scherer and then we'll get them on that list, and one of them was from my post, I almost had a heart attack when I happened to be on the hallway and happened to hear that. I'm going to call on Commander Walton for a Membership & Post Activities (M & PA) report.

Membership Chairman Walton: One thing I've pretty well hit on membership, it takes all of us working with it. And for the District Commanders I put out a weekly report to let you know where your posts stand. Please acknowledge that you have received this. I'm not just doing this for the sake of having you have something else on your email, I need to know that you've got it and you've looked at it. Because this gives you an overlay of exactly where your posts stands within your district, and you need to be putting that down also to your post. One other thing I want to mention is I'm very involved with the VA. With this new system that we're working on now for March, I'm definitely am going to need all of you to be watching your email because I'm going to be keeping up with you as far as how many volunteers you can get but also the things that you need to be telling your posts after we have done our trip in November to build more bearing on this as to what we need to be telling our members to bring if they're going to be coming to check on their claims. Because it's vital that we make this a...this is the first time we're doing it, let's make this the best we can make it. Because there again, you know, we hear all the times in our meetings about, what is The American Legion doing for our veterans. Well, if you're not doing anything for our veterans, then you know it's lacking out there. Well, this is one of our ways of stepping up to the plate and helping these veterans that we're not touching now. And it's also going to be great for recruiting. If you all have any questions on anything that I send you, please don't hesitate to let me know and I will assist you any way that I can. Ya'll have safe travels going home and like I said, let's make this a bumper year for membership, we can do it. Thank you.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis; Thank you Commander Walton.

Dept Adj Strauss: Just a couple loose ends and we're going to wrap up here. Typically we have Columbus Day off at Headquarters. I had to go to Indianapolis for the Fall meetings, and I had to leave Maggie on solo the last week over before the Fall Conference, so first of all let's give Maggie a hand for stepping up. She did a really good job stepping up. We weren't allowed to give her Monday so we're looking for a motion to give her Monday off to make up for that.

Vice Commander Kvam: I make a motion to close headquarters tomorrow.

Vice Comamnder Rabon: I second that.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: I have a motion, and it's been seconded. All in favor say aye, all opposed. Make it so.

Dept Adj Strauss:

1) Thank you Commander. So Tony Kannan who has been running the "Be the One" car in the Indy racing competed in the Iron Man competition over in Hawaii. If you don't know, that's some of the hardest races to do as a human being. You're running 25 miles, swimming I think five miles, and running another 20 miles, all in one day. And he wore the "Be the One" beater when he ran the iron man and brought a lot of great publicity to The American Legion when he did that. He also, when he raced in the Indianapolis 500, finished in 3rd place. And all the interviews that he did, he had the leading car in the race, and they were talking about the data that was pouring in after that race for The American Legion programs was off the charts, so that's great. They've already talked about, if you've been in the Legion for a while, our marketing program used to be DMS, that knife they sent out or a ring here and there. That was about our marketing program in a nutshell but with this marketing program we have now, millions of dollars have come in in donations, and it seems to be working very well. Jimmy Johnson and Tony Kannan have really been great in getting us donations. When they did the market studies, they did a lot of surveys of the veterans about what they would like to see in our organization. And one of the top things was addressing veterans' suicide and that's where "Be the One" was born. The veterans said we want to address that and that's what we're doing so you're going to see a lot of "Be the One" stuff, so we got a good start with the race team, you know keep it up, you know, talk about it a little bit.

2) They want us to convey to you, some of you know personally that American Legion caps and the paper shortages, which, some of you know, that one of the reasons we don't have our raffle tickets is the paper shortage. The normal paper that we used last year is not going to be the paper we use this year. We strongly...we haven't got the tickets in to look at them but they might be...you might want to use a Sharpie (permanent marker), we'll figure it out real quick when we get them, but we hope that it doesn't smudge, that's the ideal thing that it doesn't smudge when you right on them. But keep that in mind that we don't want it to smudge so we're using some sort of pen or pencil that's readable and doesn't smudge.

3) I know that James's cap took a lot of time to come and they're going to be combining Customer Service and Emblem Sales into one, that used to be two separate groups at headquarters. They're going through a lot of personnel changes so they're trying to be creating on how they're attacking things.

4) Pete St. Onge, they put out a new bookazine, some of you haven't heard this, some of you have. But there was a bookazine that was put out and Pete's wife and Pete were both in that book about Covid operations. They ran the farmers market during Covid and had a little farmer's market, which was awesome so good job Pete for representing us there.

5) The CPR's should be online in a week or two. Only the Post Adjutant will have access. Keep this in mind when you change adjutant's late in the spring, if you change to a new adjutant, when that changes in the system, the old adjutant won't have access to the CPR. People were calling us about being locked out of the system and the reason was there was probably a change of adjutant so tell your people, you know, that when you do change adjutant's, access to the CPR will change. Even though it's a yearlong thing, it's not going to be the same adjutant until that CPR expires. So come up with a game plan on how to attack that.

6) There's been talk at National about shortening the National Convention starting in 2027. I don't think they took any action on that. No action so far on that.

7)The Department of Iowa was talking about newsletters, and they had a newsletter that they did and they used an image from Getty just trying to pump up they're newsletter a little bit and they got a very expensive bill for use of the copyrighted photos in their publications. So I'm just kind of warning you on that, be cognizant of what photos you're putting in a publication because you may have to pay for a copyrighted photo. They had to pay the piper to use an unauthorized use of an image. So try to avoid it, if you've got a post newsletter, try to pass that on to your people.

8)I mentioned but not everybody was there, Boy Scouts, just try to keep in mind. If you have post insurance, you want to make sure the Boys Scouts are covered under your umbrella. Because they're not Legionnaires, so if you are having Boy Scouts meet at your posts, they said double check your coverage and make sure that's covered. Apparently there was an issue.

9)When you have a person that's deceased and they get marked deceased in the system, please tell your folks it may take up to a full quarter for some of the things to take place because some of the things that the people they contract out to do not have the up to the date list, some are quarterly, so that's why sometimes they still get the magazine or something they probably shouldn't get. Most publications when you mark them deceased but some of them could take up to a quarter so keep that in mind. They are working on getting that record out of there.

10)Bob talked the oratorical contest, if you need help, if you've never had one at your post, think about having one. There are a lot people that have done these contests in the past, you might now know who they are, talk to Past Department Commanders in your areas, talk to...these people have run many contests and know who are good. It's tough to get some to get somebody who can explain the scorecards and tabulations. There are people out there that have done it for years, you just might not know who they are. So I would strongly encourage to start asking questions of some of the people who have done the contest. There are step by step things that tell you everything that you're going to need before you start the contest. Great job on that, Bob.

11)Lowcountry, if you're in the Lowcountry, I've talked to the Vice Commanders about this earlier this year. We had a very, very poor showing from the Lowcountry for Law Cadet so please promote the program in the Lowcountry. Basically, if you live on the coast, we didn't have any representation hardly at all from the coast and the Lowcountry. I showed them all on a map, basically it's from I-20 and north, there were a select few from just below I-20 but not very many. When you're having those District meetings, talk about the Law Cadet program, we need some help down there. We used to have a lot from Manning and Murrells inlet and Charleston and that area. We had a two-year lull in Law Cadet and got kind of silent, so we need your help to kind of promote that, the more people we've got, the better, it helps the bottom line on the cost, so with that, I appreciate and I'll turn it back over to the Commander.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: At this time, I'll entertain a motion into Executive Session.

D-9 Cmdr Comins: I make a motion to go into Executive Session.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: Second?

D-11 Cmdr St. Onge: Second.

EXECUTIVE SESSION BEGINS

EXECUTIVE SESSION ENDS

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: If there's anybody out there, they can come on back in again. For the good of The American Legion. One of the issues that we're working on right now or we have to address right now in general, next years Fall Conference. Right now we do not have a contract for the Fall Conference, we have one for the Convention at the Doubletree next year, but we do not have one for the Fall Conference. In doing the budget, that's part of the issue that we're having right now, we need a budget for the Fall Conference, if in fact we're going to have a Fall Conference like we've know it. Or are we going to some changes to it and have individual training sessions, half day or anything along that line. What I need to do or to tell me is how you want to go about doing that,. Do we want to start investigating going away from the traditional Fall Conference. If we do that, it's going to be hard to go back into it again. I personally don't want to do away with it, but that's my personal opinion here. The camaraderie I like once a year, the relaxed atmosphere, and that kind of thing. But this is an organization, and we all, you guys (inaudible). So we need to make that decision and we need to make it now so that we can make...if we're going to have it originally like we are, we need what do you call it? Reservations, contract or whatever with a place to do it and I would think that would be the Doubletree if we're going to do it that way. I need your say so and I'll for a motion in a minute. I need you to tell me that you want us to look into an alternative or the older method.

Dept Adj Strauss: The traditional method would be the Fall Conference or some sort of the alternative to be a smaller venue type, no hotel probably, probably would be no hotel. Maybe trying to find a venue that is a large room that could fit enough Legionnaires and that I people wanted to stay in a nearby hotel we could do that and not have to pay ungodly amounts of money. We're paying roughly, probably looking at \$8,000.00 a day to have a hotel. We could do a lot with \$8,000.00 a day I think if we shortened these to one day training things, maybe have two training things, one right after the convention, maybe say for Commanders and Adjutants. And have another one somewhere, we could do a test year if we kind of like it next year, keep going with it or in next years budget we could do it again. But I just thought it was a whole lot of money for the way that we've always been doing it and we don't really know if what we just talked about, is everything going to be on board.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: Let me play the devil's advocate, The convention is the only time that we get together as Legionnaires, what's that going to do to the Legion. Remember now, the atmosphere, during the convention. Just think about that. If that's the only time we meet as a group or as an organization, what's that going to do for The American Legion, that's my opinion.

D-11 Cmdr St. Onge: Commander, I'd like to suggest that Post 15 has some of the facilities available. With far enough planning, and both of our facilities and we could talk with the Civic Center which has a 20,000 square foot area. If we kept the schedule right now, October of 2023, one of the Legion buildings is already rented. Going to October of 2024 we could look at something like that. We have a 4,000 square foot room, a 6,000 square foot room that can be broken into two 3,000's, plus I think we could get the civic center.

Dept Adj Strauss: What's your capacity for the main room there, your main room?

D-11 Cmdr St. Onge: The larger of the two rooms are 450 people, set up like this, with chairs or tables or stuff. The other building is 350 so it can be broken down into half, into two rooms like that. (Inaudible) Civic Center or stuff like that. It's all one campus, it's all one property, there are hotels close by, there are restaurants close by.

Dept Adj Strauss: How far is close, within a mile?

D-11 Cmdr St. Onge: Two miles to downtown, which has a new hotel that's down there. And I can tell you the cost, using our building would be free. So you could go into maybe having some catered food coming in or (inaudible) like that I'm not sure of the Civic Center would want something but if it did it definitely would not be thousands of dollars.

Dept Adj Strauss: For a 400 seat, we're basically looking at a little over 200 here so that could work. Those are types of options that we could look at, for sure.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: You see, we don't really have much time or chance to think of an option, especially since we don't have a conference coming up locked in for next October. So we have to make some decisions quick.

Dept Adj Strauss: It doesn't have to be October.

D-18 Cmdr Pouncy: Mr. Commander, let's continue with what we have. Let's tighten up the money (inaudible).

D-11 Cmdr St. Onge: I do have a calendar here so if you're looking at a possible change for the October late September time frame. We could talk about that right now, probably within a half hour I could get you a price on cost. If we needed to expand that into that area. But as far as bouncing around to different venues, if we chose to move there in the 2023/2024 time frame which I know we could do right now, we could make that a permanent location.

Dept Adj Strauss: We don't need to do that right now, there's a lot of logistical stuff we'd have to get into as far as any meetings.

D-2 Cmdr Coy: I'd like to make a motion to keep it the traditional way.

D-1 Cmdr Walton: I second that motion.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: I have a motion on the floor to keep it as is and I have a second. And I need to raise a hand on this one. All in favor....any discussion?

PDC Hawk: You've got a motion and a second, we amend that a little bit to let the staff and you make a survey of hotels and venues that ya'll would like? Even though we would keep it the same format? We got to find a place, Commander. The key point is time's running out to find a place.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: I think our only chance, really, if we keep it in the same format as now, would be the Doubletree.

PDC Hawk: That gives ya'll the authority to look at that.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: Would you please amend your...

D-2 Cmdr Coy: I agree to amend my motion that the Department Commander (inaudible).

Dept Adj Strauss: I don't know what....

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: He's giving you the option as well as to.

Dept Adj Strauss: To bring it back for further study?

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: No, to come up with that venue.

D-1 Cmdr Walton: And I second that.

PDC Scherer I think we should keep it the same. When we start spreading everybody and you're not going to have the continuity but maybe we could make it a two day instead of a three day. I mean, this half a day cost us how much money at night to rent the room. So maybe we ought to consider moving it to two days instead of three.

D-9 Cmdr Comins: I know Bruce is familiar with New York State they have there, I know Jim, I talked to you a long time about this that I have always pretty much been in favor of moving the convention and our conference. I have no objection to have a conference in the same place, but I think moving the convention from place will hopefully generate more interest in attending the things. I know Jim says no, I understand that but Bruce, you know and I know the Legion in New York State they move it all around and I don't think they've been unsuccessful, have they?

Vice Cmdr Donegan: No.

D-9 Cmdr Comins: No, so, I mean, I don't know what the difference is.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: What I said was exactly what I told you the last time. We have the numbers that says that you're wrong in South Carolina. Now, that could work in the North.

D-9 Cmdr Comins: I know people in South Carolina don't want to come to Rock Hill but then Rock Hill want to go to Charleston. You know, you got to think about it. But I'm in favor of it, I don't care. I'd like to say maybe the Fall Conference be reduced in size and condensed down to less meetings then maybe move it. You know, Rock Hill has a pretty big facility there, they might be able to support it (inaudible).

NEC Lysaght: Several years ago the decision was made in this Department to (inaudible), Columbia was chosen because it was the central part of the state. The second thing that was voted on was the fact that once you separate away from the hotel, you have a transportation problem to worry about, you have the weather to worry about, you have people that say, I'm not going over there today. Here at the hotel we've found that people would congregate, not necessarily (inaudible), There's no doubt about it, it'd be really ideal (inaudible). But we have to remember, some of our people just can get up and go back to the hotel. If you've ever left the state and go to National or go to Fall meetings, you're being shuttled in vans, unless you want to walk nine blocks. And when it started raining, it actually rains. So I agree with Commander Pouncy. I think we can research it but right now we have to make a decision, and I think amending the motion to allow the Commander and Adjutant to really make the decision (inaudible). Not to say the DEC could not pursue this after they end that process. But there are a lot of factors going into a meeting of this magnitude. (inaudible)

D-11 Cmdr St. Onge: I'd like to add real quick, I agree there is a lot of Camaraderie that happens in the evenings when the meetings are over. But if we are talking about 200 or 250 people coming to the convention, how many people book a room, is it 50? So are you catering to the 50 or the 200?

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: Well first off, the conference is 200/250, the convention's larger.

Dept Adj Strauss: We're talking about conference though.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: Any other comments?

Dept Adj Strauss: So we do have to make a number for the conference, which is going to be substantially larger, just want to make everybody aware of that, I am very sure of that. We are definitely going to check into that but be prepared for that when we pass out the budgets here shortly.

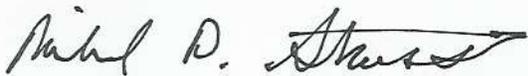
Dept Cmdr Jarvis: Everything's going up, that we've been hit with. The motion that we have, the bottom-line motion is that we keep it as such and that we leave it up to the Adjutant and myself to try to figure out where and seriously looking at the conference only being two days instead of that third day and then go from there. All in favor now, please raise your hand? 17. All against, raise their hand? Keeping it as such and trying to modify it has passed. Yes, sir?

D-9 Cmdr Comins: I voted in favor of it because we don't have time but maybe look at doing something different in the future.

Dept Cmdr Jarvis: In closing I want to bring up one thing but District Commanders, push all our programs, Ladies Fastpitch, Baseball, you name it, push it off. Yes, we're trying to rejuvenate Law Cadet Academy and we're trying to get Oratorical back up to where it used to be in the past but please push it all. And please push my Commander's project, NEF. They need to have an influx to money with Kentucky, the West Coast and now Florida and Florida's going to need a lot of help, and Puerto Rico. And they're always needing an income or an influx of money into that event and I strongly encourage it and push you to support that. I want to leave you with two things. Will you be the one and will you continue to serve.

Department Chaplain Mullinax gave the benediction and Commander Jarvis closed the meeting.

For God and Country,



Michael D. Strauss
Department Adjutant

MS/mm