THE AMERICAN LEGION

DEPARTMENT OF OHIO

DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Date: Saturday, April 11, 2026.

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60 Big Run Road
Delaware, Ohio 43015

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Saturday, April 11, 2026.

. . . CALL TO ORDER . . .

COMMANDER OREN: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. How we doing?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Good morning.

COMMANDER OREN: Good to see you all here.

Let's see, anything -- salute the colors. One, two.

. . . SALUTE TO COLORS BY ASSEMBLY . . .

Invocation, Ron.

CHAPLAIN DISTEL: Good morning, everyone.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Morning.

CHAPLAIN DISTEL: Let us pray.

Lord, we meet today as past defenders of our great land. We support each other, Lord, in our challenges due to the results of our duties. We ask You, Lord, for Your support in bringing an end to the hatred in our world, so no one else will be affected by the dangers of war's causes. Keep us all safe, Lord, as we strive to bring wellness to all. Thanks to You who we pray, amen.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Amen.

COMMANDER OREN: Gary, lead us in the Pledge.

. . . PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE BY ASSEMBLY . . .

Recover.

Holly.

2VC LEWIS: Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th National Convention, calls for designating an empty chair placed at all official meetings of The American Legion, as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America. This is a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and full accounting of those missing. Let us rededicate ourselves to this vital endeavor.

COMMANDER OREN: Recover.

Holly, would you please lead us in the preamble.

. . . PREAMBLE BY ASSEMBLY . . .

Thank you.

I do want to mention something before I turn it over to JD for roll call.

Holly, congratulations on being the Media Communications Chair at National.

(Applause).

Okay, roll call, JD.

. . . ROLL CALL CONDUCTED . . .

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Commander, you have a quorum and can conduct business.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

Sergeant-at-Arms Mike Kennedy, introduce guests, please.

SGT-AT-ARMS KENNEDY: Good morning.

Any guests who didn't sign in, let me know. We'll try to catch everyone.

Our first guest is Steve Weismann, National Vice Commander.

Did I say it right?

NVC WEISMANN: Weismann.

(Applause).

Robyn Ladson, 3rd District Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander; Fawn Auman, 10th District, Post 248; Bob Decker, 6th District 2nd Vice; Tom Tierney, District 2 2nd Vice; Charles Stennis, Past Department Commander; Bob Klostermeier, Past Department Commander; Laura Blake, 8th District Adjutant; Steve Masowick, Mr. Masowick, Past Department Commander; Jerry Perry, 4th District Adjutant.

And how do you say your name, sir, the last gentleman that signed it?

LEGIONNAIRE HARRIS: Ericolis.

SGT-AT-ARMS KENNEDY: Ericolis, 3rd District Finance Officer.

Commander, that's it.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

Okay, the approval of the November DEC minutes.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: They've already been approved.

COMMANDER OREN: They been approved. Okay, then I can skip that.

Okay, my opening remarks.

Again, hello. I'm glad that we have a good turnout today with our Vice Commander here. Thank you for showing up. It makes us look good.

And we have a lot to go over today, so I'm going to make it short and sweet. Welcome. And I appreciate everybody here.

But when you stand up and want the floor, I need your name and I need your Post or your District, so these fine folks over here (indicating) can get you registered.

Thank you very much.

Gary.

1VC COX, JR.: Good morning.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Morning.

1VC COX, JR.: How we all doing?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Good. Wonderful.

1VC COX, JR.: O-H.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: I-O.

1VC COX, JR.: There we go.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: Go Blue.

1VC COX, JR.: We ain't going to go there.

Membership, 91.94 percent, it's really, really, really good. It's not 100, but it's really good. So keep it up.

But what I also wanted to talk about, we have 492 Posts in the Department. By percentage, how much do you think our percentage is that we've had turned in? Because the CPRs are already past due. What do you think we should be at right now?

FROM THE FLOOR: A hundred percent.

1VC COX, JR.: We should be at 100 percent. But what do you think, logically?

FROM THE FLOOR: Logically, about 95. But it's about 60.

1VC COX, JR.: According to National, we're at 9.96 percent. Not even ten percent. So I need you all to get on that.

Now, the other side, Consolidated Squadron Reports, the SAL side, 7.62 percent.

Now if you guys are sitting here thinking,

well, that's the SAL, you're right. However, we, as The Legion, that's our program. You, as District officers, it's your program. So you need to be on your District officers and your Squadrons to get those turned in. We have both sides of the coin, not just The Legion. So I would be really happy if you guys could leave here today and get on this.

Now, we're going to have a little bit of fun too. So, with that being said, do we have the green lantern. Is it here?

FROM THE FLOOR: Yes.

1VC COX, JR.: The green lantern needs to go to the 11th District. So make sure that gets done.

Congratulations.

(Applause).

Do we have the red lantern?

14TH DISTRICT 1VC MARX: Sort of.

1VC COX, JR.: Did you bring it in pieces? Is it a Lego?

14TH DISTRICT 1VC MARX: No.

1VC COX, JR.: Do you have the red lantern here?

14TH DISTRICT 1VC MARX: I have a red lantern (indicating).

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Where is the original red

lantern?

14TH DISTRICT 1VC MARX: In my garage.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: That's a fine.

1VC COX, JR.: Yeah, that is a fine, because you should have it.

So you have an improvised red lantern. Not an improvised -- okay, we're not going to go there.

So that needs to go to the 12th District. You need to give them your gift, Jacob.

Congratulations on your gift.

So the 2nd Distinct gave the green lantern to the 11th District and the 14th District gave the improvised red lantern to the 12th District.

And you will be getting that to them as soon as you can.

I need to tell you a quick story though. We met up yesterday with the National Vice.

And thank you, Laura, for that. That was great.

And just so you guys know, in case I do get hungry, the Commander and the 2nd Vice, while they were at the National Veterans Hall of Fame, decided to pick me up not only a red crayon but an orange one too. So we're also representing Tennessee here. So if you all see my gnawing on this (indicating),

it's not a fine.

Now, I have the gold No. 1 pin for the large, medium and small Districts.

So, if Brian Fowle is not here, would Michael like to -- no, Brian, Brian, Tim Shaw and David Taylor are our No. 1 pins. So make sure you give them all a round of applause for that.

(Applause).

And also, I wasn't kidding on my Bulleit challenge. The 7th District, besides the 3rd District, was the only one to take me up on it. And they said 93 percent. They got their 93 percent. And here is your bottle of Bulleit.

So 7th District 1st Vice Brian Fowle, Tim Shaw and David Taylor, please come up here.

Robin, thank you.

Tom, thank you for that.

But he does have a bottle of Bulleit.

Please don't post that on Facebook.

So, John, you might end up getting cut out of that photo.

But other thank that, we're not done. We're in April. We've got to go all the way to July. Do not let off this gas. Keep up the hard work.

If you're falling behind or you're not sure

what's going on because you're in the back of the pack, reach out to those in the front. That's why we have these committee meetings. That's why we sit there and meet. Because nobody should be left behind. There will be somebody in the front and there will be somebody in the back. That's just the way it goes.

All of you are doing an outstanding job. Stay on the path and look forward to getting us to July.

Thanks for your time.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you, Gary.

1VC COX, JR.: You're welcome.

(Applause).

COMMANDER OREN: Okay, Holly.

2VC LEWIS: Good morning, everybody.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Good morning.

2VC LEWIS: Glad to see you all.

All right, a couple of updates on activities. There are flyers for everything on the side. If you didn't get them, you should.

Just an update on bowling tournament. Peggy let Sherry know that there is an issue with the scoring, which is why the results have not been posted yet. The bowling alley is correcting the errors as we speak. And once Peggy finalizes the

scores, we'll get them posted on the Department website.

An important thing to know is that next year it will be hosted by Mount Carmel Post 72, at the Cherry Grove Lanes in Cincinnati.

The Department Cornhole Tournament was last weekend, weekend before. The weekend before.

Myself and Mike were there, as well as Larry Stottsberry, Past District Commander from the 10th District.

It was really nice. They the 68 people. It went all day.

There were professionals there. Who knew that there were professional cornhole players? I did not. Right? And they're making like a 100 grand a year. And I'm like, huh, what did I do wrong here?

But anyway, it was a very good turnout. So if you get a chance to go next year, it was fascinating to watch. It really was.

The Department Pool Tournament is next weekend, April 17th through the 19th. The 17th is an open-to-the-public tournament. And then the singles tournament is on the 18th, and the partner team tournament is on Sunday. So there's a flyer for that over there.

The euchre tournament is on May 9th, at Post 262. It starts at noon and it's $10 a person. So I believe there's a flyer over there for that.

The Department Golf Tournament, for all you golfers, is going to be on July 18th through the 19th, at the Beverly Post 389. Tom is the contact person for that. And there will be dinner and entertainment on Saturday evening at the Post.

A couple of other things I wanted to just make sure you were aware of. And I think I talked to all the Districts that this affects. But we are having the Commander visit at the Cleveland VA Regional Office on May 28th. So I wanted to make sure the Districts all knew about that, because I think it's important that the Districts that go to that facility have a voice.

Also, there is the Special Olympics Opening Summer Games is on May 29. We would love for you guys to come and witness that.

I got to go last year. It was amazing, you know, just watching the torch run come in and the kids, you know, like running along with the state patrolman. It was awesome. They had such an amazing time. And, you know, just the opening ceremonies was just very heartwarming. So I highly

recommend that.

And then finally, the National Membership Workshop, which all new 1st Vices next year are required to attend, notice I didn't say it's optional, you are required to attend, that is part of your duties, that is on August 7th through the 9th, in Indianapolis. So we will be --

And just so you know, Department does reimburse the District 1st Vice Commander for one night of hotel lodging for that and mileage. So it's not like it's out of your pocket. Okay?

It's very, very important for us all to attend that, so that we know what the strategy is for the year and we can bring all of that knowledge back to help our Department.

And that's all I have. Thank you.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Good morning.

JD.

As we all know, and we will discuss later about the financial status of the Department, one of the reasons that we cut from two days down to one day for reimbursement on the membership workshop, we feel the Districts should have a little skin in the game of promoting their member to be able to go out,

and the District should help that member be able to afford one extra night at the membership workshop. That was the thinking behind it.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you, JD.

Thank you, Holly.

Since Ken is not here, Finance, Dean.

CHAIRMAN BOYERS: Good morning, everybody.

Ken sends his apologies. He's out of the country right now. He was hoping to be able to Zoom in but his schedule was changed so wasn't able to accommodate that this morning.

The Finance Committee has met, I believe at least three or four times since our, yeah, three times, officially, since our last meeting. The minutes of those meetings have been sent out.

I could stand here and read them all to you if you would like. If not, we'll suspend that.

Does anybody have any questions about the minutes that were e-mailed out to you as far as the Finance Committee goes?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

CHAIRMAN BOYERS: Okay. You know that we've had some things going on in the Department finances. We came to you guys and asked for a vote to appoint an ad hoc committee. We had some issues going on

with the audit and we needed to get a few things straightened out on that. So Commander Oren appointed Charles Stennis, Kurt Emans and Stanley Pleasant to the ad hoc committee.

They've been working together to get things straightened out. And I think they've made some pretty significant progress over the last couple of months to get that straightened out, along with our, Nancy Shaw, our -- what do I want to say -- accountant, yeah, our accountants, to get things straightened out. They are on track to get all of that and hopefully come up with a clear audit for the last three years.

We did have, or come together, for a Zoom meeting to approve moving forward with a qualified opinion of the audit. And like I said, they're making significant progress on getting that taken care of.

The Finance Committee met on March 30th. We met in person here at Department Headquarters to work on our budget. We've done that for the last couple years. Rather than just one person, we work together as a committee to work out the next year's budget.

This year it was a little bit more detailed

because, obviously, we have to come up with a budget based on whether the dues increase passes and based on whether the dues increase doesn't pass.

Now you also have to keep in mind that if the dues increase does pass, we still have to trim some out of the budget.

So it's been a little challenging. It's not complete yet, but we're still working on it, crunching the numbers, trying to pull things together to come up with a balanced budget, or balance budgets, to present to you guys at the DEC meeting at the Department Convention.

Moving forward, one of the things that was brought to us from our auditing firm, one of the big reasons we were having difficulty putting everything together for the last couple years' audits, was as we vote in new Treasurers, each Treasurer kind of likes or has their way of doing things, and have done things that have made changes each year that's really kind of made it together, to mesh everything together.

So what we're doing is we're going to put together an SOP for the Finance Commission that follows the GAAP standards. "GAAP" is "Generally Accepted Accounting Principles." So then each

Treasurer can follow those standards so everything will be done the same way year after year. So when we send that to an auditing firm, that they have a clean path moving forward to get those audits done in a timely manner for us.

The other thing that I would really like to, that I'm working on with our finance team, is to present you guys with a better monthly finance report. A monthly finance report would be sent out to the DEC so you can keep track of where our investments are, where our spending is, where our income is, on a monthly basis. I think that's part of being more transparent so you guys know where we're at financially.

Speaking of our investments, obviously, with the way things have been going over the last month or so, they don't look pretty. The last time I looked at them, and I don't think I've opened it since then, but it was probably a week and a half ago, our investments were down about $525,000.

I think they have bounced back just a little bit over the last couple weeks. So hopefully those are looking better. But there for awhile it was looking kind of rough.

The one last thing that I have is a reminder to

all committee chairs, if you would like to have funding from Charities, Inc., please send that request to the Finance Committee first. We will review that request and then forwarded it on to Charities, Inc.

There are a couple committees that I think submitted a request directly to Charities, Inc., that has not gone through the Finance Committee yet. So that money has not been approved yet.

So any committee requesting money from Charities needs to send it to Finance first, so we can take a look at that to make sure that we put it in the budget or put it in our finances properly so we know what's going on with that.

Everybody received a budget versus actual that was dated on March 30th. That's as of March 30th.

Does anybody have any questions on that at this point?

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Commander, point of order.

Parliamentarian Minadeo.

I would think that since Charities is a 501(c)(3), separate EIN, that the Finance Committee here has no authority over that to review anything, unless designated by this DEC as the Board of the

Charities.

I mean, that route of something going past the 501(c)(3) I think needs to be solidified and discussed in this group. And if this group wishes to do that as the Board of the 501(c)(3), then they could have a resolution and pass it.

I'm not saying it's wrong or anything. I'm just saying we need to make sure it's legal. I would think that that needs to be done.

So we would need --

COMMANDER OREN: We need to draw up a resolution?

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Or a motion.

COMMANDER OREN: A motion?

CHAIRMAN BOYERS: It's really not the Finance Committee approving or disapproving the request. It's just we want it to go through us first so we're at least aware of it. It's more of an awareness thing.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Awareness or not, you have no part in making that decision yourself. The body needs to authorize you to do that. That's all I'm saying.

CHAIRMAN BOYERS: Okay. All right.

NEC CHAPMAN: There again, they do have control

over the committees and their finances and what they're making their request for. They're not actually telling Charities, Inc., that they need to approve or disapprove a request, right?

CHAIRMAN BOYERS: Right, correct.

NEC CHAPMAN: Your committees are coming to you first so that you have a record of --

CHAIRMAN BOYERS: So we have a record of that income that's coming in to that committee.

NEC CHAPMAN: They do control their committees. But that is a separate entity.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: He just said so they have an idea of the income going to Charities.

NEC CHAPMAN: No.

CHAIRMAN BOYERS: Coming from Charities to our --

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Right.

So if Charities writes a check to them, that's one thing. But me, as a Post, sending it to the Finance Committee first --

FROM THE FLOOR: That's not what he's saying.

It's expenses only, Gary.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: So that's what I'm saying, I'm not sure what's been finalized by this DEC for this function.

CHAIRMAN BOYERS: So it's not, it's not an individual Post request like we've had. It's just our committees.

Like Baseball. Baseball sent a request to Charities for $40,000. We had no knowledge of that. So how do we, if we don't know that baseball is going to have an income of $40,000, it makes it kind of hard for us to -- you know, we know what Baseball's expenses are. And we're kind of trying to figure out how are we going to cover that, that expense. We just need to know that part of that expense is going to be covered by $40,000 coming from Charities to help us cover their $50,000-some worth of baseball expense.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Rick Smathers, 11th District 1st Vice.

I make a motion that any committee requesting money from Charities, Inc., send it through the Finance Committee first, in order for the Finance Committee to appropriately budget money.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

2ND DISTRICT 1VC EMANS: Emans, 2nd District, seconds.

COMMANDER OREN: Okay. Now, discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

2ND DISTRICT 1VC EMANS: I would just like to add that that will clarify accounting policies and procedures to make it a whole lot easier --

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: Tell them who you are.

2ND DISTRICT 1VC EMANS: Emans, 2nd District.

COMMANDER OREN: Yes, Kurt.

2ND DISTRICT 1VC EMANS: It will make it easier for the accounting to take place, like Dean said, just tracking the funds. I mean, it's hard to run a business if you don't know what the income is, or the expenses. It's just a check and balance.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you, Kurt.

Any other discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Any other discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Aye.

COMMANDER OREN: All opposed, same.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Motion carries.

CHAIRMAN BOYERS: Excellent. Thank you.

COMMANDER OREN: Dinner bell.

CHAIRMAN BOYERS: Commander, that's my Finance report.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you, sir.

Department Chaplain Ron Distel.

CHAPLAIN DISTEL: Commander.

Well, good morning again.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Morning.

CHAPLAIN DISTEL: You all have been keeping me busy.

Since our last E-board, I was notified that our 1st Vice, Gary Cox, was going to Save a Warrior Program. I sent him a thinking-of-you card and wished him success.

1VC COX, JR.: Thank you, sir.

CHAPLAIN DISTEL: I sent a sympathy card to the family of Robert Taylor on their loss. And I don't, I didn't jot down who sent me the information. So I apologize for that.

I sent a get-well card to Past Department Commander Jason Rue, as he was going through some very serious treatments.

I sent a card of get-well to Karen Chapman, the wife of Ron Chapman, who is receiving cancer treatments.

I sent a sympathy card to the LaVoy family in the loss of their patriot, James LaVoy, who was a World War II veteran who was 103 years young.

I sent a get-well card to our current Department Commander, as I found out he was wearing a heart monitor. The doctors are checking him out. I think they just wanted to make sure he's got a heart.

COMMANDER OREN: They didn't find one.

CHAPLAIN DISTEL: I sent a get-well card to Al and Dayna Beyers, as they were both down with the flu, pretty seriously.

I hadn't heard anything from Past Department Commander Jerry Wilson in a while. So I sent him a thinking-of-you card.

3rd District Commander Paul Michael passed away and I sent a sympathy card to the family through the funeral home, as I did not have an address.

I've been in contact with Past Department Auxillary President Jane Ridenour, who went through a new heart pacemaker being installed. It was a success. And also her husband, Dave Ridenour, who is also a Past Buckeye Boys State President, he's going through some cancer treatment and the outlook don't look good. So I keep him in my thoughts and

prayers constantly.

I sent a sympathy card to the family of Richard "Dick" Houp. He was the Americanism Chairman for Department for many years.

I sent, Past Detachment Commander Doug Hancock passed away, and I sent a card of condolence to his wife Rita.

I sent a sympathy card to Past Department Commander Richard Zulch, after being notified of his sister-in-law's passing.

I sent a condolence card to Past Department Commander Jean Wilson in the loss of her Aunt Jean. I think that's who she was actually named after.

I was notified by Department that Assistant Chaplain Sharon McLain was in the hospital. I tried to contact her several times but my phone calls went unanswered. I hope she's doing well. But I hear today she's got some serious problems going on and she will not be attending. So I'll get back with her again.

I was informed by Tim Shaw that a good friend and mentor of his, Red Feltz, had passed away. And I sent him a condolence.

I ask that you keep all these people in your thoughts and prayers.

And try to stay healthy. I'd appreciate it. Summer convention is coming up real quick and I can quit standing up here and giving all the bad news.

Commander, that's my report.

(Applause).

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

Department Historian, Kevin Motter.

HISTORIAN MOTTER: Commander.

Gee, that's a tough darn act to follow there, Chaplin.

CHAPLAIN DISTEL: Sorry.

HISTORIAN MOTTER: You do a good job. Good job, sir.

CHAPLAIN DISTEL: Thank you.

HISTORIAN MOTTER: Time. I mean this might carry off on the shirttails of the Chaplin, time.

You know, when I was a young boy, I couldn't wait to be, you know, old enough to ride my first bicycle, take the training wheels off. Then, as I got a little bit older, I said, man, can't wait to get that driver's license, be a little bit older and get that driver's license. Then I thought, dang, now I can, you know, vote and buy adult beverages. And by golly, once I get that vote I'm going to straighten this stuff out. That didn't work out so

much.

As we get older, we understand the value of time. Now I get to birthdays now and I'm like, ah, another birthday.

So, keeping that all in mind, I'm going to keep this as brief or as long as you want.

Jon Vulgamore does an excellent job on that Ohio Legion News.

And I know that everybody in here reads that thing from cover to cover. Because we are, we are the cream of the crop of The Legion here in the Department of Ohio. If not, we wouldn't be here. You know, we would have other things we would rather be doing.

There's nothing I would rather be doing on a Saturday morning than be here. Okay?

I know once you get that Ohio Legion News, I know -- let's see a show of hands. How many get that?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (Indicating).

HISTORIAN MOTTER: Okay.

This is going to be a rhetorical question: How many read it from cover to cover?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (Indicating).

HISTORIAN MOTTER: All right.

Now, that being said, all right, this is where -- that's my second question. I've got one more question. All right?

If you've read that, then there's no reason for me to recite everything I said in that winter edition all over again. So, if we can get a motion to accept that as my report, then we can proceed on. If not, then I'll read it, verbatim, word for word.

3RD DISTRICT 1VC WHITE: 1st Vice Commander, 3rd Distinct, Michael White, makes a motion to accept his report.

COMMANDER OREN: Do I hear a second?

NEC CHAPMAN: Ron Chapman, NEC, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Any discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Any discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Aye.

COMMANDER OREN: All opposed, the same.

FROM THE FLOOR: Aye.

HISTORIAN MOTTER: In closing, I'll just say this: Commander, history is being made in the Department of Ohio and it is being documented.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

HISTORIAN MOTTER: Yes, sir.

(Applause).

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Commander, a point of order for the Adjutant, he still needs to make his report at each DEC to say it was in there, just so we can receive a report officially.

COMMANDER OREN: Okay.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: I mean, he can say where it is, but he still needs to come up and say those things.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: You don't have to read it.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: No, you're fine. The Adjutant needs to know not to remove you from the agenda because it's an official report.

HISTORIAN MOTTER: Sorry.

COMMANDER OREN: No, no. Thank you. Thank you.

Okay, NEC Ron Chapman.

NEC CHAPMAN: Good morning.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Good morning.

NEC CHAPMAN: And I am going to be brief. We

haven't had a whole lot going on at National.

We've got our spring meetings, which are coming up next month. And several of you will be attending that.

What I need from you, those of you who have call-ins, as you're aware, we're staggered in for some of our meetings. But those of you who are going to be around Wednesday and want to go to the Commander's banquet, I need your names and your ID numbers so that I can get a list submitted to get our tickets done so we don't have to rush to do it when we get up there to Indianapolis. So if you're a call-in up there, please, please get me that information.

While I'm here, I'm going to take a minute. My team leader asked me to speak to those of you who are thinking about running for an office here in the Department of Ohio.

As you know, at our winter conference, we ran out of time. There were so many people that we were talking to we ran out of time. So we will be doing that at the convention this summer.

And please, if your thoughts are five and six years down the road, we don't need to talk to you yet. If it's this year or next year, then come and

see us.

We don't tell anybody they can't do anything. We just listen and try to give you some good insight, and try to see what your plans are for our Department in the future. That's what that's about.

So, with that, are we going to follow the agenda with our 2nd Vice?

COMMANDER OREN: Uh-huh.

NEC CHAPMAN: Or with our first? Or do you want to do him now?

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Your call.

COMMANDER OREN: Do him now.

NEC CHAPMAN: All right, Steve, we're going to put you on the spot.

I didn't take so much time because we have our National Vice Commander with us today.

And so I looked at his book over there. He's got a book over there about that thick (indicating). So I want to get him up here.

Stephen T. Weismann was elected as a National Vice Commander of The American Legion on August the 28th, 2025, during the 106th National Convention in Tampa, Florida.

Weismann is a Paid-Up-for-Life member of the Sergeant Donnie E. Horton American Legion Post 254,

in Collinwood, Tennessee, with 24 continuous years of service.

He is eligible for membership in The American Legion through his service in the United States Air Force, 1982 to 1996, where he worked on various aircraft platforms as an avionics technician.

He has served in many Post, Department and National positions, to include Commander in 2015 and '16; District Commander', 16 and '17; Department Membership Chairman in '17 and '18; and Department Commander in '18 and '19. He served as Department Chairman of Americanism, Baseball, and Training and Education, as well as the Dean of the Tennessee American Legion College. He has served on the National Security Council, the National Legislative Council, the National Convention Resolutions Assignment Committee, and he is also a member of his Post honor guard.

Weismann is a graduate of The American Legion Institute, The American Legion Basic Training, Tennessee College, The American Legion Basic Training Course, the Tennessee American Legion College, and the National American Legion College.

He has been with several veterans, he has been active in several veterans in the classrooms in

Collinwood Middle School for 12 years, and he is a member of the Board of Directors of the Alvin C. York Center for Peace and Valor.

He has one daughter, Alyssa; one grandson, Elijah; and a granddaughter, Zoe.

Let me introduce to you our Central Region National Vice Commander, Stephen T. Weismann. Let's give him a rousing Ohio welcome.

(Applause).

Stephen.

NVC WEISMANN: Appreciate that, Chappy.

Good morning.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Good morning.

NVC WEISMANN: Yeah, this is a book (indicating). But this is not, this is not for you. This is, this was something that I did for our National Vice Commanders for the future. But I like to travel around with it and keep a few tidbits in there anyway. So, I'm not going to get crazy.

The year, I can't believe we're already into April. It's taken a while to get to Ohio, but this has been great. I just got here yesterday. We had a great day yesterday.

For those of you that are going to come around with us for the next couple days, you will find that

I love to run my mouth. So we were there yakking until 10:00 o'clock last night. And we realized, holy smokes, you know. But it's fun. So this is what I enjoy to do.

But as I've been traveling around, you know, it's a little late in the year to talk about Commander's priorities. We all know we had our "Be the One" campaign. Priority No. 1. Right? Obviously a scourge on our society. That is something that we need to absolutely nail down.

You know, we hear 17 to 22 a day. But when you start looking at the numbers, it's more like 45 a day. And we just got to do better than that.

And one of the things that has happened that I'm going to elaborate on, that I've been talking about all year, --

Chaplin, awesome.

-- our second priority. What is it? Fire together.

Last night we had a meeting. We were at a Post, the Auxiliary, the Sons, The Legion.

But traveling around the nation, you know, even my own Department, I can speak honestly, and you'll see the dysfunction in some of the Departments where we don't want to work together.

We're a family. We're brothers and sisters. We need to work together. So just keep that up.

Obviously, we just left Washington. Frustrating as it was, the Commander did a great job.

For those of you who weren't there, he got laryngitis and threatened to make me do his speech. I said I'm not so sure they're going to be glad for that. But he did a great job.

You know, it's a frustrating thing but look, we're here to advocate for our veterans, period. Regardless of what side of the aisle you're on, that's our job. So as frustrating as it may be, let's all go down fighting.

I'm going to elaborate a little more on the three C's that was the Commander's fourth priority this year, because that's basically what I want to talk about. Because that's something that the Commander will tell you I've been beating that horse to death all year.

So, what's next? America 250. Right? Can you believe it? It just seems like yesterday, we were talking about it yesterday, walking around the museum, it just seems like a couple years ago we were celebrating the Bicentennial, and here we are,

you know, holy smokes.

For those of you who are not trying to raise funds for the Veterans and Children's Foundation, if you do Facebook, you'll see me. I'm on there beating my brains out. I have a gym in my barn. And 250 hours is a lot of work, let me tell you. I'm getting a little old for that, but having a blast.

But lastly, our Veterans and Children's Foundation. Every year, it's the National Commander's fund. We're trying to raise funds.

Look, our service officers do an incredible job all over this nation. We've got to raise funds for their training, and for our temporary financial assistance.

So, that was the Commander's priorities this year, other than the three C's.

Like I said, I've been beating that horse, communication, community and camaraderie.

And JD and Stan will tell you I really haven't been talking about membership because I'm like everybody else. We talk membership and everybody's eyes glaze over. Right?

We're sitting here. We get the report yesterday for our 95 percent. Nobody in the nation

made it.

Because this is the time of year, we've been talking about it all year, this is the time of year, it happens every single year, if you don't get ahead of the game, you know, membership, membership, membership, membership.

So I've been approaching it a little differently. And what I would like to present to you is just a different perspective on how I would like to see us deal with membership and potential members of The American Legion.

First is communication. We stink at it. Let's face it. We all know, you District Commanders, the white cappers, I can speak for myself, we have the same problem at the National level, you're trying to communicate with your members, no response, crickets. It's kind of hard to get information out there if we don't talk to each other.

But here's one thing that I've been saying: Put yourself, put your little self in your own world.

We got these smart phones on us 24/7, the scourge of society. How many of us -- how many spam calls you get a day? Hey, your car warranty is out. Hey, you know, some politician, blah, blah, blah.

And it gets to a point where it's just block, block, block, block, you know, and still all day long.

And one of the additional ones that I love to talk about, my poor neighbor is probably going to cuss me out, but I live in very rural America as well. My neighbor is a third of a mile. I see her going to church. That's it. The only time I ever hear from that neighbor is, "Hey neighbor, I need my roof fixed. Hey neighbor, I need my stove hooked up. Hey neighbor, we got a plumbing problem. Can you come and fix it? Hey neighbor, can you fix this? Hey neighbor, I need my garden tilled." After a while, that gets old.

But guess what? Think about what we're doing to our members. We do the same thing. "Hey, where's your dues?"

Instead of exactly -- the Chaplin was a perfect example. You know, we have our buddy check system. And when Commander Reistad, I was Department Commander when Commander Reistad came out with that, and I said this is a wonderful program except for once a year is not enough. Now we do it two times a year, March and November. Not enough.

How many of our members, you got a Post, you got a hundred members, how many show up? Ten? Who

talks to the other 90? Who takes the time to say, "Hey, I haven't seen you in a month. Are you all right? You need help? Something you need?" Do we do that enough? We do not. We got to do that.

We got to stop telling our members, and potential members, how much we care about them. We got to show them that. Right?

So, reaching out to them, doing a monthly buddy check, you Adjutants get something out there. Print your roster out. Find four or five people in your Post. Let them call a couple of people a day. Go knock on their doors. Let them know that we care.

We're all humans. We want to know that we matter. Right? So let's show our members that we matter. That's really important.

The community part, you guys are doing some pretty cool things here in Ohio and I thank you for that. It's very nice to go and see Departments who are actually engaged. And I appreciate that.

Make sure your Posts are the center of your community. That's the most important thing.

You want members? You got to get outside of the walls. Everybody knows that. We all know that. If we're not active, guess what? Nobody sees you. So that community involvement, that's how we get

their support.

You know, it's wonderful up here with the gaming. You have that aspect of the support.

In Tennessee, that's all illegal. We can't even have raffles, 50/50s, nothing.

So if you're not out, you're losing it.

And we're losing it in Tennessee. So that's a fight we're trying to recover from.

Camaraderie. Let's face it, we're brothers and sisters we walk past that most people in this country will never understand who have not been in our shoes. They'll never understand it.

You know, we were talking last night and all day yesterday, basically. You know, I have five brothers that we all joined the Air Force together when we were 20 years old and we talk every single day. Forty-six years later, we're still talking every single day. How many of our civilian counterparts can understand that, a brotherhood of raising together and fighting together and getting shot at together? They'll never understand that. We have that. And that's something that most people, corporate American, civilians, they'll never understand it. That brotherhood, that bond, that sisterhood is something you cannot replace. Right?

That comes from a special place. We are special.

You know, I think of the times when we were kids and we had problems in our communities. Where did you go? Your church? You went to your next door neighbor?

We are that. We are the tip of the spear there, The American Legion. Look around this room. You all put on the uniform. We have some who -- I'm not going to call out any names, Chappy -- but 40, 50, 60 years ago, put on the uniform. Here we are still serving. Servant leadership, that's what it's about, still serving our communities. We are the example for the rest of our nation. That I would love to see us get back to.

You know, we don't have the patent on our declining membership. Everything, the Rotary, your chambers, your churches, we're all having that same issue. Because it's a national crisis, as far as I'm concerned, on service. We've forgotten what service is, taking care of each other.

We are the example. Let's lead by that example.

And guess what? When we do those three things that I'm talking about, people want to be part of that. That's how I approach membership. I'm not

begging people for membership. I signed up four the last couple months. They just came to me. They know who I am. They see what I do. They see who we are. Hey, I want to be part of this. But you've got to do those three things to let them know that they matter. Be a servant leader.

And to add to that last thing, and I'll end on this note, is, you are the leaders of the Department of Ohio. There's a lot of experience in this room. Share it.

You know, I've been traveling the nation. And Chappy will tell you, Bob will tell you, you get some of us long in the tooth and they forget the fact that, yeah, they got 40, 50 years of service in this organization, but our young District Commanders, our young 1st Vice Commanders, your Post Commanders, they don't have that kind of time. They get thrown into it. We got to help them. Teach them.

So take advantage of anything at your Department. We were talking with JD about training. Fantastic, I'm the training weenie. So I support all of that. So make sure you're helping grow the Department of Ohio, because you guys are doing a fantastic job and I'm very proud to be your National

Vice Commander this year.

So I look forward to sitting around and talking to you guys. We'll be here all day. Trust me, I will talk your ear off if you let me. So I really appreciate the visit. And the hospitality has been wonderful.

I'm going to call it short. See, it wasn't that bad. But I appreciate everything.

So have a great DEC. Feel free to come on up and we'll talk about anything you want to talk about. I'm an open vessel.

So thank you very much. I appreciate it.

(Applause).

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: I always thought Chappy served with Washington.

NEC CHAPMAN: Almost.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: I always thought he served with Washington.

NEC CHAPMAN: He was two years ahead of me.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you, Steve.

Okay, the NEC Alternate, Mr. Robert Schmitt.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: Is that might.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good morning, Bob.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: Good morning. Good morning to all of you.

I wasn't going to do this. I was just going to, from there, I was just going to say I'm still practicing what I've been told, keep my mouth shut and learn and listen for when I hopefully become NEC, taking Chappy's place.

However --

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: God help us.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: Pardon?

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: God help us.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: Yeah. Now here it comes.

Okay, so first off, those on the VE&E Commission, you should have received an e-mail this week telling you about a Teams meeting that's going to take place at 1:00 o'clock this Tuesday, the 14th. So if you didn't look and see that e-mail, look for it and be on that Teams meeting.

Again, as NEC Chapman said, not a whole lot has been happening, but that's something that just came up.

The next thing is we talked about going to the VA. Right?

How many are aware of what the VA is doing, changing their records over? It's called "Cerner."

And I've been with my primary care and it's

going to be a mess. I don't know what's happening in your areas, but up in Toledo we have a CBOC and the new CBOC in Findlay. The CBOC in Findlay, the doctor quit. The floater up in Toledo had to go down to Findlay. The Toledo doctor said I'm too old to learn this, I quit. And two other doctors quit. So four doctors out of the Toledo area have resigned because of the Cerner.

My primary care doctor said, you know, for me to order. "We've got to get these unique medications. Let's get them taken care of right now." Because after this new program, she says, "I timed it, it's going to take three minutes for me to order one medication for one of my patients." Now they only get 15 minutes to see us, right? Supposedly. And they may stretch it out to 20. She says, "It's taking me 45 minutes with my patients, on average." She said, "The other night I didn't get out of here until ten minutes to 11:00."

So these are the kinds of things that's happening.

Now when we were at the Washington Conference, Secretary Collins had indicated to us that we need to get in contact with our representatives and our senators about a bill to increase more money to the

VA for the purpose of our doctors and so on. And so we need to be considering that. Because my primary care said, "It's not so much the money," but she said, "We're running out of doctors." We don't have enough doctors, especially when they start quitting.

So we need to be watching what we're doing here, contacting so-and-so, and maybe even writing a letter to the secretary, saying, "Are you aware of what's really going on out here? You know, take a look at this. You need to be on top of this."

And then National Vice Steve talked about the buddy check. And guess I have to say I've got something that just happened to me again this week.

A friend of mine from my Post, Past Post Commander, Past County Commander, Past District Commander, and he was looking to go through the Department chairs. And some of you may recognize the name, most of you probably won't, and that is Douglas Hartford. And I called and left messages on his phone. I've sent him text messages. I've sent him e-mails. I get no response back. I even say, "Doug, please respond. I don't know if you're dead, alive, in a nursing home or wherever, but I need some response back."

Well, I just happened to be close to his house

and went to his house. And when I got there, fortunately the storm door was open and I was able to get to his house door and pound on his house door.

When he came to the door, he was looking at me like, "Who are you?" And he finally said, "Who are you?"

Well, after I'd been talking to him for probably close to a half hour, he realized who I was and things like that.

But when they're locked up in their houses, not going anyplace -- his brother comes and takes him to the medical appointments and stuff like this. We need to be on top of what's happening to our membership. And so I've got an area office on aging to hopefully try to help him out.

There are things that can be done but they aren't aware of it. They're locked up in their house. They are not aware of what's going on. So we really need to expand our buddy checks to a little bit more than a, "Hey, we need your dues," kind of thing. You know, we need to know what's happening to our membership.

So, anyways, those are the points that I wanted to make today. And like I say, it's more than just,

"I'm still in practice."

Thank you.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: We're going to have fun next year.

COMMANDER OREN: We'll get a timer on him.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: You better keep in mind I'm a Past Department Commander.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: I totally respect that.

COMMANDER OREN: Okay, Judge Advocate, Jason Rue.

JUDGE ADVOCATE RUE: Nothing to report at this time, Commander.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

Okay, Department Parliamentarian Gary Minadeo.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Commander, the constitution and bylaws seem to have slowed down. I think a lot of you are doing the work down there, letting them know what they have to do. So we appreciate that.

As Parliamentarian, I get a lot of calls. I'm getting a lot of calls now about issues down in the Posts. And I'm highly qualified to go down there and help them because I teach 11, 12 and 13-year-olds.

Recently, though, I've had to deal with two issues dealing with SAL.

The SAL, if they have a problem, they think they can write a letter to the National Commander. And so, you know, what happens is, JD calls me and says, "Hey, it's in your area. Can you go do this?" And so I go down there and try to handle it.

The SAL are reporting to us. We need to educate them on the chain of command. They need to make sure the Executive Committee has a chance to handle an issue with the SAL. And then if the Executive Committee is not really handling it, they can go to county or to District.

But writing a letter to National does nothing, except they print the letter to JD or call and say, "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. How you doing? Give me five bucks."

So I think that would settle a lot of things.

The other thing is we're having problems with the bylaws and how, again, Legions are thinking they can just take SAL money. All right? Yes, they're a committee underneath us. Your adviser -- and a lot of Posts don't have advisers.

District Commanders, when you're doing inspections, just look at the Commander and say,

"Their meeting has to have the adviser in there, that's a veteran, to help them move along and see what's happening, and then report back to the Executive Committee."

So I try to tell them. I say, "You are supposed to respect that money. And you can ask them and request them to help, and they could say no and you shouldn't get mad, but they also have to see how are they using the funds." I said, "So we are a team. Let's just keep that together."

But there's just, I think, again, without the gambling money, that Tennessee doesn't have this problem, so God bless you, but the problem with that gambling money is everybody thinks they own it. They want to spend it and do something with it. There's some of our Posts getting in big trouble with the attorney general and the gambling commission.

So I really just, I long for the days where all I had to do was go to a Post, sit the Auxiliary down, sit the Legionnaires down, and say, "Listen, guys, stop fighting. Guys, buy your own pans. Don't use the ladies' in the kitchen."

Those days are gone. We're talking about some serious stuff that's going on out there.

So I think we, who have the experience, just need to be able to calm people down and sit them back at the table.

I have had an increase of five fold of people that want to have trials. "You need to take this guy out for conduct unbecoming."

I say, "Okay. Who is it? Okay. What did he say? Okay. Well, can you just sit down and kind of get over it?"

And typically it's at the bar, you know.

So we need to educate them that, in the military, there was such a thing as a Commander's inquiry. The code of conduct, uniform code of conduct, with all it's levels that we have to do to do a trial, has not taken away our responsibility for that Post Commander to receive the complaint in the form of an actual statement, that they're going to sign in front of the Adjutant, that this is, we understand this is your statement against this person. You bring that in.

And then you go to the person that's mentioned in the statement and you say, "Here, I'm going to have you read this. Tell me what you think. Write down what you think happened," with people who could verify it.

And then the Executive Committee needs to help the Commander. Because the Commander is the convening authority. He's not the judge. He's the convening authority. So he has to determine, let's bring these people together, you know, "Can you two just get over this right now?" Or, you know, we're not going right to a trial and we get with the Executive Committee, talk to other people, and see if this really needs to go to the trial.

I will help the Judge Advocate determine that. If there's no Judge Advocate in the Post or no one wants to do that, and there's no Judge Advocate in the county, then, District Commander, you better have someone that's a Judge Advocate that can sit down with someone and say, "Listen, son, we're coming to Jesus on this one. Here's the deal." Okay?

And I will help determine if you really want to take that to trial. I will even come down and just kind of talk to people in a non-side way, someone right in the middle. Because it may have to come to me, as the Judge for the District. And your Judge in the District may need to take this over because everybody's gotten so involved in this that the Judge doesn't want to try to do it.

I will help you get six people for the trial board. The Executive Committee -- no officer of the Post can sit on the trial board. Understand that. They have to do all the other prework to see if we're going to trial, but they cannot sit on the deciding trial. So that typically comes to the District trying to find others. And I typically try to go to those who have been officers, who understand The Legion, to sit on that trial board.

So, help us with that.

I don't have -- have you gotten any calls for trials?

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: No.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: So I think they're all coming to me because I'm the Parliamentarian and I say okay.

So help us with that. If you have calls, call me. I'll take you through it.

A trial is very arduous. I think we could do a lot more of just bringing them together. As we need to call people, saying how you are, how are you, we need to bring people to the table and say come out, folks, you know, without the liquor in your body. Let's sit here and say, "Really? Are we going to do this?"

Lastly on that, and I'm sorry I have to say this, if the police or the insurance company is investigating something, typically who stole $120,000, I think, the trial will not happen. They could fill out their paperwork and they can make the accusation, but if the police are involved or the insurance companies are involved, we have to wait until they're done with their findings first.

And typically their findings are, "Well, we can narrow it down to three people, but we don't know who did it." Okay, great.

So now you back up, you put that in your report as the Judge and you say, "Okay, now we can move forward with a trial if the Post Executive Committee wants to move forward with a trial." All right?

Are there any questions? That was a lot. Are there any questions on that?

I don't know if we have any specific training in the college on this. Do we?

SGT-AT-ARMS KENNEDY: I have a question.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Oh, a question.

SGT-AT-ARMS KENNEDY: Through the chairs to Gary. Back up to the SAL. Before we go there, does the Detachment have an opportunity to take care of the SAL?

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: The who?

SGT-AT-ARMS KENNEDY: The Detachment of Ohio.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Well, what's happening is they're coming to me now because I'm the Parliamentarian for the Detachment of Ohio too. So what I typically try to do is find someone close by to go down and talk to them.

But I'm normally getting a call from The Legion about the SAL. So that's how that's working. So I try to work that out between myself and who do I need to call that's closer to it. Northeastern Ohio I handle. If it's someplace else, I normally go through JD to try to get us some help down there.

SGT-AT-ARMS KENNEDY: Okay.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: All right, no questions?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Thank you for your endurance. I appreciate it.

COMMANDER OREN: And I have to agree. It must have been a hard winter, because everybody is coming out of the woodwork right now.

Okay, committee reports, or commissions, yes.

It's you. Excuse me, JD.

Department Adjutant.

I was jumping ahead of you.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Good morning everybody.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Good morning.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: I just have a few things I want to go over, not nearly as troubling as Gary beating you all up.

We have the National Commander coming into Ohio June 21st through June 24th. It will be in the Cincinnati area. We are nailing down the actual itinerary, probably within the next two weeks. We will let everybody know. We will have it posted out. So if you want to attend one of the events where we have him at, you're more than welcome to come out.

The next major event that we have going on is the U.S.S. Cleveland will be docked in Cleveland May 15th through the 16th. And they have all kinds of events. Look on the website. I know a couple, a few, of our Legionnaires that are VIPs, they get to go and experience it. So pretty proud for them.

SAL Convention is May 15th through the 17th. That's Detachment Convention. It's down in Grove City. I believe there was still a few rooms left in the room block at the Drury Inn.

Is it done now?

JUDGE ADVOCATE RUE: It's been done.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: No, they still had 12 the other day.

When I talked to them the other day, they told me they still had 12 rooms left in our room block. So, it's a hotel and they -- yeah, anyways.

The next thing I wanted to cover, and I called Commander Stan the other day and I said, "Sir, I want to send Adjutant Rodney Rolland, the National Adjutant, a nasty-gram. I'm tired of getting my butt chewed out every day because emblem sales can't deliver. So I want a response from him."

Well, to his credit, within five minutes of me sending my e-mail, he calls. And we had a good 45-minute phone conversation. Yes, it was a lot of smoke. I understand that. I know the role he's in, the same one I play in at this level.

They are still having a major issue getting the slips to print for their shipping. The communication between the two systems that they switched to in December, it took them from shipping 800 parcels a day to less than 400.

We can't force National to do anything in that regard, but just so you know that the Department is aware. We are fighting for us. Hopefully they get

it resolved soon.

Commander, that is my report.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you, JD. Sorry I tried to skip you, but Christie was better looking.

Christie, Americanism Commission Coordinator.

COORDINATOR WHITE: Good morning.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Good morning.

COORDINATOR WHITE: I will be quick because everybody has all of these minutes that were e-mailed to you.

The Americanism Commission met March 21st, virtually. They moved and seconded to approve the minutes from their last meeting. I gave them an A&G Trip recap.

Eagle Scout of the Year. We had two nominations. It was motioned and seconded to name Audra Leadbetter as The American Legion Department of Ohio's Eagle Scout of the Year. You should have received a copy of her application as well.

For unfinished business, we discussed the Educator of the Year packet. It was motioned and seconded to have August 1st be the due date to the District chairs, September 15th be the due date to Department yearly for the of-the-year awards, and remove all other dates from the Americanism portion

of the packet.

So pretty much all of the due dates stay the same. We just took out 2024, or 2025, or 2026, so it's easier to update on the website.

And then our meeting adjourned at 10:47.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

COORDINATOR WHITE: Any questions on Americanism?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COORDINATOR WHITE: Oh, I do want to add for Americanism also, two weeks ago, we had our Department Oratorical Contest. We had nine contestants here at Department.

The Department winner was from District 3, Anna Schutte.

It was the first time, I think, one, that all the contestants, every time I'd go in the room and pull them to give their speech, they were all like pepping each other up. Like, it's a competition. But they're all like, "You got this, go ahead, you're going to kill it, don't be nervous."

And I think it was the first time that when we named a winner she cried. Like it was the sweetest thing I've ever seen in my entire life. So she's going to be representing Ohio in Hillsdale.

If anybody wants to volunteer for the National Oratorical Contest, I can give you a contact for National to volunteer for that contest.

The Athletic Committee met on February 22nd, in person. It was motioned and seconded to accept the previous minutes.

The Ohio Baseball 2026 Rule Book was reviewed and updated. There is a bunch of new rules. I'm not going to read them all because it's like four pages. But again, you all have copies of the rules in the minutes.

The junior and senior tournament dates were selected. The junior dates will be July 16th through 19th. The senior will be July 24th through 27th.

Some of the times changed, but you guys should have also received copies of the brackets for the junior and senior tournaments. So I'm not going to read through all of those. But the committee motioned and seconded to accept the brackets and the game times.

Team fees were set for 500 and $600 for junior and senior teams.

The commission discussed meal money. Because at the junior and senior tournament we give the

teams meal money. It was motioned and seconded to get rid of the meal money payments for the regional tournaments. So we'll be saving Baseball some money.

The National Regional Tournament dates are August 5th through 9th, in Lexington, Kentucky.

There is a bunch of National rule updates. Again, it's in the minutes. It would take me 30 years to read them all to you, so I'm going to spare you.

The super regional locations were discussed. Those will be updated on our website.

We met with all of the coaches and managers at 1:00 o'clock. There was a PowerPoint that was created that we went over with the coaches and managers. Again, you should have all received a copy, to spare me reading all of the information to you guys.

We did the state tournament draw for the junior teams, or for the junior regionals. The play-in games will be opposite of who is in the bracket. So game one was seed two and seed three. Game two was seed one and seed four. So we drew seed one as Region one, seed two is Region four, seed three was Region two, seed four was Region three. For the

senior tournament, seed one is Region two, seed two is Region three, seed three is Region one, seed four is Region four.

And then the meeting adjourned at 1:45.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Don't you need to vote on anything?

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Yeah, the meal money.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: You can set that aside.

COMMANDER OREN: So I need a motion?

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: They can set that aside and then just approve all the minutes besides that one topic, the meal money.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: The meal money, yeah.

COMMANDER OREN: So I need a motion?

NEC CHAPMAN: Chapman, NEC. I move to accept the report as given with a set-aside of the meal money.

PDC WHATLEY: Past Commander Whatley seconds.

COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Hearing none, all in favor say

aye.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Aye.

COMMANDER OREN: All opposed, the same.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Motion carries.

Thanks, Christie.

COORDINATOR WHITE: The last one that I have is Children and Youth. They met on March 21st. There were not enough members present to vote.

We discussed flag education comic book, the Child Welfare Worker of the Year packet. We had the same discussion about taking the year out of the packet. All of the dates stay the same. That way there's not old versions on the website that have different years on them. We just take the year off and they're generic.

JD was on the call with me. And him and I had a discussion with the commission about being active and present. Answering e-mails is required. They need to be active in their Posts and Districts, or else we will recommend to the District Commanders that they are replaced.

Then the meeting adjourned at 12:20.

I think this is the fastest I've ever given reports.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: You need to go back to the set aside and read the money part.

COMMANDER OREN: The motion for the set aside, okay.

COORDINATOR WHITE: Phil Lightfoot, Junior Director, motions, seconded by Marv Shamhart, Assistant Chairman, to get rid of meal money for the Regional Baseball Tournaments.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: We need a motion for that and then a second and discussion.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Rick Smathers, District 11 1st Vice, I move that we get rid of the meal money for the regional tournaments.

COMMANDER OREN: Do I hear a second?

14TH DISTRICT CMDR LIFE: John Life, 14th District Commander, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER OREN: Any discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Discussion?

1ST DISTRICT CMDR BOYERS: Dean Boyers, 1st District.

Christie, do you have an idea how much of a savings that's going to be?

COORDINATOR WHITE: I believe -- so we give each player on each team $10 each, per day. And

there are 20 players on the team. So 20 times eight times $10 each.

I'm Americanism, not Finance. Sorry.

FROM THE FLOOR: $1600.

COORDINATOR WHITE: Per day. So 1600 per day. And that's four to five days.

NEC CHAPMAN: Chapman, NEC.

That's something that the Districts that are sending those teams up there should be able to cover that expense. That would be my thoughts. I hope that's the way those discussions went.

COORDINATOR WHITE: We're hoping that all Districts will kind of dive into their region's teams and help them out.

3RD DISTRICT 1VC WHITE: Commander, Michael White, 1st Vice, 3rd District.

Can those funds to feed those individuals come from Charities?

COMMANDER OREN: We got a yes and a no here.

COORDINATOR WHITE: I will say that Charities is already paying for the hotel rooms for all of the teams for both tournaments too.

3RD DISTRICT 1VC WHITE: District Charities.

COORDINATOR WHITE: Oh, District Charities?

3RD DISTRICT 1VC WHITE: I'm talking District

Charities, from our Posts.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Yes. From our Posts, our Post charity funds that come through?

3RD DISTRICT 1VC WHITE: Yes.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: It's a service. It's a service of The American Legion. That's how Charities is written. When that money comes back to us, it can only be used for the services and the mission of The American Legion. So you can support the youth. You can't pay the electric bill, but you can support that.

COMMANDER OREN: Great question.

Any further discussion?

Did everybody hear what -- okay.

Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Hearing none, all in favor, say aye.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Aye.

COMMANDER OREN: All opposed, the same.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Motion carries.

Thank you Christie.

COORDINATOR WHITE: I will be back. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER OREN: Yes.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Rick Smathers, 11th District 1st Vice.

On the Charities question, would the Post have to write the check to the District, and then the District distribute the money, rather than writing -- or would you write it to the baseball team, or how would it be written?

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: To the baseball team.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: It has to go -- the Post can write it to the baseball team.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Adjutant Robinson.

The check would be written to the baseball team, not an individual person.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

Jacob.

COORDINATOR BRAULT: Good morning. I'll keep this super quick.

National Security met March 19th through virtual.

Reading of the previous minutes, motioned and seconded, that was passed.

For the amateur radio program, we've had a lot

of discussion for the whole year on that. There's still not very much information from National, as it's no longer a program that's supported. So it's on each Department to make up rules and regulations for that. I was requested to find any old requirements for the amateur radio program from National. And then starting next membership year, we will start making requirements for the state level.

Our of-the-year awards, they were motioned and seconded to have August 1st be the District due date and September 15th be the Department due date, and remove all other dates besides the year date on the very first page. That motion was passed.

I gave information on the U.S.S. Cleveland christening, which Adjutant Robinson did.

That meeting adjourned at 6:56.

Questions on that one?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COORDINATOR BRAULT: The next one is Legislative.

We met in person on March 18th, at the Ohio Statehouse. That day we went and witnessed a Veterans Military Development Committee meeting. We spoke with a legislator who was the prior chair for

the Veterans Caucus, and then we had our meeting in his office at that time.

From the meeting, the minutes were motioned and seconded. That was passed.

Discussion was had on property taxes and the what-ifs of if the state does eliminate property taxes, where will the extra money come from, how will we use it. Chair Heller recommended that all members contact their representatives and get solidified answers to what they have as of right now.

Under new business, we spoke about House Bill 708. That one would pretty much legitimize claim sharking in the state. The entire commission was opposed to that as a whole. They don't feel that charging veterans for things that are free from accredited representatives through counties and The American Legion should be allowed. I'm working with Representative Willis' office to kind of see if we can do a supplemental bill or something to either tank it completely or make these claim shark organizations have to be accredited within the state, which would be federal accreditation.

We presented a proclamation to Representative Demetriou for being selected as Legislator of the

Year.

That meeting was adjourned at 1:30.

Any questions?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COORDINATOR BRAULT: Perfect.

VE&E met March 16th, virtually. There was no quorum present so we had discussion only.

From the discussion, I was requested to do an e-mail vote for Resolution 26-03, which would create a Department Employer of Veterans Award. It is similar to National's with criteria that fits our Department specifically. That vote was passed, then it was forwarded to VA&R.

That meeting adjourned at 7:19.

Any questions on that one?

(No response).

Perfect.

Then a small, little legislative update.

House Bill 476, which was authorizing the on-line 50/50 raffles, has been sent to the Senate Select Committee on Gaming. Their sponsor first testimony is going to be April 14th. That is all I have on that one right now.

Senate Bill 92, that authorizes a total property tax exemption for veterans that are 100

percent disabled in the state, still no hearings in over a year. It is likely that that one will need to be reintroduced in the next general assembly.

And then for House Bill 708, I pretty much gave you guys what we know as of right now. If you would like to talk about it further, I'm more than happy to do so.

Any questions on bills that we currently have?

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Robinson, Adjutant.

Could you go over our Voter Voice that we have for Ohio so everybody is well aware of what we're sending out?

1ST DISTRICT CMDR BOYERS: Yes.

So, similar to National, we have Voter Voice, which is the same program they have. You get, probably, weekly e-mails from Grassroots requesting you to contact senators, representatives, on the federal side. We now have that for the state level specifically.

You will get an e-mail from legion@ohiolegion.com. It's the same one as our previous e-mail service, but it will have similar things to what National does, but applicable on the state level. You've probably seen a couple come in already. They're going to keep coming in as we have

bills that we want to push as hard as we can.

So please do your best and engage with those, because, as you know, grassroots efforts are the ones that get things changed.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: But it only works if you push it out into your Posts. If you don't take this back and tell the Posts about it, we can only tell them so much. You're talking with them. So please reach out to your Posts and let them know that those are actionable e-mails. That is a real e-mail. Pay attention to it.

COORDINATOR BRAULT: Thank you, Jacob.

William.

COORDINATOR GENOCHIO: Commander.

All right, good morning.

So the Department Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee met on March 18th, at 6:00 PM, virtually.

Our meeting was called to order at 6:11 by our Chairman, David Cook. The Pledge of Allegiance was done. We did have a quorum. It's our first quorum of the year. So we were actually able to discuss some business.

We did the reading of the minutes. There was a motion by Jerry Perry to accept them as e-mailed

out, seconded by Randy Robert of the 1st District. That motion passed.

For District reports, we only had one District report, and that was the 2nd District reported that the Auxiliary annual visit is going to be in June to the Dayton VA.

Under Unfinished Business, we did discuss, as previously mentioned by Darell Bishop, the use of the Veterans Treatment Court funds. He had mentioned purchasing coins to hand out to participants. Suzette Heller mentioned that the coins should be supported by local Post and not through the money through the VA&R Commission via the Veterans Treatment Court.

She also said, Suzette also reported that Justice Estrap made testimony about incarcerated veterans. Currently there is no system of tracking our veterans who are incarcerated. So they're looking at working on a system to know what veterans we do have within Ohio's prison system to be able to reach out to those veterans when they're getting up to their release from that deal.

We reviewed the Veterans Treatment Court. There's no changes.

Per our Veterans Treatment Court guidelines,

there was a deal to appoint a commission. So we have three VA&R members that volunteered, those being: Suzette Heller, 12th District; Randy Roberts of the 1st; and Jerry Perry of the 4th.

Again, Suzette mentioned she was going to reach out, and she has since sent to me, we have a current listing, which I'll get on the Department site, of the Veteran Treatment Courts currently active in the State of Ohio. So I can get that uploaded or get it to Jon to get it on our website.

Under New Business, I'm not going to beat this one up because Jacob just talked about the various bills that we've been tracking. There's been no movement, no traction. They should be on your minutes, which they are, and their brief description of what they are and what they do.

The main one, you guys, that we're tracking, you know, is the Major Star Act. It was put to vote. We had one, one person, shoot it down. So that's back in the mix.

And again, if anybody has any specific questions about these bills that VA&R is looking at, please let me know.

We started looking at nominations for VA&R awards. I did confirm with Suzette for the position

one, healthcare one. As long as they're in healthcare, it doesn't necessarily have to be a physician or not. But if you've got those, get them in.

Gifts for Yanks Report. Darell spoke that there was no recent report. I know Holly just had one put out earlier today, right? We stapled those together.

So, at the meeting we didn't have a report, but Mike Homan mentioned that his 2nd district raised $8,990, his Post gave $1500 to Gifts for Yanks. Jerry Perry, Post 49, money needs to be sent by May 31st, and David Cook sent money from Squadron 79 to Gifts for Yanks.

I gave a DSO report. It's confirmed that it is official that the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission has left, or had moved into their new building. It's on your report. But that's 3950 Chester Avenue, in Cleveland. They've also pulled out of Wade Park. So they have one rep there. When I talked to Darell about it, they had one rep that does all the bus tickets and financial stuff at Wade Park, but the county is out. So you just have the DAV, eventually, American Legion, and the VA currently at Wade Park.

Resolution 26-01 was discussed. Really nothing new to pass. But I did send out a poll. I'm waiting on the results from that poll to say yea or nay, because Jacob sent it from the Legislative Committee to VA&R. So that poll is pending.

Good of the Legion. Jerry Perry gave information that Grove City has a new CBOC. And Suzette Heller advised of a new CBOC in her area. I did not catch that. We had a little bit of technical difficulty with audio, so I did not catch the new CBOC in her region.

Closing prayer, salute to colors, and the meeting was adjourned at 18:58.

That concludes my report, Commander, barring any questions.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Adjutant Robinson.

Delaware would be the CBOC she was talking about.

COORDINATOR GENOCHIO: Delaware would be the other CBOC.

Yeah, we had -- audio was in and out sometimes, so I couldn't catch everything.

Thank you.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

Jon.

COORDINATOR VULGAMORE: Commander.

Good morning, everyone.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Good morning.

COORDINATOR VULGAMORE: It's still morning, I believe.

Commission Chair Shallon Smith was excused. She's deployed. Therefore, we had a substitute Chair.

Holly Lewis, District 10, called the virtual meeting of the Department Media, Marketing and Communications Commission to order at 2:03 PM on March 21st.

The only motionable meeting item was Lewis, District 10, moved to entertain a motion to approve and suspend the reading of the previous meeting minutes. Bob Mason, District 5, motioned. Brian Fowle, District 3, seconded. No discussion was offered. Motion carried.

Next, Staff Liaison Vulgamore gave his quarterly Legion News, website, social media publications, mailing and IT reports.

In and effort to save some time here, I'll skip the details. They were in the minutes. However, our new website designer, Kiki Kiana, wished to convey her own website progress update to the body,

if you'll permit me.

The website redesign is progressing well and continues to evolve into a more refined and comprehensive platform. While the timeline has extended beyond the initial estimate, the extension has been driven by thoughtful enhancements and additional content that has strengthened the overall quality of the site.

Following the initial build completed in February, reviewing the website page by page, inch by inch, is providing valuable insight into opportunities for improvement, such as the addition of new content, refinements in structure, and updates to navigation and formatting to create a more user-friendly and organized experience.

Throughout this quality review process, we have completed over eight rounds of wire frame and navigational updates. These refinements have helped insure the site is clear, cohesive and easier for users to navigate.

At this current stage, the website includes approximately 80 developed pages. Some pages were redesigned to eliminate duplicated information or consolidated to improve clarity, streamline information and enhance overall flow. Each page is

being painstakingly evaluated to insure the layout copy is consistent, accurate, the sizing is fixed, the links are fixed, and the menu is more accessible, presenting a polished look across the entire site.

So, she's got some metrics numbers here. She has design, development and revisions are around 30 hours per week. And that's mostly her. Collaboration and working sessions, this is both of us, at least ten hours per week. And also preparing this content to be organized and for her to make these edits are also ten hours a week. So that's about half of my workweek is being devoted to her since, you know, last February.

So we're zeroing in. My personal best guess is about May 15th. She still will need to relink everything off of the test site onto the Ohio Legion domain. And also, she has to resize it so that it fits your phones and your tablets and your computers. So she still has work to do once we finish. And then we should be live.

That concludes her report.

Substitute Chair Lewis, District 10, closed the meeting with directing a salute to colors and we adjourned at 3:28 PM.

Pending any questions, that's my report, Commander.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you, sir.

COORDINATOR VULGAMORE: Thank you.

COMMANDER OREN: Any questions?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you again.

Okay, Sons of The American Legion, JD.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Good morning again.

I already went over it. They have not had any meetings since the last time we met. So, therefore, they will not have anything until their Detachment Convention in May.

I talked about it briefly, so I won't go over it again.

Next up is Legion Riders. Can I go into that, Commander?

COMMANDER OREN: Yes.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: The ROMP is where they elect their officers for the year. And that will be June 11th through the 14th, in Avon Lake.

I know we've been discussing developing a constitution and bylaws for them. Currently, they are only going off of a handbook, which has no substance behind it. So we are hoping to work with

their new leadership and get a constitution and bylaws established so there is more direct direction and continuity of action that we can take when we're dealing with issues that pop up. Because, Lord knows, that's all I get to do.

So that is my report, Commander.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

Anybody hungry?

FROM THE FLOOR: Yeah.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: I've got one thing.

COMMANDER OREN: Go ahead, JD.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Real quick, while you're sitting there eating lunch, we passed out the Gifts for Yanks minutes and chair minutes. Please review those so we can cover those when we come back from lunch.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you, JD.

Okay. We'll take a 30-minute break. We'll go to ten after 12. We'll be back.

(THEREUPON, A LUNCH RECESS WAS TAKEN).

. . . CALL TO ORDER . . .

COMMANDER OREN: Welcome to the team, Steve.

Now that I've got you on your feet, have a seat.

Okay, at this time I'm going to have JD on

Gifts to Yanks.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Morning everybody. Afternoon. Sorry.

Everybody should have received the minutes and the committee rules. We'll start with the committee.

We met on 12/13/2025. Chairman Stan observed all customs and courtesies.

We'll move down to "Remove four convention awards, two Posts, two Districts, that contribute largest and highest percentage," and replaced with four small crystal eagles and two Mid-Winter Banquet tickets for each to the following Mid-Winter Conference.

Is everybody following along with that?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Yeah.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Removed additional plaques to be provided in three categories; changed six additional plaques to certificates signed by the Gifts for Yanks Chair and Department Commander; took out District Gifts for Yanks Chair to receive plaques to present at their District meeting; added any Post that raises over 5,000 will receive a large crystal eagle. Bob Steggemann and Darell Bishop motioned to make the changes. The motion passed.

There was a golf cart approved for Toledo. It passed.

The American Legion Auxiliary of Ohio can request up to 1500 to support local programs. It must be shown what the request is for. Jeff Hess and John Tepper motioned. The motion passed.

We concluded the meeting.

And then there is the updated Gifts for Yanks Committee Rules. We need a motion and a second to adopt. The Commander will call for it.

COMMANDER OREN: I need a motion.

1ST DISTRICT CMDR BOYERS: Commander, Dean Boyers, 1st District, makes a motion to accept the Gifts for Yanks Committee Rules.

6TH DISTRICT CMDR LITTLE: Will Little, 6th District, seconds.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Yes, sir, Chappy.

NEC CHAPMAN: Chapman, NEC.

Okay, you're going to start giving crystal eagles to every Post that reaches 5,000 or more you

said?

COMMANDER OREN: Yes.

NEC CHAPMAN: So 5,000 is not going to get it?

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Five thousand or more.

NEC CHAPMAN: Okay.

I don't know if you're aware, but our District Chairman went around to every Post that had gaming and pretty much got $5,000 from every Post that had gaming. So you're liable to see a real increase in those crystal eagles.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: We hope.

NEC CHAPMAN: I hope so too.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: I mean, I'll spend $100 to get --

NEC CHAPMAN: The message in that is this: If you have gaming in your Post, there's no reason we can't take care of our veterans with some of that gaming money.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Yes.

COMMANDER OREN: Thanks, Chappy.

Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN STAN: I'm Thom Stan, Chairman, Gifts for Yanks.

If you have money, we want it. We'll give you an eagle.

COMMANDER OREN: Thom, it's hard to soar like an eagle with turkeys like us, right?

CHAIRMAN STAN: Yeah.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you, Thom.

Okay, any other discussions?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Any other discussions?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Aye.

COMMANDER OREN: All opposed the same.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Motion carries. Thank you.

Okay, let's see, JD, on the charters.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: So we have, these are Post Charter revocations and suspensions.

New charters: We have two Squadrons, 109 and 307.

Suspensions are none.

Closing Posts: 116 is merging with 84; Post 242 merging with 633; Post 540; Post 545; Post 576; Post 637 merging with Post 9; Post 725 merging with Post 45; Post 798.

Closing Squadrons are: 79 and any Squadron

that is attached to a closing Post. So the Squadron cannot stay viable without a host Post.

12TH DISTRICT 1VC WOODRUM: 1st Vice, 12th District.

Post 798, we were trying to merge that with 797.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: I'll have to look at the records to see what it says. I don't have them in front of me.

12TH DISTRICT 1VC WOODRUM: Okay.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: That's a lot of them for me to remember exactly where we went. But yeah, we can look at that.

12TH DISTRICT 1VC WOODRUM: Okay.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Just call me Monday, if you will.

12TH DISTRICT 1VC WOODRUM: Okay.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: So, District 12, Post 798, and he states it should be merged to Post 797.

And at this time you need a motion and a second to be able to close all those Posts.

COMMANDER OREN: Do I have a motion?

5TH DISTRICT CMDR RODGERS: Melissa Rodgers, 5th District Commander.

COMMANDER OREN: Okay, Melissa.

14TH DISTRICT CMDR LIFE: John Life, 14th District Commander, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Aye.

COMMANDER OREN: All opposed, the same.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Motion carries.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Commander.

COMMANDER OREN: Yes, sir.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Commander, I'd like to get an alibi on some of The American Legion and maybe bring something, as the Parliamentarian, forward.

The Commander of the Detachment, Vrabel, did a Vrabel at the last District meeting. He took a resolution to raise the dues of the SAL, brought it to his Post in the basement. They approved it. They brought it upstairs to the District meeting and they approved it.

It's not -- well, that's the District.

And he wants me, because I'm the Parliamentarian, he wants to formulate it so we could do it at, approve it at our convention.

Now, as it is, there's nothing in the bylaws of is the SAL, and there's nothing in the bylaws of the Department, except to say we have general oversight of the SAL, on how to increase their dues.

So I'm working on formatting it and getting it out to everybody before our convention so the Districts can come and vote on it.

What I'm seeking here today is a, again, I am seeking a motion to allow the Detachment to go forward with a resolution to increase their dues, with the caveat that the DEC will then approve it after their convention, at the end of your DEC. So that would be at our convention. I'm thinking that's a route that we would need to take.

And we can discuss it here. I think he wants to go from five dollars to seven dollars. He wants to increase it two dollars.

So, Chappy, you got that look on your face. I know you're thinking through it. Do you think that would be a good process of, today, the motion says thank you for the information, we allow it to proceed on?

It has to go through the District and then it will go to convention in May. And then whatever comes out of convention, if they approve it, then it would go to the DEC, to us, for final approval.

Now it hasn't even gone to the Detachment Finance Committee. So this is a pure Vrabel. This is pure Vrabel, where I'm sitting there going maybe talking to your Parliamentarian ahead of time may have been good. Why? We want to get this done. So God bless him for his energy.

So, just to make it simple, I'm seeking a motion, sir. I am seeking a motion to allow the SAL Detachment to proceed with the approval process of a dues increase for a report and final approval back to the final DEC of this year in July.

COMMANDER OREN: Go ahead.

14TH DISTRICT CMDR LIFE: John Life, 14th District Commander, so moves. And I'll use your wording.

COMMANDER OREN: Bob?

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: Schmitt, Alternate NEC, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER OREN: Okay, we got a first and a second.

Any further discussion?

2VC LEWIS: Yes.

COMMANDER OREN: Yes.

2VC LEWIS: Lewis, 2nd Vice, through you, Stan, to Gary.

Gary, is that a per capita increase or a dues increase?

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: A dues increase.

2VC LEWIS: So how much goes to the Detachment?

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: It would be a per capita increase.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: I'd have to look at the bylaws. They pay five dollars right now.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: It's increasing the per capita from five for the Detachment to ten for the Detachment.

2VC LEWIS: Okay.

FROM THE FLOOR: Ten? Ten or seven?

Seven, I think.

He said seven. You said ten.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Right now they pay five per person, per capita.

FROM THE FLOOR: And you said seven.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: And they want to increase it to seven.

FROM THE FLOOR: You just said ten.

COMMANDER OREN: Okay, changed it to seven.

2VC LEWIS: Okay, I just needed to get that clear because --

COMMANDER OREN: Chappy.

NEC CHAPMAN: Hearing the discussion that just went on there, --

Chapman, NEC.

Hearing the discussion that went on there, it's going to be operating under two different DECs. But all we're doing is giving the authority for them to proceed. And then the final decision is going to be made by the next DEC then.

JUDGE ADVOCATE RUE: It would be made at ours, at Department Convention, before the Department Convention.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: It will be made by the last DEC --

NEC CHAPMAN: Oh, the last DEC of this year.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Because their DEC will change too.

NEC CHAPMAN: Okay.

Their per capita has been five dollars forever. And, you know, their in the same particular financial strap that we are, as we're looking for an increase.

So God bless him. But his dad was my Department Commander when I was a District Commander. So, yeah, he's on the right track.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: He hasn't lost one ounce of chutzpah, believe me.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you, Chappy.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Smathers, 11th District 1st Vice.

So, the Sons, or The Legion, has no mechanism to change their dues or how their dues would increase?

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Well, I mean, the mechanism is just per Robert's Rules of Order. Just like we're doing, you're going to see a resolution soon.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Right.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: So you have to have a resolution that comes from Posts or the DEC. So it can go from Post to the convention, or to the DEC before the SAL Convention, but we normally take it from District who have a larger approval of it. So that's how it is.

What we don't have, and I'll have to work on it, we don't have the crossover as to where is the link for the DEC, The Legion DEC. And the only link

is we have general authority and oversight for the program.

But we don't have that written. So that's why I'm saying I want to get the approval today to say move forward with it anyway, because we knew it would come back to this DEC.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Got it.

COMMANDER SCHMITT: Any other questions?

Yes.

SGT-AT-ARMS KENNEDY: Commander, may I speak as the Chairman of the Finance Committee for the SAL?

COMMANDER OREN: Yes.

SGT-AT-ARMS KENNEDY: There was a statement just made that we're in the same condition as The Legion. We're not. We operate on a balanced budget every year. We donate a lot of money every year.

So this increase is strictly to send it on up the line. It's not going to help us at all. So, be aware of that, that it's going to be a battle at the DEC.

Thank you.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

NEC CHAPMAN: Chapman, NEC.

Our Vice Commander had an interesting comment. And so I'm going to ask for permission for him to

speak.

COMMANDER OREN: Commander. You've got the green shirt on. With the green shirt, we give permission.

NVC WEISMANN: I'm sorry, I did not mean to -- we were just talking.

But the mere fact is, I have no idea, I haven't looked at your contusion and bylaws in a little bit, but you have to recognize the Sons as a program of The American Legion in your constitution and bylaws, correct? The DEC has authority over that. So I don't understand what the question is. They already have authority. They're the program of the Posts.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Yeah.

The idea was the sequence of it.

NVC WEISMANN: Right.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Where should it go through us? Some believe that once the Detachment approves it, that's it and we just tell The Legion. And I said no.

NVC WEISMANN: No.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: I said we need to sequence this up. And as a matter of fact, just courtesy says you should notify The Legion, through the Adjutant, that this is what we're going to do.

And then the Adjutant asks the question: Where is that money going? Why are you doing it?

Because we are solvent. Because I'm the Parliamentarian. We are solvent. And he wants to do it to try to send more to The Legion. And that's where the fight is going to be in the Detachment.

So I just wanted to get our Districts working on it so they know what's happening in their Districts. So that was the procedure, sir.

NVC WEISMANN: All resolutions through the Sons have to be approved by the DEC.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MINADEO: Right, right.

But I had to get the sequence because it showed up so late. So --

COMMANDER OREN: Any further questions?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Any further questions, or discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Aye.

COMMANDER OREN: All opposed?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Motion carries.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Ding.

COMMANDER OREN: Ding. (Ringing the bell). Okay.

Yes.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Our favorite topic, the resolution that will never get finished, I don't think.

I'm not sure of the exact resolution you have in front of you is the exact resolution I have in front of me. So I am going to read the important parts that I know have been changed.

"Whereas, The American Legion Department of Ohio Constitution Article XI, Section 2, currently reads 'The amount of annual Department dues beginning January 1st, 2004, shall be nine dollars per member, of which each year at least $1.20 shall be allocated to publish and distribute to the entire membership a Department newspaper; at least fifteen cents shall be allocated for the Department Convention; and at least thirty cents shall be allocated to aid Delegates to the National Convention. Posts shall submit all dues monies mentioned herein to Department Headquarters and it shall establish accounts and disburse these funds according to regulations as may be promulgated by

the Department Executive Committee.'"

From there on, nothing has changed until, "Whereas, the mandatory minimum of $1.20 Ohio Legion News is removed, as it is no longer needed due to the efficient move to a solely online delivery;"

Then we're going to go down to the "Resolved."

"Resolved, The American Legion Department of Ohio, Incorporated, in convention established in Toledo, Ohio, July 11th, 2026, Article XII, Section 2, The Department of Ohio Constitution, to read:

"Article XII, Section 2, the amount of annual Department Per Capita dues beginning July 13th, 2026, shall be $14 per member, of which each year at least fifteen cents shall be allocated for the Department Convention operations; and at least thirty cents shall be allocated to aid Delegates to the National Convention. Posts shall transmit all dues monies mentioned herein to the Department Headquarters and it shall establish accounts and disburse these funds according to the regulations as may be promulgated by the Department Executive Committee."

Now I'm going it turn it over to Stan. He's going to call for a vote.

We voted yes on this once. So let's try this

again.

COMMANDER OREN: Will.

6TH DISTRICT CMDR LITTLE: Will Little, 6th District Commander, I so move to approve the resolution as read.

COMMANDER OREN: Do I hear a second?

14TH DISTRICT CMDR LIFE: John Life, 14th District Commander, seconds.

COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?

Yes.

14TH DISTRICT CMDR LIFE: I just want to make sure, for anyone who is confused on this, because I know there's confusion from what was sent out through the e-mails. This is the same resolution that we had at Mid-Winter. We just cleaned up some of the language on it.

The biggest thing, of course, as the Finance Committee traveled the state throughout all of March, it is a per capita increase, not an actual dues increase. So the Posts, if you're above 37.50, you don't have to raise your dues. Any Posts below 37.50 would have to raise it. But we're looking for a per capita increase, not an actual dues increase.

COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?
FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).
COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?
FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).
COMMANDER OREN: Hearing none, all in favor say aye.
FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Aye.
COMMANDER OREN: All opposed.
FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).
COMMANDER OREN: That's scary. Thank you.
2VC LEWIS: Ring the bell.
COMMANDER OREN: (Ringing the bell).
Okay, unfinished business, audit update.
ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Dean, does he want to go over any more?
COMMANDER OREN: Do you have anything more to go over, Dean?
CHAIRMAN BOYERS: I have nothing further to add.
COMMANDER OREN: Okay.
ADJUTANT ROBINSON: That covers all of those, those next three.
COMMANDER OREN: All except for the membership, the ad-hoc committee.
ADJUTANT ROBINSON: That was your five-year

plan.

COMMANDER OREN: Yeah.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: And that was sent out to everybody.

COMMANDER OREN: Okay, and if I do could, Kirk, would you mind coming up and going over that five-year plan.

2ND DISTRICT 1VC EMANS: I can.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

Since Kirk was my lead person on that, I want to give credit due where credit is due. It wasn't me. He did a great job and I want everybody to hear it from him.

2ND DISTRICT 1VC EMANS: Good afternoon. Kurt Emans from the 2nd District.

Commander Oren asked me to spearhead this program. And we floated a version, I think it was draft version three or four, at the winter conference.

And several of you, I appreciate, cornered me and we discussed a few items on this, on this five-year plan. And I really appreciate your input. And your input has been added to this.

So this is the last and final draft. It is a five-year plan on how to increase membership from

the Department. I've also written into this the Department to the District and the District down to the Post. So this is an all-encompassing plan. And it also has campaign calendars, examples that all of you can use. And I think everybody should have had access to a copy of this.

So at this time, if there are any questions, I would gladly field them from you.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

2ND DISTRICT 1VC EMANS: If not, okay. Thank you.

I did attach a, there is an addendum that strictly deals with retention. So this should be a viable working document that should serve the Department going forward.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

I need a motion to approve and adopt Kurt's hard work.

2ND DISTRICT 1VC EMANS: Emans, 2nd District, makes a motion.

2VC LEWIS: Lewis, 2nd Vice, seconds.

COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Any furler discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Aye.

COMMANDER OREN: All opposed the same.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Motion carries.

2VC LEWIS: All right, one thing I neglected to discuss earlier was the membership manual.

We had our Membership and Post Activities meeting a couple weeks ago. We went through and made a bunch of changes to the awards manual. You guys all have that. There's a sheet that basically says what we're doing and all the updates that we made. So I was going to entertain if there was any questions about that.

It did get approved via e-mail vote with the 1st and 2nd Vices. It just needs to be approved by this body.

This is contingent, the membership manual, just so you understand, is contingent on the per capita increase passing. If it doesn't pass, there will not be a membership manual, awards manual.

We cut the budget from 30,000 to 18, in the version that they approved, if the per capita passes.

Anybody have any questions?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

2VC LEWIS: So I make a motion to approve the membership manual, contingent on the per capita increase.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Rick Smathers, District 11 1st Vice, I second the motion.

COMMANDER OREN: Any discussion?

Chappy.

NEC CHAPMAN: Not negative, not too negative.

COMMANDER OREN: Name and rank.

NEC CHAPMAN: Not too negative.

First of all, I'm glad that you realigned the Districts. That's something that needed to be done. That pretty much reflects what it was 25 years ago with the District, as it goes.

What I did see when I looked through that, there are several cuts to Post incentives there. And that's going to be contentious when it gets to the floor. When they see the cuts in that manual, along with your request for an increase, that's going to cause a little debate on the floor, I've got a feeling.

But that's just comments. I have no issue with the thing. I think a lot of that stuff is minutiae

anyway. But I just wanted to throw that out there.

2VC LEWIS: Gotcha.

COMMANDER OREN: And I need all of you guys' support, going back to your Districts and talking to your people. We need to get this through. That's why we're making cuts.

JUDGE ADVOCATE RUE: Point of order. Rue, Department Judge Advocate.

This isn't a constitution and bylaw change. So, therefore, it doesn't go before the delegates at convention. It goes through the DEC. So the DEC approves it.

COMMANDER OREN: Bob.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: My question is: Okay, we're cutting from 30,000 down to 18,000?

2VC LEWIS: Yes.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: We find that the incentives to the Post is not paying off for us?

2VC LEWIS: No.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: It's not?

2VC LEWIS: No.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: Do we need no readjust it? In other words, we're in this time period now that we can't get to 100 percent. We need to, somehow or another, boost this portion of the awards

program up to give them incentive to go out there and get that 100 percent, versus trying to get their Brown Jug and all that kind of stuff early in the program.

2VC LEWIS: Uh-huh.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: They'll do that.

But at the end of the program, where we really need to boost some incentive into the Posts to do something here at the tail end to get to that 100 percent, I think we should go ahead and try to increase incentives at this point in the game to try to get them to win the money.

The Posts that have won the money, they know how to do it. They've gone out and gotten their 100 percent early in the program. But I'm just looking at maybe we need to look at another incentive, another way to incentivize the Posts to get the job done at this time of the year.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you, Bob.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Rick Smathers, District 11 1st Vice.

One other thing is, even though we passed a motion, the motion was pending the passing of the resolution, or the dues increase. So it doesn't go into effect today. It's pending the dues increase

itself.

JUDGE ADVOCATE RUE: What I'm saying is it doesn't go to the Department floor.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Right.

The other thing is, when the committee looked at this, on your behalf, we had a lot of plaques in there. And we're finding out, if you go to the Posts, you don't see any plaques anyhow. So it's sitting in some Commander's or some Adjutant's desk drawer or file cabinet or whatever.

Now some Posts do display them, but a lot of them don't. Because, No. 1, they don't have room to display them, so, like I said, it's sitting on a shelf.

So that's part of the reasoning behind doing away with a lot of these plaques that we had in there. Yeah, it's nice to receive it, but I think the recognition by certificate, or whatever, will still do the same thing as far as the incentive goes.

And a lot of times it's the same Posts or the same Districts winning the same money. So that's really, I don't know if that's an incentive to anybody, if you up the prize and all you do is give that same District or that same Post the same money

every year but just more of it.

So that was some of the logic, I think, behind everything on that.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

AJ.

PDC WHATLEY: Past Commander Whatley.

I just want to say that this shouldn't be a surprise. We've been talking about this for two years. We've done what you asked for these officers to do. We've done that. We've done it. Now it's time for you to step up to the plate and do the right thing.

Thank you.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Any further discussion?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: All in favor say aye.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Aye.

COMMANDER OREN: All opposed, nay.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Motion carries.

Let's see, new business.

Charles, could you give us an update on

Charities, please.

Come on up, please.

PDC STENNIS: All right.

Good afternoon, everyone.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Good afternoon.

COMMANDER OREN: Afternoon, Charles.

PDC STENNIS: All right. Just a few things coming from The Legion Charities Committee.

We currently have about three different versions of the constitution and bylaws. They are being reviewed. We are hoping to have, at convention, to have it basically approved from our group.

Those bylaws, the best way of putting it, there's different angles for different things.

The old ones, we definitely have to update and improve. The old ones, I think, or last ones, were from the early '90s. So we are not going to be doing that.

But there are some things that I think that need to be added. But then again, I think there's some things that we have to discuss as a group that will have to come off.

That being said, we are still working on those. And we hope to have those finished before

convention.

All right, the A&G's office has sent us some recommendations that they plan on, I guess, doing somewhere down the line. One is a rolling schedule for bingo licenses.

Right now, all the bingo licenses are scheduled to be turned in by December 31st. That creates a small problem. There is, I believe, 1400 different entities that have to have the bingo license. And it looks like my Post, we're in April and we haven't even gotten ours yet. So, yeah.

So, you know, one of the things that they're thinking about doing is doing it on a quarterly basis, which I think is a fantastic idea. That breaks everything up, and so this process will go a lot faster.

I was audited last year for '22, '23 and '24, at my Post, and it took three months to get through that audit. So I know the A&G's office has, there are some issues. I think they need to expand the amount of employees that they do have. But we'll continue to work with that.

I do want to thank, I do want to thank the Treasurer and the member, not the membership chair, the Finance Chairman, because they have allowed

Legion Charities to sit on, sit in, the Finance meetings. We have mentioned several times in those meetings that Legion Charities wants to be a partner with the Finance Committee, not necessarily to be a piggy bank, but have an understanding of what is going on, and being there to assist or aide or even give some guidance, you know, at any point in time. So again, I just want to thank Dean for allowing myself to sit in on those meetings, and just reiterate that we are a team, not just them and us.

So, we are -- the group has approved, the committee has approved the funding. And after this meeting here, we will start discussions into putting together the 501(c)(3), because I have quite a few Posts who have e-mailed me wanting the $10,000. So I know beforehand we had where, after three years, you could apply for it again. And I think the three years is up and folks want it again.

But we're going to set some guidelines and processes and procedures in place on how that is to get done. Because Legion Charities is not an acronym for ATM.

The last thing, we are thinking about making some changes to the convention sweepstakes. One may be moving some of the prize money up. But what I'm

also going to do, and I talked with Shirley about this, is we're going to look back five years to see if this thing is actually even profitable anymore for the Department of Ohio. And if it is not, this may be the last year that we do that.

I do -- I have seen documents where, at times, there were six figures being raised. But I don't think we're raising that anymore.

So these are the things that are going on. Again, any questions or anything, please feel free to e-mail me, at any time. I'll make sure that I answer them between 12:00 and 12:15.

Ladies first.

2VC LEWIS: Lewis, 2nd Vice.

Charles, can you give us an update on the audit?

PDC STENNIS: We asked for an extension. We asked for an extension on the audit and we have not received anything. We have not received any word from the IRS as of yet.

I know Ben Antonelli responded to -- Shirley asked that question. They copied me on the e-mail. And I believe that was like a week ago. We're waiting for their word on the extension that we applied for.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Rick Smathers, District 11 1st Vice.

We know that you have bingo, the AG coming in to do bingo training. Have you considered ever doing a sidebar meeting with Charities and the Posts and bringing this up?

Because, as our Parliamentarian said, we have Posts out there that are doing nothing right. And they're losing the gaming money because of it.

At those meetings, they don't answer the questions that the Posts have. I think that a meeting or something needs to be done where we go over the reports that are due, when they're due, --

PDC STENNIS: Sure.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: -- what happens if you don't do them, the audits, you know.

I mean I just want through an AG audit myself at my Post.

But I'm seeing Posts, in just our District alone, that I know of, you know, we've had three that's been in grave trouble, close to losing their license.

PDC STENNIS: Yeah.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: And so far I've managed to get them out of it. Some of them paid a

nice fine for it.

PDC STENNIS: Yeah.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: So the AG made a little bit more money on us that they shouldn't have, which comes out of your Post funds, because of stupid errors, you know.

And a lot of Posts have these questions about what do I report, when do I report it, how do I report it. And I think that might be something beneficial, in addition to having the AG down here. The AG is good with the law, but the actual reporting they do nothing with.

PDC STENNIS: And correct me if I'm wrong, good sir, it's the internal infrastructure that is not in place. I think we get more information from our vendors than we do actually from the AG.

2VC LEWIS: Yeah.

PDC STENNIS: We do. We do.

And from several of the Posts, even when I was Department Commander, there are things that are still not being done correctly.

I know, even within my Post, I've told them 1500 times, this is the structure in which we do things and this is how it's being done, and they still don't understand it.

So I understand, as an organization, we have an issue with that.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: I think we have talked about it on our Adjutant meetings, trying to get the Adjutants aware of it. I speak on it at almost every District meeting we have. I bring out that your quarterlies are due, --

PDC STENNIS: Correct.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: -- this report is due, you know.

PDC STENNIS: Correct.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Your bingo license, get it in as soon as you can after November 1st. You will have your license by December 1st.

PDC STENNIS: Right.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Adjutant Robinson.

Charles, is this a class that we could put together to cover at Mid-Winter?

PDC STENNIS: Yes, yes, it is a class we could put together at Mid-Winter. Yeah, definitely, definitely.

You know what would be nice? Mr. Vulgamore, if we could put something up on YouTube and we could do that that way also. That way, at any time, there would not be an excuse. We can get that done. We

can get that done.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Yep.

PDC STENNIS: Because, as you mentioned, good sir, you need those bank statements, you need those canceled checks, you need all of that information.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: And you need to get it to the AG on time.

PDC STENNIS: Correct.

But my problem is I don't think a lot of the Posts are doing it. I don't think they're doing it.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Right.

PDC STENNIS: Correct. I don't think they're doing that.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: And getting fined.

PDC STENNIS: And with the -- call it what it is. There is a level of theft that is also happening within the Posts also.

So, again, these are some of the things where we need to enlighten the Post member that, hey, you have a right to see those bank statements. You have a right to know how much money is in that charity account. You know, the 30 or $45 dues isn't just a pony up at the bar. We have a responsibility to the community also.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Rick Smathers.

I'd just say that they should be reporting those figures at their meeting anyhow.

PDC STENNIS: Yes, yes.

11TH DISTRICT 1VC SMATHERS: Their normal Post meeting.

PDC STENNIS: Yes.

I am the finance officer at my Post. You get a P&L, you get a balance sheet, and you also get a check reconciliation. That's for every account that I have. That's for each and every account that I have. So there is no question what is going on.

Now, is that done at every Post? I don't know. I don't believe it is, but we have to get there. Because the amount of cash flowing through Posts, you would be amazed.

I know I went to an Amherst Post and I know that Commander told me, "Yeah, we're doing like 100,000 a week."

So, you know, having fiscal policies and procedures in place are a must right now.

And then let me take another step back. We need to use those funds that we're getting from this gaming and impact the community. We really do.

And Mr. Lockyer, I will be visiting your Posts. Because I ran into a young lady that is doing, she's

working with the VA with the homeless, with homeless men and women. And they are looking for assistance from us.

So, again, these are the things that we can do. We can build relationships. It's not just, you know, Buckeye Boys State, Buckeye Girls State. Those are great avenues. But we have opportunities to go into the community and impact veterans who are, call it what it is, who have not made it, who are downtrodden and disillusioned. So we can do these things. And also, we need to take these opportunities and do them.

Commander.

COMMANDER OREN: I'm off my Post. Thank you, sir.

PDC STENNIS: Thank you.

13TH DISTRICT CMDR LOCKYER: Lockyer, District 13 Commander.

We have a meeting the second Thursday of every month. We welcome you to come. Last month we gave out $50,000 to the community, starting with the mayor's outreach for Berea Police, for Berea Fire, and for kids. Everything went to the community in Berea. So we look forward to seeing you and whoever you bring with you.

PDC STENNIS: I will be there.

COMMANDER OREN: Christie, under the good of The Legion.

COORDINATOR WHITE: Hi, friends, me again.

Actually, if I could, Commander, for my Americanism report, I forgot to mention Buckeye Boys State. The president is a grumpy old man who yelled at me.

Just kidding, Bob Schmitt.

The Buckeye Boys State staff meeting, if anyone is curious about Boys State or being on staff, we have a staff meeting next Saturday, starting at 10:00 o'clock, right here. It is open for anyone and everyone. So if you are curious about Boys State and you want to potentially join the staff, you are more than welcome to attend the meeting next Saturday.

And Boys State would be held at Miami University, June 14th through the 21st, of this year.

You're welcome, Bob.

So, Department Convention.

Again, I have been preaching this for awhile, but I'm already having Posts calling, saying, "Hey, I called the hotel and I can't get double rooms."

Well, because they're sold out.

So, what I've been told from the hotels is, if you have not booked a room yet, go book your room. The rooms are sold out at the Hilton Garden Inn, the one that is connected to the convention center. Those are sold out for Friday and Saturday.

So if you still need rooms, you will have to contact the Renaissance. We are under contract with them also.

And there will be constant shuttles the entire time. So I know that everybody is like, "Ew, Renaissance, gross." There's shuttles. So you don't have to drive your own car. There will always be a way to get from the hotel to the convention center and back. Okay?

So make your hotel reservations. You can try to contact the Hilton. But if they say that they're sold out, they're not lying. So don't call me and ask to verify. Okay? So make hotel reservations at the Renaissance.

Going with the Department Convention, I know there was conversation about the hospitality rooms and Gary wanted me to give a segue for him to speak. That's my segue.

1VC COX, JR.: 1st Vices, in years past, when I

was sitting in your seats, we would be given a list. This is what you bring. You bring this alcohol. You bring this alcohol. We've found out that doesn't work.

We've tried to do it where one medium, one large and one small get together. We feel that doesn't always work.

So we want to try something a little bit different this year. We have one big room. Just one. So how do we do it with 14 of you guys to bring what? You're going to bring your own thing? You're just going to bring double?

So what me and Holly sat down and thought about, we would ask that each District donate $400 each to the Department. We will go pick up the alcohol, the pop. And we could only have chips and cookies at the hospitality room. That's it. We will pick all that stuff up.

I got that truck and trailer. You've all seen it. I'll bring it. I'm going to bring my two large coolers down.

I would ask that you guys bring some coolers for me so that we can put them in there.

Now, here's the other question: At the end of the convention, we always have leftover, leftover

alcohol. What do we do with it? How do we distribute it?

So, again, Holly and I had another thought. What if, on Saturday, we do a raffle ticket, and at the end of the night, about 10:00 o'clock, we start raffling off unopened cases of beer, unopened bottles of liquor? And then you guys get to take it all back to wherever you want to do it. All that money and all that proceeds goes to this guy (indicating) and his project. That way, there's not a whole big mess, there's not a whole big bringing in ten bottles of Jack Daniels we don't need.

But we can sit there -- and again, and I would not just talk with just me and Holly, but any ideas that you guys would have for bringing stuff and getting that done.

And I'll bring it down in my truck and trailer if I need to, if it's that much. And I have no issue with that.

So, that way, it takes a lot less of the argument, a lot less of trying to coordinate who doesn't bring what. And that way we can have a really, really, really good hospitality room. And then maybe, just maybe, we can raise some money for this guy's (indicating) charity. I think they

deserve it.

Do you have any questions on that, my idea or Holly's?

Oh boy, I can't wait on this one, Bob.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: Schmitt, Alternate NEC.

You said District. What about the candidates? I didn't hear you say "candidates."

1VC COX, JR.: That's Mid-Winter. Mid-Winter is for the candidates. Convention is for the Districts. That's why you didn't hear anything about the candidates.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: So I don't have to spend any money. Thank you.

2VC LEWIS: Don't worry, Bob. We're going to hit you up.

COMMANDER OREN: Okay.

5TH DISTRICT 1VC PARSONS: That sounds good to me.

1VC COX, JR.: Who are you again?

COMMANDER OREN: Ken.

5TH DISTRICT 1VC PARSONS: Ken Parsons, 1st Vice Commander of the 5th District.

COMMANDER OREN: That's information, okay.

FROM THE FLOOR: Do we need a motion for that?

1VC COX, JR.: No, because that's you guys.

That's up to you to do. That's the minimum that we would ask for that you guys do. We don't need a motion to make it happen.

If you can do more, please. The more we can cover this, the better off we'll be.

COMMANDER OREN: And where do you want the money to go? Payable to who?

1VC COX, JR.: The Department of Ohio.

COMMANDER OREN: For the hospitality rooms?

1VC COX, JR.: For the hospitality rooms.

COMMANDER OREN: Okay, I just wanted to clarify.

COORDINATOR WHITE: I'm sure Gary will send a follow-up e-mail to all the District 1st Vices also, so then everyone is on the same page and it's in writing.

One final thing that I have and then that's the last that you'll hear from me today.

Every year, the upcoming Commanders, the upcoming Legion family, so Gary for The Legion, and Mindy for Auxiliary, and Todd Bidlack for SAL, they get together at Mid-Winter and pick a new family shirt. This was last year's lineup (indicating), was the green.

This year, they have chosen this one

(indicating), with the new logo. So this is the new Legion family shirt.

If you would like a new shirt, instead of us ordering five million of them and having them sit around, we are taking orders for these. The order forms are over there (indicating) somewhere.

So please make sure, if you want it before Department Convention, or to pick it up at Department Convention, Vanna White/Jerry Perry has them in his hand, please get them filled out and get the money to Becky ahead of time, so then I can get them ordered ASAP, so then you will have them already for convention. Okay?

5TH DISTRICT 1VC PARSONS: What size is that?

COORDINATOR WHITE: Not yours.

COMMANDER OREN: You need to stand up when you ask a question.

5TH DISTRICT 1VC PARSONS: Ken Parsons, 1st Vice Commander of the 5th District.

COORDINATOR WHITE: So they sent me a sample. The sample is an extra large.

I thought you were just trying to buy it off the floor.

There will be men's sizes and women's sizes.

And this color that they have chosen only comes

with no pockets. So if you have pocket or no pocket complaints, I can give you a suggestion box to file those complaints.

COMMANDER OREN: I'll buy an extra, cut it up, and you guys can get pockets from me.

COORDINATOR WHITE: You'll survive.

Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

Okay, JD.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Just a couple things and I'll turn it over quick and easy.

The District and Post delegation sheets will be going out before your District Conventions. Please keep an eye out for them. Sherry is working on them. We started going through everything to make sure they're updated and correct.

The next thing I wanted to touch on is National Convention, which is in Louisville, Kentucky, August 28th through September 3rd. The sheets are out here (indicating). Please make your housing reservations with us.

I know you don't know if you're going to be a delegate. And it is getting close to where we may actually have alternates. Our membership keeps shrinking and more people are going. So at some

point here very soon, we may not have alternates, or we may end up having alternates. So just be aware of that, that that could happen.

We were about ten short last year. So we get ten more people, Louisville is a whole lot closer than Tampa, I can see us going over our allocation this year.

So, with that said, Commander, I am done.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

ASST. SGT-AT-ARMS MASON: You're on good of The Legion, right?

COMMANDER OREN: Yes, yes.

ASST. SGT-AT-ARMS MASON: I have a donation for you, sir.

COMMANDER OREN: For me or him (indicating)?

ASST. SGT-AT-ARMS MASON: At our last Post meeting -- in case you need to know, Bob Mason, Post 344 -- I got a deer-in-the-headlight look when we were discussing our Buckeye Boys State, on Boys State needing money. And I just the deer-in-the-headlights look because we pay for them to go to Boys State. So I had to explain to them that they haven't raised that cost. Boys State still needs money. So maybe we need to do a better job at getting that out there.

It wasn't what I wanted, sir, but our Post, they voted to give Buckeye Boys State $344, to represent our Post.

(Applause).

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: Hey Bob, we'll change your Post number to 1344 for next year.

ASST. SGT-AT-ARMS MASON: Okay.

3RD DISTRICT CMDR FOWLE: Brian Fowle, 3rd District Commander.

I just wanted to give a donation to Commander's project of $500 from the District.

(Applause).

COMMANDER OREN: Mr. Jerry.

4TH DISTRICT ADJUTANT PERRY: Jerry Perry, Post 72, 4th District.

I don't have any money. But what I am, I come from the old school of Legionnaires that I write a resolution for what I want to do. So all I'm saying is I'm not here to jump the line and I'm not here to make anybody mad, but I am submitting my resolution to run for Alternate NEC this year.

NEC CHAPMAN: He's out of order.

Chapman, NEC.

He's out of order. We don't campaign at this

DEC. We don't endorse candidates at this DEC. That's something that needs to be done on the floor of the convention.

4TH DISTRICT ADJUTANT PERRY: It will be.

Thanks, JD.

12TH DISTRICT 1VC WOODRUM: I'd like to talk about this (indicating).

Joe Woodrum, 1st Vice Commander, 12th District.

The red lantern has been a long-standing practice, but I question its relevance and appropriateness at this point in time.

While tradition often serves to connect us with our past and reinforces the values and continuity within our organizations, not all traditions are suitable for perpetuation. Some, due to their outdated or inappropriate nature, should be retired, as this (indicating) should be.

The red lantern, which is a rusty relic in a burlap sack -- and you laugh, but it's the truth -- is a tradition that serves no constructive purpose, because it doesn't go to anybody that can have a true impact.

I can tell these Posts, which I do, all the Posts in the 12th District have been given all kinds of great ideas on how to increase and how to get

their people to renew their memberships, but to confer upon me something that I cannot physically do something about is not the thing to do, in my opinion. It's basically, it's public shaming, something that I don't believe in.

We're all adults, every one of us. We don't need this kind of shaming. We are adults, every one of us, and we deserve respect. Every one of us in this room has served this nation well, honorably. And to publicly shame any one of us, no matter whether it be in a group like this or even in public, is an atrocious thought.

I am unwilling to carry this lantern. I really am.

As a volunteer, my motivation is rooted in serving our veterans. The red lantern does nothing to benefit our veterans. Instead, it serves only to demean the District forced to bear it. I sympathize with the Districts that have had to bear this atrocity, even though this is just a symbol of what it is. And I really apologize to you for having to do that.

The 40 and 8, which is where this initiated from, has long since gone. There's one Voiture left, you know, in Ohio. It's in Lancaster. And

actually, across the nation, there is less than 50 of them left.

ALTERNATE NEC SCHMITT: We've got a Voiture in Toledo.

12TH DISTRICT 1VC WOODRUM: You got one in Toledo? It's not listed on the list.

NEC CHAPMAN: We have one in Clermont County too.

12TH DISTRICT 1VC WOODRUM: Okay.

FROM THE FLOOR: There's one in Washington County.

12TH DISTRICT 1VC WOODRUM: By the way, I'll tell you that I am a former 40 and 8 guy. I've even still got my hat.

But it's a tradition that needs to die. So I would like to move that this tradition die today, right here.

COMMANDER OREN: I need a motion.

FROM THE FLOOR: He made a motion.

COMMANDER OREN: Do I hear a second?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Do I hear a second?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Do I hear a second?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

COMMANDER OREN: Hearing no seconds, that's it.

12TH DISTRICT 1VC WOODRUM: That's all I have to say, Commander.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you, sir.

13TH DISTRICT CMDR LOCKYER: Good afternoon, Commander. James Lockyer, 13th District Commander. I'll give an update on the U.S.S. Cleveland, with some details.

May 19th (sic), it's going to arrive in the North Coast Harbor in downtown Cleveland. I don't think they have anything --

FROM THE FLOOR: The 15th?

13TH DISTRICT CMDR LOCKYER: May 9th.

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: May 9th.

13TH DISTRICT CMDR LOCKYER: May 9th.

2VC LEWIS: You said the 19th.

13TH DISTRICT CMDR LOCKYER: Oh, sorry. I can't read my writing sometimes.

May 10th is Community Day, when it's going to start opening to the public.

The American Legion Post 91 and the VFW District 7 will be sharing a 20-foot by 20-foot tent on the pier next to the Cleveland, or in the vicinity.

I already got some material from JD, and I'm

going to be passing out literature.

I got a conference call next week on the details of that event. So I'll find out more about that.

VIP tours. Post 91 was given a couple tickets. The Department is going to get four. I'm going to send that link to JD. He'll make sure it gets to the Commander and you all fight. That's on you guys.

COMMANDER OREN: The fight is already over.

13TH DISTRICT CMDR LOCKYER: Okay.

On May 15th, there's going to be a reception at the science center. Post 91 is going to get two tickets and the Department is going to get some. I'll find out this week how many we're going to get.

COMMANDER OREN: Three.

13TH DISTRICT CMDR LOCKYER: No. That is for the commissioning. That is for the commissioning. That's something else.

This is on May 15th, a reception. It's a black tie formal. So you guys dress in a suit and big boy pants.

2VC LEWIS: Excuse me. I won't be doing that.

13TH DISTRICT CMDR LOCKYER: Don't interrupt.

That's at 6:00. That will be from 6:00 to

10:00, --

2VC LEWIS: How about I punch you in the throat?

13TH DISTRICT CMDR LOCKYER: -- at the science center, on Friday night, May 15th.

As soon as I get the details, I will forward them to JD.

May 16th is the breakfast. Post 91 and the Department was each given two tickets. I shared one of my tickets with the Department. I got the Commander as my guest and the Commander picked the other two attendees.

It starts off with a breakfast at 8:00 o'clock at the science center. And then after the breakfast, we will walk over and we will be given our VIP tickets. And we'll be on the commissioning platform for the ceremony.

Anyone else that wants to order tickets, you go to the USSClevelandFoundation.org and look for "Events, Commissioning," and there's a spot down there that says "Register." You'll get your tickets via e-mail.

Any questions?

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: (No response).

13TH DISTRICT CMDR LOCKYER: Thank you.

Commander, that's all I've got.

(Applause).

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you.

Okay, anything else to be thrown at me?

It's not going to stick.

Oh, you're throwing your pen at me, okay.

1VC COX, JR.: All right, real quick, Gary Cox, Department 1st Vice.

I want to sit here and bring up, real quick, something we've been doing all year. And I want to start out by saying thank you.

We've been asked, the DEC, to give money for the Commander's gift. And I wanted to hit on that. And we have raised $729 so far for his gift. And I want to thank you guys who have contributed.

However, if you haven't, I would really like it if you would, so that we can get this together. Because we have some ideas, especially coming from the true Commander, on what we're going to get Stan. And I've got a couple ideas for myself to give him to make his going out as good as possible.

I don't know about your homecoming though. Your homecoming was off the chain when it came to gifts. I don't know if I get some of that, wow. The gift that his Post got him, that big sign, that

was insane.

We have ran through this all the way now until April. And he has been one of my biggest mentors that I've ever had, besides my father. And we owe it to him to send him out with a bang. Because I don't know where I would have been without AJ, Chappy, especially this guy (indicating), coming up through these chairs. And I know all of you guys have sat here and probably thought the same thing, especially coming out the 1st District. You guys have had one heck of a mentor. Jason. You guys are lucky to have Stan. And we are lucky to have Stan. So I would ask, if you haven't contributed yet, give your money to Becky for his gift.

And that's pretty much what I have. So, thank you, sir, so much.

COMMANDER OREN: Thank you, Gary. I appreciate it.

I don't know what to say after that. Thank you. Wow, I'm quite honored. Thank you.

We had swimming lessons out here about a month ago. And JD and I was the first one in the pool. They tried to drown us, but we got out.

But it was for Special Olympics. And we did the Polar Plunge. And we raised 70-plus thousand

dollars for the Polar Plunge. Thank all of you.

(Applause).

And I'm still trying to thaw out. That was cold. I'm here to tell you. It woke you up.

Let's see, closing remarks I guess we're at.

Anything else?

ADJUTANT ROBINSON: I'm on vacation Thursday and Friday.

COMMANDER OREN: So?

Well, in closing, I want to make a few comments.

I appreciate all the support you guys have given me, you guys and gals have given me over the year.

And Gary, I'm still a little shaken from what you just said. Not expecting that.

Also, help me with the dues increase. I wouldn't be standing here asking for it if we didn't need it.

1VC COX, JR.: Per capita.

COMMANDER OREN: Yeah, I understand, but it's still a dues increase.

And membership, we've been working hard. And I know, as the National Vice said, this is a hard time. If you see a person with a ball cap on that

says something, or anything, ask them. It's amazing how many will sign up. And let's go for it.

Thank you again for everything.

Mr. Distel.

CHAPLAIN DISTEL: Before I give the benediction, with the convention coming to Toledo, I've been struggling really hard to get a priest for a service on Sunday morning. And so far I'm striking out. They say they're so short on priests that they can't spare one.

There is a mass on NBC. And I'll have flyers at the hotel. And it's at 6:30 in the morning, so you won't miss anything except some sleep.

Let us pray.

As we prepare to depart, Lord, give us all safe travels. Help us remember, Lord, how far we have come in the journey that got us here today. We are all tourists, God.

God has fixed all our roots and has made all of our reservations as we head to our destinations. So trust in him and enjoy your trip called "Life".

We don't focus, Lord, on what could go wrong. We focus on what can go right.

And to that we pray for You every day. Amen.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY: Amen.

COMMANDER OREN: Recover.

The colors in place, by the numbers. One, two.

. . . SALUTE TO COLORS BY ASSEMBLY . . .

COMMANDER OREN: Adjourned. Thank you all.

* * * * *

(PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED)

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