Wisconsin State Council Meeting Summary

Overview

This meeting of the Wisconsin State Council (Vietnam Veterans of America) addressed ongoing challenges with leadership representation, communication, declining participation, and the uncertain future of both state and national VVA organizations. Discussions focused on elections, organizational structure, membership, communication issues, and national-level proposals impacting the council's future.

Key Takeaways

- **Leadership Representation Issues**: Insufficient chapter participation prevented valid elections, requiring leadership delays and structural realignments.
- **Communication Barriers**: Outdated contact methods and low digital literacy hinder effective information sharing among chapters.
- **Membership and Participation Decline**: Despite stable membership numbers, actual engagement is low due to aging and health challenges.
- **National VVA Financial and Structural Crisis**: The national organization faces financial hardship and controversial membership proposals, causing uncertainty.

Key Points

Leadership & Elections

- Insufficient representation from regions and chapters prevented holding valid elections for regional directors.
- Motion to delay elections until enough chapter participation can be ensured; current directors remain until replaced.
- Proposal to eliminate region director positions was deemed out of order due to bylaw requirements.
- Emphasis on the need for more active leadership and direct communication with chapters.

Communication Issues

- Significant problems with email delivery, outdated contact lists, and low digital literacy among chapter officers.
- Many chapters lack functional websites or reliable ways to disseminate information.
- Calls for an annual, up-to-date calendar to improve planning and attendance.
- Recommendation for each chapter to designate someone responsible for digital communications.

Membership & Participation

- Membership numbers are steady on paper, but actual participation is dwindling, mainly due to aging and health issues.
- Only 11 people attended the last election out of 2,668 members, raising concerns about legitimacy and engagement.
- Chapters encouraged to consider their own incorporation and tax exemption status to ensure continuity if national support falters.

Organizational Structure & Realignment

- Discussion of unequal regional representation led to a motion (passed) to realign chapters for balance.
- Some chapters are nonfunctional and may face charter revocation; investigation into assets and compliance recommended.

National VVA Issues & Mission 75

- National VVA faces financial crisis: declining income, high rent, staff layoffs, and poor communication from leadership.
- “Mission 75” proposal: Open VVA membership to post-1975 veterans, with a two-year probation for new members. Widely criticized and expected to fail.
- Alternatives for organizational dissolution or restructuring are under consideration but lack consensus.
- Concerns raised about national leadership’s transparency, decision-making, and direction.

Veteran Support & Legacy

- Presentation on Vietnam veterans' experiences, aging, health issues (Agent Orange, PTSD, substance abuse), and the importance of recognition and support.
- Advocacy for better VA services, caregiver support, and preserving veterans' stories.
- Committee reports highlighted ongoing work in toxic exposure, membership, POW/MIA accounting, and scholarships.

Administrative & Procedural Notes

- Importance of timely submission of election and financial reports.
- Next meetings scheduled for March 13 and September 11; chapters urged to update calendars accordingly.
- Suggestion to improve communication by requesting email receipt acknowledgments.

Conclusion

The Wisconsin State Council is at a crossroads, facing declining participation, communication challenges, and uncertainty at the national level. The council must revitalize leadership, improve communication, and plan for possible organizational changes. Active participation, transparent planning, and adapting to members' needs are essential for sustaining the council's mission and supporting Wisconsin's Vietnam veterans. Members are urged to engage, update their chapters, and prepare for critical decisions in the coming year.

Transcription

A 00:02

And there's nobody representing Region 1.

B 00:05

Yes, there is. Oh, I was joined by Tom.

A 00:11

But we need more than one person from a region to vote for a director.

C 00:15

So you got 2?

A 00:17

Yeah, we need more than 2 because there are 6 chapters in Region 1.

C 00:23

We should have at least 6 members 921 is here.

A 00:28

Oh, okay, so we don't have enough for that.

B 00:32

What's your number? Milwaukee?

A 00:39

Milwaukee is 325. No, that's Waukesha. So anyway, we still have somewhat of a conundrum.

B 00:55

Nobody—

A 00:56

is anybody here from Region 4? One chapter out of 7. How can one chapter vote for the region? Not fair.

B 01:10

So I move at this particular time we delay this election until our next meeting, which is in—

A 01:17

2 weeks. Mark here, 27.

C 01:20

Now I'm currently the elected director for Region 1, and I'm also, you know, president of Wisconsin State Council. Can I appoint Javille as my alternate?

A 01:37

Alternate, sure. But then what about the other 5?

C 01:44

chapters.

A 01:44

We need to have a voice in those other 4 chapters, whether, whether it's if we can get them by proxy, if we can do something over, over the internet, a Zoom meeting or something, get the presidents together from these chapters. It's just going to be difficult.

C 02:06

Can we think about that?

A 02:09

And then there's— to say, if we do not have elections, those currently holding those positions, even though they don't come here, are still those regional directors? That would be the case. That would be the case until they're replaced. So they still have the office.

C 02:28

So I'm asking, what is the methodology for replacing them?

A 02:37

elections. But you've got to get the people from the regions here to do that. And Jim is going to have to— It's not going to happen. No, telling the chapters, at least for the next meeting, they need to show up so we can do the elections for region director.

C 02:55

Okay.

A 02:56

I don't think there's a provision for an alderman. And then I would propose—

B 03:04

I—

A 03:04

that's kind of what my motion is for.

C 03:06

Well, the, the issue is more current than that. I mean, so that would take care of the election, but what happens between now and March? That's what I'm concerned about.

A 03:20

Well, we stay status quo. Okay.

B 03:25

So in other words, the acting—

A 03:26

Greg, I'm recognizing Greg back there first. No, um, only one little problem with keeping it the way it is, is I resigned as Region 4 effective the end of June, so there is no active Region 4.

C 03:42

Can he appoint an alternate? I don't think so.

A 03:52

It's not in the bylaws. Not in the bylaws.

C 03:55

Can I appoint an alternate?

A 03:58

Doesn't say so.

C 04:00

Okay, let's take this offline.

A 04:06

Okay, well then, if that— we're going to table that motion for now till next time. I also, at this particular point, would like to make another motion. That motion, it would be to totally eliminate the 4-region director position within the State Council.

B 04:32

I second that discussion.

A 04:36

Why? Why not? If nobody is here to take up the space, how can we get anything done?

C 04:44

I understand where that motion is coming from because Region directors in the last at least 2 years, maybe 3 or 4 years, haven't done any reports. They have— except for Jamil, they have not visited any of the chapters. Uh, Ray probably has. You've been busy communicating with your chapter that he has resigned.

D 05:09

Yeah.

C 05:10

So I understand where that motion is coming from. And who's making the second?

B 05:18

Yes, sir. You know, I, I'm very emotional for this whole thing. My chapter at present is burned out, and they burned out for one reason: they do not see face-to-face leadership. We don't see anyone as executive level coming and visiting us. This is not to point towards anyone. This is happening in the leadership. And what leadership is doing is basically— to be candid with you, I think if I'm not a member of that chapter, the chapter will dissolve.

B 06:00

And I can speak of it because I'm a life member of all other organizations. But VBA is closest to my heart because I'm a Vietnam veteran. So I think we need to wake up here. The reason why you're seeing these absent chairs are because half of them cannot open the website, including me. The information that Jim is sending is correct. He's receiving

my information. But on the other side, we are not getting that information. We are not seeing anyone visiting us.

A 06:33

Thank you.

B 06:34

So this is a fact of life. So you've got to make very serious decisions. When you take an oath that I want to serve this thing, with oath becomes responsibility. And with that responsibility, if Jamil takes an oath as a chairman of membership committee, it's my responsibility for the entire state. And I try to communicate through electronic means, you know. I keep in touch with the national And in my brief, I'll explain it to you more.

B 07:02

But in all honesty, I'm sharing with you, bleeding from my heart, that we, we need to wake up as executive leadership to be down to the trenches. Thank you.

A 07:12

I find your motion out of order because it requires a bylaw change. Aha, okay. I rescind, or whatever, reject. If you're going to consider that, then somebody needs to propose a bylaw change.

B 07:28

And I agree with you, sir. Okay, we had to get some action somehow.

A 07:34

So, okay.

C 07:35

And we do need— like I said before, we're in a crisis, and we may be ending up being the Wisconsin State Council of our chapter. That's fine with me, standing on our own without CVA support coming from national. So we have 2 years to get our act together. Actually, that's only a year and a half.

A 08:03

Yeah.

C 08:05

And get our chapters where they can either stand alone or be part of the state council. And if we're not going to have regions and region directors, We need to find another way to communicate with the chapters. So before we change the bylaws or the constitution, we need to make sure that we have a way to communicate with the chapters. So do we need to have a committee to work on that? Yes, sir.

A 08:47

One of the questions for you guys would be, is the state incorporated in order to keep these chapters that are not incorporated open when national shuts down?

C 09:03

Only national is incorporated in New York State, which is the major issue I understand that. But, uh, the state councils are incorporated through the individual states.

A 09:22

Okay.

C 09:23

And the chapters are incorporated through their individual states. So all of our chapters are incorporated, have a charter with each state.

A 09:35

If national goes away, In previous veteran— I forget, maybe 2 veterans ago— but on the website, there are— there is published by National guidelines for what state councils and chapters can do if National goes away. It really boils down to either being a C3 or a C19. And so if NASHUA goes away, they supposedly are going to provide even further instruction to try to help with that. That topic was to be covered at leadership and they didn't cover it, so— but it's out there about what you do.

A 10:21

NASHUA goes away, State Council needs to make a decision who wants to be a State Council. change to become a C3. It's involved, but it would be a decision that the state council would have to make and each chapter. Yes, ma'am, I'm sorry. In following your statement, it was not— it was March that we had asked The question— we had a large group. We had at least 60% or more of the chapters represented. The question was asked, should the Wisconsin State Council continue operating?

A 11:21

As a separate entity? And everybody said yes. It was unanimous. We did not ask the second question. Well, those of you who want to participate and be active in that

participation, stand up. And step forward. We didn't do it. It was a straw poll. Anybody can go, yeah, let's keep it going. All right, but who's gonna keep it going? That's the key.

A 12:13

Quickly, if more people don't step up to run for these offices of this State Council and all of a sudden you have a gap where you're not filling the offices, then I have to come in as a region director and tell you that I may have to shut the State Council down because you don't have the proper leadership.

C 12:36

Which was done in Minnesota.

A 12:38

That's correct. And all I'm saying is, every— following up on Jim's— everybody said they wanted to do this.

E 12:46

Lookers have got to start showing up and taking care of business. This is not a social club. This is not a coffee clutch. It is supposedly to try to help all the chapters in the state and keep the name of VVA out in the forefront in the news and the other things we do, and we're not doing it.

D 13:07

So, well, and I would suggest that not only at the state council level but also at the chapter level, because their attendance is also dwindling. It seems like the numbers in the

chapter level and at the state level are growing, not by a lot, but the participation is dwindling. And that's where we need to step up.

F 13:34

Correct.

D 13:35

And there's reasons for the participation to be dwindling, and it's mostly health reasons. So I think we need to take this conversation offline, maybe have maybe a separate meeting with the board and try to figure this out before The March meeting, because we get to the March meeting and we don't have these issues resolved or have action-type objectives or solutions, we're really going to be behind the 8-ball. Because by March, we're only going to have a year left to find out an answer.

E 14:19

At the last convention, it was approved to have a electronic meetings. And if we have to go to that, people need to also participate. But we legally could have a Zoom meeting or another—

F 14:35

Absolutely.

E 14:36

But legally we could do that, and then you don't have to worry about traveling, you don't have to worry about all that.

D 14:42

And we don’t have to worry about the white elephant.

E 14:45

That’s right, we’ll go find some penguins.

D 14:50

Okay, okay, a couple of things.

G 14:54

Got a question back here.

H 14:56

Back in June.

F 14:57

Question back here.

H 14:58

Question.

D 14:59

Question.

C 15:02

Yes.

D 15:02

Hey, what's your name?

I 15:04

Dennis Emery. I'm from Chapter 729. Um, let me tell you how poor communications are. The internet system that you folks have is practically unusable. Okay, and like an infantry squad, this organization goes down to the squad level. The squad level is not being communicated with very well. The decisions are made at the higher headquarters that impact the lower companies. We have a real problem because our membership It's virtually all in the 70s.

I 15:47

So, to expect them to travel without adequate planning and things like that is, is an impossibility. I got the call about replacing Mike Johnson this weekend because nobody else was available from my chapter. do it, and we're in his region.

G 16:11

That's—

I 16:12

that tells me I really don't need a regional director. I really don't need to do anything in my chapter except get myself a tax exemption at the level that I can get it. Because it looks to me like the discussion here today, and in the past, It's just going to go on and on and on and on. And you told us a little bit ago that the option that's on the internet for the future for National is probably not going to pass. So my question then comes down to reality.

I 16:55

Why should I depend on my higher headquarters? I've got 25 members typically that meet at my chapter meetings. So, I'm going back and I'm going to tell my chapter my recommendation is to file for our own level tax exemption, so that whatever happens in the future to those organizations that can't come up with a decision, or— Our slow addict, we're covered because we intend to meet until the last guy's gone, period.

E 17:32

That's great.

D 17:35

That's—

I 17:35

and I think that I— my opinion probably represents a lot of the chapters.

D 17:41

And I appreciate that because what you're suggesting there is for your chapter, because your chapter does A lot of things at the local level. You know, you show up at the parades and local events, and you could function on your own. Uh, and so that's— that is an option, not only for your chapter, um, 721, but for all of the chapters. So we need to consider that option too. Thank you.

I 18:16

That's what we're going to do.

G 18:18

Okay.

D 18:20

I hope you give us until March of ’68.

F 18:24

’68?

D 18:27

’68? ’98.

E 18:29

I would suggest that Jim put back out again on our website the guidelines that have been provided by National with regard to what chapters and state councils can and may want to consider doing. I think it’s there. I don’t know how many people saw it in the Veteran, but let’s get it back out there so that all our chapters have the ability to at least read what their options are.

D 19:01

One of the issues that pops up when we talk about getting information passed out either Either through Jim’s website, which is a great website, or sending out emails or texts or Instagram. Many of the officers at the chapter level don’t use email. They don’t use the internet. They don’t have smartphones. They don’t have computers. Uh, Jim and I have found out that we want to send out a communication to the chapter that the president doesn’t use a computer, the secretary doesn’t use a computer.

D 19:48

So I'm not saying that if you're going to be the president of a chapter, it doesn't mean that you have to be tech savvy. But somebody in your organization has to take up that responsibility of receiving emails and being able to look at the internet for that chapter. So that, that becomes another communications issue.

F 20:18

For this meeting, for last night's meal and this meeting, I sent— there are on the national— on our monthly roster that we get from national, less the at-large, there are—

K 20:52

F 20:53

A little over 2,000 opportunities— 2,081 opportunities to email out to our members. Over half of them are returned because they are fictitious emails. So the emails that I have available don't go anywhere, they just come back. Second, the remaining— of the remaining half, over 50% are bounced. In other words, they get to your computer And they're bounced out. You don't want them.

F 21:53

So that means 90% of the time that you have a filter in there that you have turned on that will bounce these emails and maybe other emails as well. Of those, I got about 125 that they reached the site, it was opened, but they didn't do anything with it. So it'll tell me that it reached the that the person opened it, but they didn't do anything with it. So, you know, if, you know, when they say garbage in, garbage out, we got a lot of garbage.

I 22:52

We sometimes get the message, but it's too close for us to notify our members.

F 22:59

That too.

I 23:02

What we really need is an up-to-date calendar at the beginning of each year that tells the dates and the activities, which requires planning from this committee to get that calendar put together and published so that anybody in here that does use their cell phone or a computer can pull up the calendar and remind themselves what weekend what's happening. I think that's a good idea. Because you're— right now you're talking September.

I 23:31

There's a lot of football games that I have grandsons playing, he has daughters cheerleading, whatever, that are competitive. So, the reason for that calendar would be for the individuals to plan far ahead, and when something comes up, they can make their decision. Not, not— I'm not saying that. 2 days or 3 days before, get an email, or even a week before, when their daughter's getting married or something, the decision's already made to them.

I 24:04

Had they known that, they might have reorganized their daughter's wedding, or asked her to do it on a different weekend.

F 24:12

Doesn’t know his daughter.

E 24:16

No, not a chance.

I 24:20

We need to have an effective calendar.

D 24:21

Okay, we’ll note that. I want to reinforce what Jim was saying about those numbers because I know that in my chapter we have 106 members. I have like 58 emails that, that are active, although every time I send something out, 2 of them bounce back. So basically I have like 56 valid emails out of the 108, which is a better response than what Jim shows for the state.

E 24:55

I know that.

I 24:56

I’m a commander of a couple of different things, and I, I’m confronted with the same issue.

F 25:02

I was elected president again of 101, and our election papers were sent into the state With my email, I’ve been a delegate for 43 years, or whenever we started. And, a long time

ago, I used to receive some emails. But, for the last, maybe 6 years, I haven't received a single thing from the State Council.

D 25:31

From what chapter?

K 25:35

D 25:36

101, what's your name?

C 25:37

Gary.

I 25:38

Gary? Okay.

D 25:41

I'll look into that. He's not received anything from the State Council for—

F 25:45

For at least half a dozen years. And, I've been a delegate, and now I'm president. I get my information from Greg, who gets it.

D 25:56

Well, he just resigned.

E 25:58

He feels it’s missing.

D 26:01

Okay. We’ll work on that.

J 26:03

Jim, one recommendation. The meeting minutes of this meeting, besides whatever else you do, if you kindly send an email to each address and first line you say acknowledge receipt, write it over there. Although I know in the system we have read receipt and all that, first line is acknowledge receipt. I think it will improve Our problem on our end is we can’t even open the damn website. And I keep on telling you, maybe it’s just me and my team who has a problem now. But their website has issues.

J 26:42

And in their website, there is information which is much older than we are all talking about. So, we’ve got serious issues over here to fix it.

D 26:52

The simple fact is, Thank you. Okay, we need you 2. John, you can participate, but you don’t have to. Dick and I will— so, Jamil, our membership committee chair, and we’re gonna have to have a offline meeting, whether it’s Zoom or at a coffee shop or whatever. So we need to plan that. Do you have anything to continue with?

E 27:30

Yes.

G 27:31

First of all, we had an election in June here. How many people showed up?

A 27:43

G 27:47

11. There are 2,668 members of DBA in the state of Wisconsin.

I 27:53

Where were they?

F 27:53

How many got notification?

G 27:57

The elections went out. They said it was done at the March meeting, and it was put out that they were going to have elections in June, because June is our annual. We have to have our elections in June, on an even number year, by national organization. Just put out there. Even though we're sitting here, you guys aren't going back and telling your membership. That's the biggest problem. This stuff is not going back to membership. It's not only this organization, it's the national organization.

D 28:29

Yeah.

G 28:30

The board of directors and those guys are sitting up there, they listen to what's going on, they come back and they say they Told it to their membership, to their state councils. BS. I know it for a fact. BS. The guy is not giving the information out to the chapters.

E 28:46

It's wrong.

G 28:47

We've got to have the membership here and understand. 11 people made a decision for 2,600. Think about that. 11 people made a decision for 2,600.

E 29:01

2,600 people.

G 29:02

That's 24 chapters. What's wrong with that? Technically, the election would have been illegal because we didn't have a quorum. But because the national constitution says we have to have an election, we had to pull it off. Yes, sir?

J 29:23

The same day, VFW had the state level had their convention about 50 miles away from here. So those of us who are officeholders there, we were caught between the two. My suggestion would be have election in fall conference. Advertise so much so more people can come. I mean, this March was one and then we created another one in— what was it, June?

G 29:49

We had to.

J 29:49

It was hardship for the—

E 29:51

It's quite true. That's by national constitution.

F 29:54

It's in the Constitution.

J 29:56

I'm giving you the facts of life. That's why you only had 11 people.

F 29:59

No, no, no, no, no, I don't buy that. I don't know.

D 30:03

There's not that many people that are belonging to multiple veterans organizations.

J 30:09

So that's why his point is, give us calendar, we can inform you that what you're trying to do, you conflict with another organization. Some of us hold high office there. We can't be in more than one place.

G 30:24

Well, one of the things—

E 30:25

Send somebody else.

G 30:26

Yes, Rick?

M 30:30

Unfortunately, it's just the— it's the times. It is what we are facing for the VBA and the AVBA. Membership is declining, even though you say that the numbers are climbing. I don't believe it.

F 30:44

I don't see it.

M 30:45

You know, we have so many members. We have 125 members in our chapter, and we have 6 showing up for the meeting. You can't change that. You can't force people to show up for a meeting. You can't get information to them if they have no ability to get that information. We haven't changed anything with our meetings. We had 4 meetings a year, constantly up and Until what, this year?

D 31:10

M 31:11

That we dropped it down to 2, saying that June was going to be the election month, that we were going to hold the 3rd meeting. This— none of this information is new. Nothing that's being done right now is new. It is just what we are facing for this organization, and every organization is facing the same thing, a decline in membership.

G 31:35

Well, I can say this. Before we're done today, we will know when the March meeting is, and we will know when the September meeting is. Put it on your calendar. Put it on your calendar, so when you go back and tell your membership that the meeting is going to be at this date. That's the only way I can tell you. Just saying, you've got to go on Jim's website. Fine. Look at it. I'm going to go back and look at it.

D 32:02

Okay.

G 32:02

You get the thing here, you sign the paper. We're having a meeting on March 16th, 19th, or 2027. Fine and dandy. And we're having one in September, whatever date. Put it down so people know that it's coming. Because it's, it's decided at this meeting when our next meetings are. So you got a calendar right in front of you.

D 32:28

We need a date for our March meeting.

G 32:30

Great. We need a March meeting and our September meeting.

D 32:34

Let's work on that now. Got the calendar up? So we're looking at March, and typically we're— our meetings are on the second Saturday, which is the 13th of March. We have any other conflicts with the 13th?

F 33:22

Why do we have to have it in March? Can't we have it in April?

K 33:25

Why?

A 33:27

Or May.

H 33:28

We can't do it in May.

E 33:29

We can't, because we voted as a State Council to change our meeting date. Again, now you're going to have to go back in and change the bylaws. That's the only reason. That's what State Council voted for. And primarily because of health and travel.

H 33:47

Well, John, one of the reasons, from what I remember, that we can't do it in May is because you have to have chapter elections. Well, of course, that really is different, but you have to have your chapter elections done in April in order to send delegates. So it doesn't make— you might as well do your state council meetings before the delegates in the chapter level are chosen as well. I mean, we could potentially have one in May, but then when would you have the other one?

H 34:19

Would you have it just 3 months later, 4 months later?

K 34:25

Why?

F 34:26

But you have to change the bylaws.

D 34:37

So right now, is March 13th going to be okay for the next meeting?

G 34:43

Yeah.

K 34:47

Pardon?

G 34:48

Saturday.

F 34:50

You want a show of hands?

B 34:52

Okay.

D 34:54

Show of hands, any— we okay with March 13th for our next meeting? It looks like, uh, okay, that's a— okay, curiosity, how many have a conflict with the 13th of March?

F 35:16

I do, but I'll have to send a delegate.

D 35:21

Okay, there's only 2 in opposition, so March 13th is our next meeting.

F 35:27

Done.

G 35:28

Put it down on your calendar so you know.

D 35:34

Okay, now we go to— we don't have any elections next year.

G 35:43

Nope.

D 35:43

So, we go to September.

E 35:46

It would be the 11th.

D 35:52

Well, is that going to be Patriots Day again?

G 35:57

Probably.

D 35:59

Would that be a conflict?

E 36:08

I don't have September.

G 36:09

Because that's—

E 36:11

second week is the 11th.

D 36:13

Yep. Okay, is there any reason why we can't do it on the 11th? Because that's Patriots Day and—

F 36:29

No, let's do it.

E 36:31

Let's do it. Just do it.

F 36:32

Okay, Eddie, you got a show of hands?

D 36:36

Let me show of hands that September the 11th is okay for September meeting.

I 36:42

Is that the second weekend?

C 36:45

Yes.

J 36:45

Yep.

E 36:46

Second Saturday, yes.

D 36:47

Oh, that's the majority.

H 36:50

It's done.

G 36:52

Now go back and tell your membership.

D 36:56

We'll put it on our calendar online. And if you want to change your bylaws, we'll need to get this Can't we do that in March?

G 37:08

No. Bylaws, if you're going to make an amendment to change the bylaws, it has to be given to the members 30 to 60 days prior to the meeting. So, if you've got a change for these bylaws, you've got to get it to Jim, so we can get it on the calendar, 60 days prior. You've got September, you've got March, you've got to look in January, to change the bylaws. Gotta have it done by January to change it by March.

E 37:37

Yes, our chapter has a calendar for the year. Yeah, it's updated regularly. Okay, so we have this on ours, this state meetings, every— all the activities. Yep, that's what we do in ours, Tom. So we keep up with I echo what he said.

L 38:02

I mean, I belong to the same chapter. We've got an individual who does a calendar and it's published to the membership every month, and it's months in advance, you know. And the other thing he does—

G 38:16

If you've got suggestions, let's do it.

L 38:20

And the other thing he does is he religiously filters the email list. If it bounces back, it gets kicked or whatever so that our membership mail list is up to date. I mean, to the month. It's monitored with national. It's always pristine. Now, we're very lucky to have this individual, but that's how—

D 38:46

Would you like to share him?

L 38:47

Yeah, I'd love to.

E 38:50

I mean, I don't think he wants to.

L 38:51

I don't think he wants a lot more. He's dropping some stuff, but I'm sure that he would help us and say, this is what I'm doing and this is how I'm doing it, because he does a fantastic job.

D 39:02

Do you have a website for your chapter?

E 39:08

Yes.

D 39:08

How many chapters have a website for their individual chapter? 1, 2, 3. So, you're one chapter, you're the one that does the work. We're one chapter. Looks like maybe 4 or 5 chapters do that, and that's admirable.

L 39:27

But even if you—

D 39:28

You have somebody in your chapter that knows how to do that.

L 39:31

But even if you don’t have a website, you can still send messages every month at least.

D 39:36

Absolutely, yes.

L 39:37

You know, that has a calendar, that has that calendar as part of the email that you send out. so that months in advance, you’re getting a calendar that says, hey, put this on your calendar. It’s not a surprise.

D 39:50

I’ll give you an example of why that’s important, even though we don’t do it at our own chapter. Because recently, a member, a chapter member, previous chapter member, because he stopped paying his dues, when they— went through the length of membership. It must have been about 10 years ago. So he stopped paying his dues, and he passed about a month ago. And in his trust, he requested that money be sent for the— sent to the VVA.

D 40:27

He didn’t specify whether it was to the local chapter, so the trustee of his trust, sent it to the Wisconsin State Council, which is the check that you just got.

C 40:41

Right.

D 40:41

Because that's the only thing that he could find, or they could find on the internet. So it's important that you not only find a way to communicate with your membership, you need to be able to communicate with your community. So, having somebody that does do a website at the chapter level would be important. Might even be important enough to consider hiring somebody to do that. Anything else on your agenda?

G 41:17

Yeah, I've got to get this thing done. I'm kind of beating this around the bush now about this membership thing.

D 41:25

Yep.

H 41:25

Okay.

D 41:25

It's good.

G 41:26

Everybody's got a copy of this. It says proposed chapter realignment. I went back and I looked at each district, each region, and the number of chapters that are in the region. Unfortunately, Region 2 only had 4 chapters. Region 4. Region 1 had 6 chapters. 7 chapters. Region 6— or, Region 3 had 6 chapters, and Region 4 had 7 chapters. That's

not equal amount of representation for the State Council. So, I looked at how we can change some of this around.

G 42:08

And, I haven't figured out how Region 2 wound up the way it is, but that's the way it happened. Region 2, Is Wisconsin Rapids, Baraboo, Janesville, and Castle Rock. Now, I don't know if anybody looks at their map, but Janesville is down in the lower part of the state, right along a place called Illinois. Right next door. Baraboo, Wisconsin Rapids, and Castle Rock are down the highway here. There's something wrong with that to me, looking at it.

G 42:45

The only way I could figure it, as long as we're going to have Janesville, is going to be the Region 2 director, Region 2. Let's take Fort Atkinson out of Region 1, and put them in Region 2.

E 42:58

Yeah.

G 42:58

Which will now make everything line up again, so we have at least equal representation for each region. As it was in our— One region could literally operate the whole operation. So, I'm asking you people, go back to your chapters, discuss it with them, look at it.

K 43:18

Correct.

G 43:19

And, if you can come up with a different idea of how we can realign these chapters, fine. But, we've got to have it so that these guys have, we have equal representation at the State Council. And, right now, we don't.

D 43:34

Can we entertain a motion to go ahead and make that change? We're only dealing with one chapter.

G 43:39

The problem is, is Chapter 409 is not here.

E 43:44

Chapter 409 is here.

G 43:47

All right.

E 43:47

And, uh, as a delegate, I, I can't see any problem with that.

G 43:52

I think it would line up so we'd have—

D 43:55

yeah, right.

G 43:56

Yeah, it would line up so we we'd have at least close to equal representation. If you look at the front page, it'd be 6, 5, 6, and 7.

D 44:05

Okay.

J 44:07

Yes, Cliff.

G 44:09

This is a point. As far as I can tell, from the communications I've had, Chapter 479 and Wausau, they're completely nonfunctional.

H 44:18

Yeah, they're gone.

E 44:20

The only thing they haven't done is surrender their charter.

H 44:24

National has them listed as at large. They do not have a Chapter 479. If you look at your—

F 44:30

We do not have a Chapter 479.

E 44:33

It’s on here, right here.

F 44:35

Okay. Oh, I would put everything—

G 44:37

F 44:39

He’s got it where?

E 44:41

Right there, Region 4.

D 44:44

What are you suggesting?

G 44:49

balance it even better, because it won’t be 7, it’ll be 6.

D 44:54

Okay, so you’re okay?

E 44:56

This is just information.

G 44:58

Okay, so, so your, your chapters on 409, would your chapter members have any complaints on it?

E 45:06

Oh, I can't see, you know, we don't have, you know, a real close relationship because Nobody comes to see you anymore.

B 45:18

Pardon?

D 45:19

Nobody comes to see you anymore.

K 45:21

No, no.

E 45:23

Yeah, I can't see a problem. I would make the motion that we adopt this proposal.

D 45:31

Okay, I have a second.

H 45:32

Before we go, could I have his name, please?

E 45:36

John McIntyre.

H 45:38

Thank you, John.

J 45:41

And Jamil Khan seconded.

G 45:42

Any discussion?

D 45:44

All those in favor say aye.

F 45:49

Aye.

D 45:50

Opposed?

G 45:52

Motion carried.

D 45:54

Done.

F 45:54

Question, 479.

G 45:56

479, if you look at that, I don't think there was a 479 back. By the way, The membership lists are all back there for each chapter for the state.

F 46:11

So, if you—

G 46:13

I know everybody here got one, but the rest of them I'll take back and destroy them, because nobody's here for them chapters. But, I don't think— yes, John?

E 46:21

For 479, there needs to be an investigation to see what they've done with their assets. Our state president can then submit to national, that their charter be revoked. If they're not doing anything, that's what you need to do.

N 46:37

Okay.

F 46:40

They refuse to do the election, they refuse to do the finance.

E 46:45

Every, every board meeting we go through a list of chapters' revocation, and the state president can make a recommendation.

D 46:56

The chapter's own I'm sorry, to the BBA board?

E 46:59

Yes. Okay, goes to Bill Meeks.

D 47:02

Okay, so I need to do that by a letter.

E 47:07

Make sure you find out what they did with her assets, if they have any.

F 47:13

I'd call 479.

D 47:14

Who would be the person to call at 479? Well, Roger Bartnik was the president.

K 47:25

Who is it?

G 47:26

Roger Bartnik.

H 47:27

But he's Bartnik, B-A-R-T-N-I-K. Because they're all listed, every one of them are listed as at-large members.

D 47:37

They are?

H 47:37

Yes, they are. Because they're on the at-large list in June.

D 47:42

Okay, we'll do it. I'm good.

J 47:49

Okay.

G 47:50

Now you can carry on with the rest of it.

D 47:52

John, do you want to do your comments?

F 47:56

Yeah, I have, I have one thing, and I had lots more, but given the hour, I have one thing.

G 48:09

Is that on?

H 48:10

Yes.

D 48:15

There's a cute little button right here and it says on.

F 48:18

Hello, hello, hello.

E 48:23

No, no help.

D 48:24

Oh, try it again.

M 48:26

Oh, hell.

G 48:27

There you go.

E 48:27

How you doing?

F 48:30

Okay, I put this together You may not like it, you may like it. If you like it changed, keep it to yourself. No, uh, let me know. Uh, and then secondly, if you want copies of it—

D 48:56

When you use the mic, you got to put it by your mouth.

F 48:58

No, I, I thought I could do this part easily. If you would like a copy of it, it will be on the website. All you have to do is download it. If you're not getting it, email me and I'll send you a copy of it. Okay, let's go.

N 49:27

This presentation—

J 49:29

James, what's the email at? What's the website address?

E 49:37

VietnamVeterans.org.

M 49:39

Huh?

L 49:41

VVA what? VI?

F 49:43

Did you hear it?

L 49:45

What is it, Richard?

G 49:46

VVAVI.org.

L 49:50

Thank you.

N 49:50

The lived experiences of those who served, the needs Vietnam veterans have as they are aging, and practical ways—

F 49:57

Just one second.

N 50:00

The Vietnam War spans overlapping timelines. Broad histories often describe the conflict from 1955 to 1975, while the VA frames U.S. involvement from 1961 to 1975. Key events shaped the war's trajectory: the Geneva Accords, the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, major combat operations, It's too loud.

D 50:26

No.

F 50:26

You can't hear it? Okay.

I 50:28

No.

F 50:28

Just give—

D 50:30

There's a lot of volume left on this mic. I mean, on—

G 50:34

What's this plug on the mic?

E 50:54

Did you hear that?

L 50:55

That started again too.

E 50:56

Please, Lord.

N 51:10

This presentation invites us to learn together, remember together, and stand with Vietnam veterans and their caregivers. We'll explore the history of the Vietnam War, the lived experiences of those—

F 51:21

You can't hear it in back. I count on you, Tom.

D 51:32

This thing is off.

F 51:42

Well, it's unplugged.

G 51:53

Who does that?

L 51:53

Mother Mary, please help us in our hour of need.

F 52:02

Please, please, please.

M 52:06

Are we ready?

D 52:06

No.

E 52:35

There we go.

F 52:39

Can anyone hear that?

N 52:49

This presentation invites us to learn together, remember together, and stand with Vietnam veterans and their caregivers. We'll explore the history of the Vietnam War, the lived experiences of those who served, the needs Vietnam veterans have as they are aging, and practical ways families and communities can support veterans as they age. The Vietnam War spans overlapping timelines.

N 53:13

Broad histories often describe the conflict from 1955 to 1975, while the VA frames U.S. involvement from 1961 to 1975. Key events shaped the war's trajectory. The Geneva Accords, the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, major combat operations, and finally, the fall of

Saigon in April 1975. Each moment influenced the decades of reflection that followed. Millions served during the Vietnam era, but not all served in Vietnam.

N 53:46

About 8.7 million Americans served worldwide, and roughly 2.7 million served the Republic of Vietnam. Their roles were diverse: combat, medical care, logistics, intelligence, communications, aviation, and support. Understanding these distinctions helps us avoid oversimplifying the service of a generation. Women played essential roles throughout the Vietnam War. About 7,500 women were stationed in Vietnam.

N 54:12

Nurses were prominent, but women also served in administration, intelligence, Communications, and support roles. Their service required resilience, skill, and dedication. Civilian support included many distinct communities. Red Cross donut dollies and USO staff provided morale support. Journalists risked their lives to report the conflict. Aid workers offered humanitarian and medical assistance. Employees and contractors supported operations through specialized roles.

N 54:44

Each group carried its own responsibilities and its own risks. Returning home from Vietnam was not one shared story. Many veterans reintegrated successfully, but a substantial minority faced psychological or life adjustment challenges. Political division and uneven recognition shaped their homecoming. The motto, never again will one generation of veterans abandon another, reflects lessons learned from a painful chapter in our history.

N 55:13

The psychological and exposure-related effects of war are real, but not universal. Some veterans experience PTSD symptoms that persist or re-emerge later in life. Depression and anxiety can contribute to substance use. A later-life assessment found that about 11% met full criteria for war-related PTSD, while most Support is available through Vet Centers, VA mental health care, and qualified providers. Vietnam veterans and their families fought for recognition, care, and fair policy.

N 55:47

Their advocacy led to major changes, including the creation of Vet Centers in 1979 and the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982. These milestones reshaped national understanding of the Vietnam War. Understanding and provided places for healing. Agent Orange exposure remains a significant legacy of the war. More than 19 million gallons of herbicides were used in Vietnam, affecting both American veterans and Vietnamese civilians.

N 56:16

Veterans must document service, review current VA guidance, connect with accredited claims support, and seek clinical evaluation. The PACT Act expanded qualifying locations and presumptive conditions, but eligibility still depends on individual circumstances. Today, Vietnam-era veterans are a smaller— a little more than those who served during the Vietnam era. Moreover, those veterans are aging, with an average projected at 77 and older.

N 56:44

About 4.9 million are projected to be living, with a median age of around 77. These numbers are projections, not census counts. Definitions matter. Vietnam-era service includes those who served outside Vietnam. Planning must focus on access, aging, and individual circumstances. VA access varies because eligibility depends on service records, discharge character, program rules, and individual circumstances. Veterans must apply and enroll, often with help from a Veteran Service Officer.

N 57:18

Compensation, pension, long-term care, and caregiver programs each have their own criteria. As veterans age, health concerns may overlap with prior injuries or exposures. Chronic disease, mobility limitations, hearing loss, tinnitus, and mental health needs can all affect daily life. Some conditions qualify for presumptive benefits, while others require individual Individualized assessment. Life transitions can bring old memories to the surface. Retirement may reduce structure.

N 57:53

Loss and grief can reactivate wartime memories. Health decline can add stress. Anniversaries, news, or sensory reminders may matter. Professional assessment is more reliable than self-diagnosis. Long-term care needs vary widely. Some veterans benefit from in-home support, skilled home health, or respite care. Adult day health programs offer structure and social engagement. VA Community Living Centers provide skilled, dementia, or hospice care. Community settings offer additional options.

N 58:28

Some veterans carry grief, survivor guilt, loneliness, or the loss of peers. Their experiences were never uniform, Hearing or mobility changes may make participation harder. Connection matters. Listening, accessible activities, peer support, Vet Centers, and care teams can help. Recognition takes many forms. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial offers a place for remembrance. POW and MIA accounting missions continue. Oral histories preserve individual voices.

N 59:00

Welcome home ceremonies offer belated acknowledgment. The meaning of recognition and closure is always personal. Vietnam veterans have contributed to families, workplaces, civic groups, and communities. They have advocated for recognition, research, care, and fair benefits policy. Veteran organizations sustain connection and service. Their experience guides younger veterans and communities. Supporting Vietnam veterans and era veterans begins with listening.

N 59:33

Ask questions, avoid assumptions, and share verified VA and Vet Center resources. Normalize help-seeking. Reduce barriers by offering transportation, plain language, and local referrals. Support caregivers and advocate for accessible care. Caregivers help veterans sustain daily life. Life connection and access to care. Their responsibilities include daily activities, transportation, appointments, medication coordination, and emotional support. These demands can affect health, time, and finances.

N 60:07

Communities, as well as local, state, and national veteran service organizations like the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, and others, can support caregivers by asking what help is wanted and sharing verified resources. The future of support depends on preserving oral histories, teaching precise history, expanding telehealth and home-based access, equipping caregivers, and protecting dignity and choice.

N 60:36

Communities can ask, listen, connect, and verify, ensuring support is accurate and meaningful. Honoring Vietnam veterans means recognizing their service, acknowledging their sacrifices, and offering the welcome home many never received. Their stories continue to shape our communities, and their legacy endures through remembrance, advocacy, and connection. This presentation invites us to learn together, remember together, and stand with Vietnam veterans and their caregivers.

N 61:12

We'll explore the history of the Vietnam—

J 61:14

Good job, Jim.

F 61:22

Good job. I thought this would be really great, especially for those chapters, uh, members that go into schools.

L 61:35

Yes.

F 61:35

Really get turned on by, you know, technology. Okay, in addition to this, there is one other option, is that you can do it step by step. You can have the voice, but you can stop it and you can talk right then and there. I'm planning to do a couple more on an educational basis so that, you know, it sort of follows through.

F 62:15

But it was a nice— for me, it was a nice learning experience to put it together, but also how you could put it together in a simple, straightforward approach, and I thank you very much for the time to share it.

E 62:33

Is this going to be on the website?

F 62:35

Yes.

A 62:36

Okay.

F 62:37

And if you can't get it and you can't download it, what you do is you contact me, call me, text me, send me a message. I will send it to Do you have this copyrighted? I have— I

haven’t done the formal copyright on it, but I have all the sources approved where I have the information.

D 63:11

Not actually a formal application for copyright? You just need to put right on here someplace, copyright 19—

F 63:24

Right, I can— yeah, that I can do. I’ve done that before.

D 63:29

Great. Okay, John, you are next.

E 63:39

Okay, if you don’t mind, I’m going to stay seated so you don’t have Come up here and pick me up off the floor because—

D 63:46

Do you want the mic?

E 63:47

I’m going to cover a bunch of stuff quick, but I’ll preface it by saying— And then you can hit the standby button. Severe problem. I’m going to try to explain part of that to you.

D 64:00

First of all— That’s all the string you got.

E 64:03

Okay, can you hear me back in the back? How about now?

C 64:13

Yes.

E 64:14

Good.

F 64:18

John, we've always—

E 64:19

Can I just project, Tom, please?

F 64:21

John, we've always heard you.

E 64:22

Okay. The first thing, let's talk about leadership real quick. Nobody, I rephrase, one person out of Region 6 was able to attend leadership. Leadership was supposed to have been livestreamed for the whole conference.

H 64:42

It was not.

E 64:44

They livestreamed the board meeting, and halfway through the board meeting, the livestream quit. So what I'm telling you is, first of all, the things I'm covering is my opinion and of the couple other board of directors I was able to talk to, but there's some bad information that was given out leadership. So you ask about Mission 75. Mission 75 is President Tom Burke's proposal on how to perpetuate VVA.

E 65:21

Basically, he is proposing that we change our constitution to allow Honorably discharged United States veterans that served after 1975 to join VBA. Now I'll preface that by saying that has come up at 2 conventions and it's failed.

D 65:45

Tom will not listen.

E 65:49

So they came up with this plan and Part of what he's got in here, we had a closed board meeting, we presented our questions to him, he answered the questions. The one question that's not in this document is I asked him, would not IAVA, Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, be better served if VVA threw our support behind them and tried to get Congress to change the law to allow another Congressionally chartered veterans organization? His answer was, well, their membership is nebulous.

E 66:25

They don't have a published membership list. And then he started downplaying the organization. And I'm sitting there thinking, God, that's how Vietnam veterans felt when

we came back, and the Legion veterans, and VFW, and others. It does not meet our motto, never again one generation of veterans veterans abandon another.

E 66:45

So he has criteria in this thing that basically says our new members, if we change, will go through a 2-year training process to learn how to function the way VBA says to function. My answer to that is they're already in other organizations in leadership capability. They damn well know what they're doing.

H 67:06

So, I'm not sure.

E 67:09

I'm telling you this because I want you to go read that and study it, and I think you'll see how ludicrous it is. My opinion, it's going to fail. You need to know what it says so that when you send a delegate, if you do, to the convention, they need to know your chapter's opinion.

F 67:35

That's called Mission 75.

E 67:37

Mission 75. It's on the website. You get a little packet, looks like this.

I 67:42

It's—

E 67:43

Judy and I are debating. I say it's 49 pages, he says 46, but that's irrelevant. But I'm— it's just wrong, and I will not support it unless the Region 6 presidents tell me to support it. I vote the way they tell me to vote, but personally I will not support it. VVA National Board also approved back in April— that's wrong, January— for a subcommittee, which I would participate in, to explore one option for what to do with VVA.

J 68:24

What was that option?

E 68:26

And basically that option that we studied was that VVA and AVVA would get together. They would absolve both organizations and form a new corporation. And that new corporation then would be able to open its membership to whoever it wanted because it doesn't have to meet the statute of a veterans organization. The board received the presentation. We did not ask the board to approve that option, but merely to be allowed to present it at leadership.

E 69:02

I do know that Tom's position and that option, along with the other 5 options, were presented at leadership. They couldn't vote at leadership. There were approximately 350 30-some people there. Probably 75% of those were new people, had never been to a VBA function. So they have no background on all this stuff. The second part was, and it's on our website, there are 6 options that that subcommittee identified that VBA has to make a decision on the future. This is also on the website.

E 69:44

You need to read it closely. I'm not recommending any option at this point. I— the board has to explore those 6 options. Tom Burke cannot tell the board his way is the right way or the highway, and that's what he's doing. We come to convention, we should have done this at the start of the 2 years. prior to the convention. We've done nothing. We were also supposed to eliminate or combine national committees.

E 70:18

At one point they were going to supposedly vote to eliminate regional— excuse me, at-large directors. Then you would vote later to get rid of the regional directors, and it would be down to the 4 officers in the, in the organization. I'm telling you that VBA National's income has dropped by— well, it was 40%, it's probably more than that. We don't have money. Everybody thinks we've got a lot of money in the bank. We don't have.

E 70:51

This move for Mission 75, our Government Affairs Director, who's supposed to be talking to Congress about veterans issues, etc.

G 70:58

He's talking to you.

E 71:00

In my opinion, got behind Mission 75, which he had no business doing because it's not a government affairs decision. And then our attorney, uh, also got behind Mission 75. His job is merely to supply legal guidance and opinions to the state council and our national

president. They both got way off Based on this, I think they're looking to get positions in the new organization if it's created. It's not going to get created.

E 71:33

I think Mission 75, and Dick and I and Tom and I talked about it, it's going to fail. The problem we have, as Tom alluded to, we don't come up with a viable alternative solution to present at the convention, we're back to another 2 years to try to plan the dissolution of BBA. I'm 80. Another 2 years, you think I want to be coming to meetings and doing all this? All I'm getting at is we're aging, we're becoming very infirm.

L 72:07

Please speak for yourself.

E 72:09

We're dying. And to me, the only viable option is to dissolve. You want to be the last man standing? When we dissolve, you're still the last man standing. But more importantly, if they keep screwing around nationally with finances, the state of New York's going to come in and shut us down. Because that's who governs us. That's where we're chartered. Our chief financial officer quit about 2 weeks ago.

E 72:43

Part of that was because at leadership, our attorney, who is a defense attorney and not a corporate attorney, made the suggestion to national— Backing up, the national employees had complained about health hazards in the work environment. So the landlord said, here's 3 organizations you can contact and have one of them do an environmental study.

K 73:10

Well, they did.

E 73:11

There are no environmental problems at the regional— at the national office. So he said, well, we'll just withhold paying rent and then we'll go to court. Well, first of all, if you go to court for anything other than a traffic ticket, you're talking years. And second of all, you do not have legal grounds to withhold rent. Corporations Can't do that.

E 73:38

So we need to get an attorney out of either New York or Maryland, depending what where we find the documents really are, who can give us that state's legal opinion about that particular action of withholding rent. Part of this is tied into what will move the national office right now. I think Philadelphia is a Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh, excuse me. It began with a P.

G 74:03

I got part of it right.

E 74:06

So we're going to move the national office, and they've been courted, and we've gotten some very low rent and a lot of office space, etc. At the same token, we're still in contract to pay $55,000 a month for rent at the corporate office now, and our constitution also says we will maintain an office. In Washington, D.C. Half the employees said they would be willing to move. The other half would say they can't move, and there is no severance for those folks.

E 74:46

It's, it's a financial crisis right now. I would not support voting to move the office. That's not going to solve the We're still paying the rent, whether we move or not. We're going to have new rent. And with Mission 75, how are we going to fund that? There's no income. He says, well, we'll start charging new members. And I'll pick a number, $70 a year to be members.

E 75:13

Do you know how many hundreds, if not thousands, of new veterans we would have to sign up to support the organization financially?

D 75:20

No.

E 75:21

It's going to fail. I will keep you posted. I'm going— the other thing is, there's very little communication between the national board and leadership right now. National board members have been— some of us have been emailing some thoughts and stuff back and forth. When I come out there in October, I'm going to sit down with various board members and and see how they all feel. We have to take control as a board of the organization and get our agenda back to dealing with these facts.

E 75:55

I don't need to hear committee reports on the same agenda we've been doing for 10 years. We need to take care of business, which is trying to resolve, A, are we going to

move the office, but more importantly, what is going to be the solution for the ending of DBA?

L 76:13

Thank you.

E 76:14

And everybody says, well, I don't want to end. But reality's reality. We are not going to be able to keep going forever. So we need to have a plan to dissolve honorably. We don't want New York to come in and take us, and take all our assets. We don't have a lot of assets, don't— I'm not trying to mislead you, but we don't have a lot of money that everybody thinks we have. So that is my dirty laundry. Opinion on Dr. Doom today.

E 76:43

But, um, look quickly at some notes I did write, see if there's anything.

G 76:49

Okay.

E 76:51

Um, the other thing I heard, and there's been 2 people, 2 board members that were down there that I've also— all 3 of us heard different things. We were supposed to get videos and minutes and stuff from leadership. None of that's out there.

L 77:08

I looked—

E 77:08

the last board meeting minutes are January. But I understood our National Government Affairs Director that BVA should be on record supporting the Make America's Veterans Great Act with Section 108, which would change the rating for sleep apnea and tinnitus for future veterans. You're going to take it away. Now, since then there's been a move to say, okay, we'll pull out Section 180.

E 77:39

What I don't like, he implied that he does not support the Major Richard Starr Act, which is currently out there and it got rolled into this Make American Veterans Great Again. There's a move now to try to pull it back out. That basically says A veteran who is medically discharged from the military and also files for VA compensation can get both. Right now there's a dollar offset, dollar for dollar.

E 78:11

And he— again, that does not support taking care of all our veterans and not abandoning the new veterans because that would take benefits away from them. The Legion also is on position to support Make America Great. It does have some parts of it that are good. That needs to be pulled out. The other part in that law, it implies that Congress will start making the decisions on disability compensation medically.

C 78:42

Oh.

E 78:42

So that means Dr. Oz or whonot— not Oz.

J 78:48

Kennedy.

E 78:48

Kennedy will be making decisions on how we'll be— I mean, physicians. It's a bad act. I'm going to— I prepared a paper to present to the National Board to make sure that we go on record, to attempt to make sure that we go on record supporting the Major Richard Starr Act, and that we do not support Make America's Veterans Great. So, having heard all that wonderful news, do you have any questions? Questions for me? Yes, sir.

J 79:19

We hear at present the higher headquarters is failing us. In other words, headquarters Marine Corps is failing me. I'm a force deployed into Beirut. I'm not getting the damn support upstairs, but what I got, I got to survive with. So question comes up, what— how can we protect Wisconsin. How can we cut the damn ties off with whatever is happening, you know, at the higher level? We want to keep— at a chapter level, I like to keep my chapter alive. I mean, I have whatever number of people.

E 79:57

Well, all that's laid out. There are instructions on what to do. The problem we've got right now is that the only way we can— well, first of all, he's Our president needs to understand the board doesn't support most of his ideas. Instead, he yells shouts at us and puts us down. He did that to the state presidents at their meetings. The only way you could stop that is to bring him up on charges. And I don't see a lot of avenues for us to do that.

E 80:33

It's going to take the National Board— we're running out of time— to sit down at that meeting and move to have the agenda changed, that all committee reports will be sent in by paper or electronic and they're not given at the meeting. And we're going to take that time to start discussing the 6 options for dissolution.

J 80:55

That's—

E 80:56

we don't have time to think about all this other stuff. I understand everything.

J 80:59

I think what I'm trying to do What I'm trying to do is, I don't have time for 2 years. I may not live 2 years. I'm trying to survive today and keep my brothers alive in Wisconsin. What can we do at a state level that cut the ties off with the national?

E 81:15

You can't cut the ties off at national unless you turn in your state charter.

J 81:22

Is it just the charter, or do we have to give the money back also?

G 81:26

to do something with our assets.

E 81:27

All I gotta say is there's— there is guidelines for chapters. There is no guidelines for the state councils. Chapters can give their money to other veteran-related activities, and national can't touch it. There is no provision for the state council. So, having said that, that doesn't mean what money we have we should run out and spend.

G 81:59

I'm glad.

E 82:00

But it does mean we need to think about extending that money as much as we can so we can keep using it for State Council purposes. And if doom and gloom really looks around the corner, I would think if we did Things are allowed under the guidelines for chapters that we'd still be okay. But if national goes away, it's not going to make any difference. They're not going to come storming in and take your assets because they're going to be gone.

E 82:31

The only thing you can do to protect Wisconsin is revitalize this state council. When's the last time— show of hands so somebody can tell me when the last time we would testify testified in front of the state legislature? I think I know when it was. I'm just guessing. I think it was when Marv Friedman was still around. So now we're back 20 years? We're not functioning as a state council.

H 83:02

Right.

E 83:03

If in fact we're to be supporting veterans in Wisconsin, then we need to bone up the state Get involved in the State Council and get it active again. This stuff— well, no offense, I don't like to drive in bad weather more than anybody else. If we're having State Council meetings, get here. Or we're going to try to do it electronically at some point, but attend those meetings. Become active.

N 83:30

Yes.

E 83:31

As best you can. This dinner again last night, 25, Jim? 25 people out of how many members in Wisconsin State Council?

G 83:45

E 83:46

Okay, we missed a couple, I guess. I'm pleading to you, if you really want to have a State Council and save it, go back to your chapters, find somebody that'll come to this stuff, and start getting active. When's the last time we gave committee reports? We used to have committees just like national does. We don't even do that anymore because we don't have people that will chair a committee. And more importantly, if they're chairing a committee, they don't have any members.

E 84:15

They don't have any other people that want to support them. So that's my plea. And I'm telling you, by October we may have direction about what's going to happen.

G 84:27

I hope.

E 84:28

Thank you. Because if you don't do it in October, then we don't meet again until January. And guess what's coming when we start in January? The convention in July.

I 84:37

August.

E 84:38

So, time's running out. Richard knows, Tom knows, because— well, Richard's not out there anymore, but I make sure he gets all the information. And so does, I guess, our national president, vice president. I don't know. I, I'm bewildered about what's going to happen.

J 85:01

Where?

G 85:01

What?

D 85:02

I'm sorry.

J 85:02

Yes, sir.

E 85:03

I didn't see you back there.

H 85:04

Stretching. Stretching.

E 85:08

Just stretching. That's what the State Council needs to do. It needs to stretch. Okay, I'm done unless you have some questions for me.

G 85:16

I'm not trying to be doom and gloom, but it's I'm going to jump in on John's comment about what's going on out there. I talked with the national president a week—

E 85:32

2 weeks ago now.

G 85:35

And he says, we've got a problem. We've got no money coming in. We've got bills going out.

H 85:44

That's right.

G 85:46

That travel pay that's going out for these guys, we're no longer getting the rebate from national for the state council and the chapters. That's gone. It's done. Finished. Kaput. It's all gone. That rent money, to me, is absolutely ludicrous. No shit.

E 86:12

month.

G 86:13

I don't know if you can do the math real quick, but that comes out to a little better than half a million dollars in my book. Almost 3 quarters of a million dollars. They advised me, yes, we're paying that right now. Next year, the rent is going to go up to over a million dollars a year. Over a million dollars. They had to reduce the office staff. 2 people that I'm aware of, and I've heard it's up to 4 or 6 that they let go. It came out that they got fired. They weren't fired, they were—

I 86:49

how do you call it?

E 86:50

Laid off.

D 86:51

Laid off.

J 86:53

Laid off.

G 86:53

The one person they laid off was the highest paid person in VBA national office, almost $200,000 a year.

E 87:04

Oh, but she'd been there forever. Yeah.

G 87:07

And they let her go.

E 87:09

It wasn't that she was overpaid, it's just that's what her salary was. But in conjunction with that, Government Affairs Director signed a contract with an outside communications agency. And if you get the government Affairs report weekly. It's now in a new format.

L 87:33

I—

E 87:34

what's it— I don't even know what it's called.

G 87:35

Phil Larrabee or something.

E 87:37

But you can't follow through.

G 87:39

Yeah.

E 87:40

To really learn what's going on. And he has increased his office staff by 4 or 5 people. I want to know, as a Finance Committee member, I'm going to call it in October—

A 87:53

in—

E 87:53

yeah, in October. I want him to come in and tell me what that contract cost with this outside agency, which gives him also office space outside of the VVA offices.

I 88:06

Mm-hmm.

E 88:07

I want to know what the cost was. So they saved $200,000 letting 4 people go. What's the offset for this new— and he did not bring this to the Finance Committee. He had no

authority, in my opinion, Even if Tom Burke said, yes, go do that, it had to come to the Finance Committee because it was not in the budget. If it's not in the budget, you need to come to us to get approval to spend that money.

E 88:33

So again, there's an underlying theme that I think there's 2 people that are pushing Tom in the wrong direction to create this new organization so that they probably were going to have some Some kind of role in it when it's created, and it's not going to get created.

L 88:50

I don't—

E 88:51

I can't believe it will.

G 88:52

No, I don't think so either. When he wants the quote, and I'm going to tell you, make sure you read the veteran and read it entirely because Mission 75 is in it, every damn one you get. It doesn't have anything about the other options. This is what This is my plan, and this is the only thing that's going to happen.

E 89:14

And the last issue had that, but more importantly, it had our Government Affairs Director and our attorney touting Mission 75 rather than doing their job.

G 89:27

So read it and make sure you understand what that stuff is before you come to the National Convention next August in Washington, D.C. And I can guarantee you, not only is it It's going to be hot weather-wise. Historically, historically, we have— because one of the things that national has done, we have had— we have a national convention, it's a 4-year set aside in advance to get the operation. So that we might pay or offset the charges that members get. And why don't you go to national?

G 90:06

If we continue these dinners, we'll overspend it a couple thousand dollars. 2,000 people, good luck. Let's say 3,000.

E 90:16

It's an expensive operation. Yeah. I think many people that were going to come to that convention thought it would be the final convention. And a vote then in March? of the year following. I mean, you used to have a budget. And I think if this comes out about Mission 75, I'm not aware of any regional directors that support it. I don't know whether— if they're going to be there, it's going to be there to be angry.

G 90:46

And it's going to be— My budget was $2,000 a year. We opened this organization up for 8 years. However, when you open that organization up and you decide to join this organization, you're going to be on probation for 2 years. I paid for the website. You can't hold an office. You can't run for office until you have 2 years and you have been vetted that you're good. Are you going to join my organization?

J 91:15

No.

E 91:16

And all the guidelines for advanced and BBA leadership and running for the different offices, etc. It's already in our constitution. He didn't need to create all this new rigmarole about how you're going to be a member in good standing after 2 years of BBA. Never mind, just read the dang thing. Read those reports.

G 91:39

Moving on.

D 91:41

Let's move on.

E 91:41

Yes, sir. I'm ready.

D 91:45

We need to take a break. I just saw somebody go out the door, so he couldn't wait.

F 91:53

They're adults, they can— they'll come back.

D 91:57

All right, uh, we need some committee reports, and we've already done a couple. Uh, so one is for the region reports, and we don't have any. Oh, we got one. Regent Director, you got a report?

E 92:13

Yes, sir.

J 92:14

Region 1 is in good shape. The chapters are doing well. They are doing recruiting. And in my membership, I'll give you more information.

E 92:25

Region 1 is doing good.

H 92:26

Okay.

D 92:29

Agent Orange toxic exposure, we have a committee chair for that?

J 92:34

Yes, sir.

F 92:35

Jamil Khan.

J 92:36

First, let me introduce myself. I'm a United States Marine. Served from Vietnam to Desert Shield, Desert Storm. And during that, I was in Beirut. I survived— I'm a survivor of Beirut bombing. So what I'm sharing with you is coming from my heart. Chairman is just a title, you know. Actually, Jamil speaks to you. And I feel for each one of you. So the topic was, sir, Agent Orange. Which one was the first one you just mentioned? Membership?

D 93:07

No, you already did. Oh, you did feature one. No, so you're on, uh, Agent Orange toxic exposure.

E 93:15

Okay.

J 93:16

Exposure to carcinogenic chemicals, radiation, and other hazardous conditions during military service can lead to various health issues including cancers and other serious diseases. Veterans may be eligible for compensation and benefits related to these exposures depending on specific circumstances and health outcomes. Majority of us, we already know what Agent Orange has done up to the 5th generation. We are still already in our 6th generation.

G 93:53

generation.

J 93:54

We are still having babies, children born with defects. And when it comes to Agent Orange, it's not only Vietnam. On my flight line in the United States, when the plane lands in the Air Force airports, naval airports, we use DDT, which is the same thing as Agent Orange, to kill the grass around the fence line. And those Doctors are suffering from same thing. So from that, I'm going to shut down because I got 3 other reports to give to you. This will be available on Jim's website with details.

J 94:33

Thank you, Brian.

E 94:34

Just send it back here.

D 94:35

Membership Committee. You have something for us, Jim? Membership Committee, you have something for us?

F 94:41

Yes, I do. Just one second.

J 94:44

He's the membership chair.

D 94:45

No, I'm from the Constitution Committee.

F 94:48

Sorry. Constitution Committee has not met. I would like to reconstitute the Constitution Committee and its membership. Those people that are interested in providing their input into, uh, the state constitution, would you please email me of your intent? I want to join the Constitution Committee. I know there's a— there are several people that want to be on that committee. Oh, don't you back up. You have no choice.

D 95:36

Yeah, I didn't want to block your vision.

F 95:39

Oh, I, I could have gone right around that one. Okay, um, and I believe if you will be a member of the Constitution Committee, we will have Zoom calls because we have 2 meetings a year. And we need to get some work done. So be aware of that. Can I just make one other comment? Okay, according to the national Constitution, for those of you who may have forgotten, okay, if you do your election report And so far, we're only miss— I'm only missing, uh, one.

F 96:36

Uh, however, I do not have a copy of, uh, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. I don't have a copy of 20 financial reports. Now, according to the Constitution, you mail in your financial report to national. You also send a copy To the Secretary of the State Council. When you get your, uh, report— when you get your confirmation back that they have accepted it, you're also supposed to send that to me. And I request For those of you who have done the election report, you know that there is a page 3.

F 97:54

You only send 2 pages to national. Page 3 is one that we have done since the inception of the Wisconsin State Council. What is on that page? Your board of directors. Your board of directors and your delegates and/or alternates. Guess what? Delegates and alternates are elected. You just don't put their name down.

E 98:46

Questions?

F 98:47

Comments? Thank you.

E 98:56

Jamil, membership report.

F 98:59

This membership report is effective August 2026.

E 99:06

From the national finance report, okay, okay.

J 99:10

We— BVA WSC Wisconsin has total membership of 2,668. We lost 5. AVVA has total members of 361, and we gained 2. So the national level, we are doing great. Chapter level, you know, we are having hardships, true. Few people come to attend, but that's a fact of life. We've got to live with it. However, we need to see— this is my

recommendation— we need to see the executive level faces. We need to have this leadership shown more at the chapter level. That's my membership report, sir.

E 99:56

Thank you.

D 99:57

Thank you.

A 100:00

POW?

D 100:00

I'm just going to make it brief.

F 100:04

Thank you.

J 100:07

Very fine.

K 100:09

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced today— that was on June 26th this year— that U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant Don F. Worley, 31, has been That— who was killed in Vietnam was accounted for on June 22nd, 2026. In 1968, Worley and 18

other men assigned to the Lima Site 85 tactical air navigation radar site on a remote 5,600-foot mountain peak known as, uh, Phao Pha Thai in Hai Phong Province in Laos.

K 100:47

In the early morning of March The 11th, the site was overrun by Vietnamese commandos, causing the Americans to seek safety on a narrow ledge of a steep mountain. A few hours later, under protection of an A-1 Skyraider aircraft, U.S. helicopters were able to rescue 8 of the men. 4 of the 10 other Americans were killed in action or unable to recover. All the other wars updates will be on the website.

J 101:15

Any questions?

F 101:16

Thank you, sir.

D 101:19

Virginia, do you have a scholarship report? No, I just have to report that I received 3 thank-yous from our scholarship recipients for this year, and the deadline for next year's scholarships is February 17th. So if you have anybody that's eligible for this scholarship, graduating high school senior or in college, they're certainly eligible to apply. And the application should be on the website.

F 101:53

It is. It is on the website. And remember, the website is vva.org. Go to scholarships, click on scholarships, and by God, have them fill them out.

D 102:19

Do we have any old business? Do we have any new business?

J 102:28

Sir, 2 more committee meetings.

D 102:32

I don’t have it on my agenda. What are they?

J 102:36

Well, one is substance abuse, other is PTSD, the most very important topics.

D 102:43

I thought that was part of the toxic exposure.

J 102:47

No, no, okay, independent.

D 102:50

Okay, go ahead.

J 102:54

For substance abuse, Substance abuse disorder. The essential features are a cluster of cognitive, behavioral, and psychological symptoms indicating individuals continue using the substance despite significant substance-related problems. Vietnam veterans, we didn’t lose a war, but we lost because the Vietnamese to introduce drugs. That’s where the U.S.

community got the drugs coming back to us. This will be detailed in the— I'm trying to make the thing short.

J 103:33

And you all know what substance does to us. We try to make ourselves doctor and try to use it, but actually there's no single pill that solves the problem, disease. There are side effects.

E 103:47

Yes, sir.

J 103:48

So thank you very kindly, sir. That's my substance abuse. Now, PTSD. I call it post-traumatic stress condition because I hate the word, as a Marine, as a veteran, to be called as a disorder. It's not a— it's a fact of life what we've gone through. Just starting from the Yes. In boot camp, regardless which organization you are with, the drill instructor hammers you on your head. And when I went through, we had foxholes and we had marsh places where we got our training done.

J 104:28

So there's a sleep disorder with it. Those 2 things are basic to being a veteran. Even today, when my son comes back from Afghanistan, although he's staying in a barrack which looks like a hotel. I went through quonset huts.

H 104:49

Different.

J 104:49

Vietnam generation, very, very, very, very different. So in our case, we try to fix ourselves. In my case, Beirut, thrown from a 4-star building down to the ground.

A 105:04

I'm sorry.

J 105:05

I'm reconstituted. I'm 100% government issue, GI. So the VA on the other side, we have to improve it. They need our help. It's not perfect. As a matter of fact, present secretary has already removed more than 3,000 veterans who had jobs in the VA hospitals. So to do that, I request each one of you, call your congressman, call senator, regardless what damn party they belong to, and make sure— knock on them— that do not cut the promise Abraham Lincoln did with us.

J 105:42

We seek the fulfillment of that promise. Thank you, sir. It's in the—

D 105:50

okay, the report's on the website.

G 106:00

wi.org.

D 106:02

Okay, now we'll go to old business, new business.

G 106:08

For those that you haven't heard, Robert Piero, our past State Council president from way back when, and your executive The person that started Chapter 448, the founding member, passed away last Monday. Not this Monday, 2 weeks ago now. He was a Marine, 100% disabled, and there are no services. Family said no services.

D 106:44

Why?

G 106:46

He had 11 brothers and sisters.

D 106:51

Big family to make that decision.

G 106:55

Bob passed away, I think, at the VA. I think that's where he was when he passed away.

A 107:04

Okay.

D 107:10

Anybody else with new business?

C 107:15

Comments?

D 107:15

Motion to adjourn?

G 107:16

Make a motion we adjourn.

E 107:17

Second.

D 107:18

We just want to think about that.

F 107:21

Hold on, hold on, hold on.

G 107:24

Time out, we got one question here. Okay.

H 107:27

Okay, so Dwayne, you made the motion?

E 107:30

Yes. And the second was?

D 107:33

Jamil.

H 107:34

Jamil. Okay, got it.

D 107:36

All those in favor say aye.

M 107:38

Aye.

D 107:39

Opposed? Motion carries.

F 107:41

Oh, I wanted to keep it going.

E 107:44

Sure you did.

F 107:46

Yeah, right.

K 107:47

I—

F 107:48

oh, uh, you need, uh—

D 107:51

You know what we missed?

E 107:53

We missed the treasurer's report.

L 107:54

That's right. Only thing I would have told you is the balance in the 2 accounts.

F 107:58

Yes, sir.

I 108:01

You're, uh, you mentioned a problem with emails.

E 108:05

Yeah, well, I'm kicked off I, I, for this meeting, I never got nothing. I haven't been getting anything from the state. But, uh, Bill Zaleszowski gets it, and, uh, Ken Yuzek gets it, so they send it to me.

I 108:16

So that's the only reason I knew there was—

M 108:18

this was out.

E 108:20

I got it on my little report there. It's got it on here, but it's all— if you remember, if you look at it, it's all lowercase. I don't know if that makes a difference on there.

K 108:31

No, it doesn't.

J 108:31

Okay, well, but I haven't been getting nothing.

E 108:32

I haven't been getting anything.

J 108:33

Okay.

E 108:35

RosinskiSteve@yahoo.com.

F 108:37

All right.

E 108:38

So if you try it again, and like you say, if, if I get it, I'll confirm it.

F 108:42

Okay. I mean, I will send an email out to everybody that came today.

D 108:49

Sure.

E 108:50

And then you'll have to confirm that I got it, or if I don't, then we got it. Sounds good. We'll do that test then.

F 108:55

Hey, thanks.

B 108:57

Thank you, Jim.

E 108:58

Appreciate it.

M 109:01

By any chance, is Chapter 5 on that list that has not—

F 109:12

The naughty list?

M 109:12

Financials.

F 109:13

Chapter 5?

M 109:20

Yeah.

F 109:20

Yeah.

M 109:22

We are on it.

F 109:22

Yeah, you're on it. On, uh, just financial.

M 109:27

The financial, was that the approved one that needs to be sent to you, or—

F 109:32

Well, the real one.

M 109:34

Yeah.

F 109:35

Yeah, for fiscal year ’25.

M 109:37

Okay.

D 109:38

Well, it was Chapter 5, but last year they sent it in, but they only credited you for one of the reports.

F 109:47

I don’t know which one, but, uh, election.

D 109:50

Election and not the financial, and I, I don’t know why.

M 109:55

Well, we got a new finance officer after losing our long-term man.

E 110:00

You did a super— you did a super job.

M 110:03

He may not have got you.

F 110:07

You have a safe stride.

J 110:09

I'm sorry I didn't say— well, they chipped out together anyway, and he's gonna—

E 110:15

I can tell. tell you all about it.

D 110:17

Thank you for coming in.

E 110:19

Been there, done that.

J 110:20

And, and you put it on the website. Help me as a chair.

G 110:24

I didn't open up.

D 110:25

Absolutely.

K 110:26

Absolutely.

D 110:26

Uh, but I'm going to scan it and email it in.

J 110:31

No, there's something that I needed from you that I don't have. I've got—

L 110:34

is this the election report?

F 110:35

No, that's the finance report. That's the one with the—

M 110:40

yeah.

E 110:42

Oh, and the signatures.

G 110:45

Do I need to make—

L 110:46

do I need to copy this and give it to you? Or give this back to you?

F 110:50

Give it back to me when you send back.

L 110:52

Here, let me just write it down now.

F 110:59

I know that it was State Council was done. I, you know, I want to call the bank right now.

E 111:08

Seats are open.

J 111:09

I'll make sure someone is getting your voice in front of them. And we need to make— I tell you, this guy, this— every third day I got an email from him asking for a letter.

D 111:27

And which is— and I told you this before, but my donations go out once a year. I don't need a letter every month or every week.

L 111:36

Okay, let me see what I can gin up here.

E 111:41

Let's see.

F 111:51

Don't you start walking towards me like that.

K 111:55

Why?

F 111:55

That’s my— that’s—

N 111:57

I know it was left on the table, man.

E 112:00

Jim? John?

F 112:06

I got it. Just one second.