



America First SWFLC Membership Meeting Minutes
326 Nokomis Ave. S., Venice FL 34285 - May 14, 2025

Officers Present: Terry Angley – President; Mike Stephenson – Vice President; Donna DeFiore – Treasurer; Luke OBrien - Secretary

Opening Ceremonies: Invocation - Barbara Vaughn; Pledge of Allegiance – Mikkel Mandt; God Bless America – led by Randy Wedin

Call to Order: President Terry Angley called the meeting to order at 11:46 am.

Approval of Minutes: approval for April is tabled till next month; unable to distribute minutes for review

Treasurer's Report: Donna DeFiore reported that for March and April, the beginning balance was \$6,245.86; receipts were \$1077.21; and expenses were \$234.37, leaving an ending balance of \$7,055.18. The Legal fund has a balance of \$52.09 due to a retainer borrowed by the Treasury of \$5,000 in December. We still owe \$2,302.80 to legal fund.

Committees:

Emergency Preparedness - Chairman Joyce Leogrande is currently looking for a meeting place, as well as a place to meet with one another in the event of an emergency.

Terry Angley subsequently added that she can obtain the meeting room at the Venice Police Station for a Committee meeting.

President's Report:

The People won in the special election in North Port on Tues May 13, against government overreach and tax hikes; all 5 ballot items were defeated.

As for the lawsuit against America First and four individual officers, the deposition was not attended by the defendants, acting upon the advice of their attorney.

Reorganization of AFSWFLC committees is underway, as this is a completely new organization, separate from the Republican Club of South Sarasota County from which it emerged. Unlike the RCSSC, we are free to endorse candidates. A potential speaker for next month is the CEO of the Sarasota Medical Pregnancy Center.

Terry extended special appreciation to the Hospitality Committee. We have 15 people all chipping in, rotating responsibilities, and doing a marvelous job.

The Executive Board is asking for donations for postage stamps - for postcards/invitations that are sent out to invite newly registered Republicans in South County to join with us. [We are trying to take advantage now of a forthcoming increase in postage rates in July.]

We also need someone to take over the 50-50 raffle from Sharon Bellandier, who has been doing this for many years.

Program Speakers: *Exploring the Pros and Cons of Article V of the U.S. Constitution*, featuring Rick Mikluscak and Vic Rohe.

Vic Rohe began by expressing the concern that if the federal government is not now already obeying the Constitution, how could changing the Constitution get them to obey? As for term limits, Congressional leadership does not rise to power until late in their term(s), at which point they are lame ducks - on their way out. At that point the electorate has little influence because those representatives are not going to be running for office anyway. He sees no benefit in having an Article V Convention. Instead, he believes that there is a likelihood that a Convention of States would do



away with the U.S. as an independent country and submerge it into a one-world dictatorship - a global technocracy.

Rick Mikluscak approached the subject from the perspective of the importance of preserving the constitutional right of calling for an Article V Convention of States, and the importance of that threat from the States. Article V is not so much about a Convention as it is about citizen self-governance and activism. He posed the rhetorical question, 'Who does a better job of fiscal responsibility, and is it not the States?' The Federal Government has regulations for everything from growing potatoes and raising chickens, to manufacturing baby strollers. That is not in the Constitution. The Federal Government is not authorized to regulate those things. The States can do a better job without the unelected bureaucrats. If we disregard our options provided in Article V, we deprive the States of the option to get the Congress out of our way and fix the problems ourselves. Historically, that threat alone, to hold a Convention of States (COS), provided the impetus to create the Bill of Rights and the first 10 Amendments of the Constitution. So it is imperative that we provide the States with the ability to reduce the power of the Federal government. And that's what we're fighting here - the encroachment of the federal government into our constitutional rights. If we get involved and we fix these things ourselves, that is the purpose of the move to act on the Convention of States. Although we actually don't want the Convention, it is clear that the Congress has been unwilling or unable to fix these systemic problems constitutionally or legislatively, so it appears to be up to 'We the People' of the States to do it themselves.

There was time for questions from the audience, responses from both speakers, and this summary:

Rick Mikluscak: St. Augustine, once said that the truth is like a lion. You don't need to defend it. Just let it loose. There have been good decisions that have reinforced our Constitution in many cases. There is a lot of garbage in there. And at the same time, it has expanded, not diminished, centralization of power.

Vic Rohe: A constitutional convention cannot help, but it could destroy the country. It could submerge us into a one-world technocracy. A convention cannot be limited, and the ratification procedure is no safeguard.

50/50 Raffle - John Rohe drew the winning ticket for \$28, which went to Sara Wall. Sara Wall donated her \$28 winnings to the purchase of postcard stamps.

Adjournment: Motion by Barbara Vaughn, seconded by Randy Wedin. Adjournment at 1:14 pm.

Submitted by: Luke OBrien, Secretary

Approved - Wednesday, June 11 2025