THE AMERICAN LEGION

DEPARTMENT OF OKLAHOMA, INC.

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MID-WINTER CONFERENCE

REGULAR SESSION

3RD DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (DEC) MEETING

ARMED FORCES RESERVE CENTER, 400 THUNDERBIRD STREET

NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73069

JANUARY 18, 2025

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REPORTED BY: JESSYCA GUERRA, CSR
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(Meeting called to order at 13:30 hours.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All rise. Face the flag. With the Colors of our nation in place, HAND SALUTE. TWO. Please be seated.

All right. Welcome to the 3rd Department Executive Committee Meeting for the committee year 2024, 18th of July -- correction -- January. It's been a long day already.

Chaplain, if you would, lead us in the prayer.

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN STEWART: Let us pray.

Thank you, Lord, for the closing part of this meeting. We ask for your direction now on everything that is discussed here today to be done for the good of the American Legion. Direct our thoughts, our questions, our resolutions, every part of this meeting today, to be done for your glory, that we can help veterans, and we can be what we're supposed to be as the American Legion. Guide our thoughts.

And now we pray in Christ's name, Amen.

COLLECTIVE GROUP: Amen.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Please remain standing with your cover for the POW/MIA ceremony.

Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th National Convention calls for a designated POW/MIA chair at all official meetings of the American Legion.

At this time, accordingly, Sergeant-at-Arms will place the POW/MIA flag on the chair as in accordance.

I would like to include a moment of silence.

(WHEREUPON, the POW/MIA chair cover was placed by Sergeant-at-Arms Lager, and a moment of silence was observed by all. Thereafter, the following transpired:)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you. Please be seated. As a reminder, we did perform these ceremonies this morning.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Microphone, please, Commander.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: As we did this morning, we've done this, so we're going to go right into our regular session and get this done quickly. Because I understand that there is a possibility of snow, I would like to get some of you guys home before that happens.

Are there any newly elected members? If there are no new members, we will call roll of the DEC.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Senior Vice Commander Woody Alexander.

DEPARTMENT SENIOR VICE COMMANDER ALEXANDER: Here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Vice Commander East Patricia Mathes-Kerr.

DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER EAST MATHES-KERR:

Here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Vice Commander West Shirley May.

DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER WEST MAY: Here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Judge Advocate Dale Haynes.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Treasurer Sam McPherson.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Historian Wayne Flowers.

DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN FLOWERS: Here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Sergeant-at-Arms Ed Lager.

DEPARTMENT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS LAGER: Here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Chaplain Bobby Stewart.

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN STEWART: Here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Surgeon John Loose.

DEPARTMENT SURGEON LOOSE: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: NEC Charlie O'Leary is excused.

Alternate NECman Michael Taylor.

DEPARTMENT ALTERNATE NECMAN TAYLOR: Here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Oklahoma Veterans Commission Rep and current Chairman Brett Martin.

DEPARTMENT OVA REP/CHAIRMAN MARTIN: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 1A Commander Karen Ritter.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RITTER: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 1B Commander Karen Cruice.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 2A Commander Kayla Rector.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER GROSS: Taking her place. Danny Gross. I'm here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 2B Commander Ken Rose.

DISTRICT COMMANDER ROSE: Here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 3A Commander Gary Pierson.

DISTRICT COMMANDER PIERSON: Here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 3B Commander Jack Sikes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 4 Commander Thomas Snodgrass. Thomas Snodgrass. Thomas Snodgrass.

District 5A Commander Mike Harris.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 5B Commander Eric Grubbs.

DISTRICT COMMANDER GRUBBS: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 6A Vice Commander Mike Devenitch.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER DEVENITCH: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 6B Commander James Rees.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 7 Commander Elmo May.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 8A Commander Joe Kingery.

DISTRICT COMMANDER KINGERY: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 8B Commander Wayne Flowers.

We just heard from Wayne, didn't we?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: He's present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 1A DEC Rep Rich Conn.

DISTRICT DEC REP CONN: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 1B DEC Rep

Ron Bunch.

DISTRICT DEC REP BUNCH: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 2A DEC Rep Jim Quinn.

DISTRICT DEC REP QUINN: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 3B DEC Rep Curtis Deer.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 3A DEC Rep Robert Chisolm.

DISTRICT DEC REP CHISOLM: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 3B DEC Rep Amanda Current.

DISTRICT DEC REP CURRENT: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 4 DEC Rep Michael Kerr.

DISTRICT DEC REP KERR: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 5A DEC Rep Melvin Hopkins. Melvin Hopkins. Melvin Hopkins.

District 5B DEC Rep Stephen Worley.

DISTRICT DEC REP WORLEY: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 6A DEC Rep Don Kuntze.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 6B DEC Rep

Larry Watson.

DISTRICT DEC REP WATSON: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 7 DEC Rep Doug Hale.

DISTRICT DEC REP HALE: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 8A DEC Rep Tina Kilmer.

DISTRICT DEC REP KILMER: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 3B [sic] DEC Rep Jack Day is excused.

Are there any past department commanders? Please stand and acknowledge yourselves.

PDC KUNTZE: Don Kuntze, Post 353.

PDC QUINN: Jim Quinn, Post 20.

PDC MARTIN: Brett Martin, Post 12.

PDC BLOXOM: John Bloxom, Post 126, also answering for District 4.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Say that again, John, for the stenographer.

PDC BLOXOM: I'm the first vice for District 4, so I'll be answering for District 4.

PDC TAYLOR: Michael Taylor, Post 12.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I'm sorry, but Mr. Bloxom messed me up.

Don Kuntze, Jim Quinn, John Bloxom, Michael Kerr

[sic]. And somebody named Michael?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No, Michael Taylor.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: What did I say, "Taylor"?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: You said "Kerr."

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I meant "Taylor." Thank you. And then, Mr. Martin.

And then, finally, Commander Hayden Woods.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Commander, we have 38 voting members present.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We have a quorum.

PDC MARTIN: Commander, point of order.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Go ahead.

PDC MARTIN: When we asked if there were any officers who need to be sworn in, we do have an officer who needs to be sworn in. District 5A District Commander Eric Grubbs has not been sworn in, to date. So protocol would say before we could go any further, he needs to be sworn in.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Concur.

DISTRICT COMMANDER GRUBBS: Because you can't count five years ago as the DEC, can you?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No. Doesn't work

that way.

If you would, please, Eric, come to the front.

DISTRICT ADJUTANT GORDON: (Unintelligible.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Excuse me. If anyone is going to speak, you'll need to come to the mic, please. There's almost 35, 40 feet between there. There's no way we can hear you. So, if there's something you have to say, you must come forward so that the stenographer and us and the audience can hear what's going on.

DISTRICT ADJUTANT GORDON: Debbie Gordon, District 1A Adjutant. Do I need to be sworn in?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: She's an adjutant.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Oh. She's the adjutant? No, no.

No. I'm sorry.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Eric Grubbs, what's your title you're being sworn in for?

DISTRICT COMMANDER GRUBBS: 5B Commander.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Okay. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I would say the sergeant-at-arms will bring you forward, but you've already jumped up here.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Commander, will you use your microphone, please?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Actually, I'll use a microphone.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Any one will work.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We'll share it. I've know you well enough we can do that.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: My fellow Legionnaire, you have been chosen to fill the various offices of the post of which you are assigned to, which is Post 88. I know you will vindicate the trust that has been placed in you. I know you will fulfill every obligation required of you. Familiarize yourself with the duties of your office and carry out those duties with the same spirit from which the American Legion arose. The welfare and success of this post depends upon you, as does the preservation of the integrity of the American Legion. Protect the good name of the American Legion with the people of our great nation; help them to know the Legion's purposes and its policies. Remember the tolerance that animates us as members; remember there is no rank among us for we all serve as equals. We all are aiming for the same goals -- the ideals of justice, freedom, democracy, and loyalty.

Remember, too, the cardinal principles of the American Legion are:

The rehabilitation of all disabled veterans;

The care of the dependents of those who have answered the final call;

The care of those who are now suffering from wounds, disease, and want;

The education of our children; and

Service to the community, state, and nation.

(WHEREUPON, Eric Grubbs was administered the American Legion Oath of Office.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Hand down.

3B [sic] District Commander Eric Grubbs, face the audience.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: 5B.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I'm sorry.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Who would disagree with me that that's probably one of the most important things to do is the installation of officers and the initiation of new members? That needs to happen all the time.

DISTRICT DEC REP HOPKINS: Point of order. This is not a point of order. But, Melvin Hopkins, DEC. DEC for District 5A is here. Right there (indicated).

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Point of order on that, Commander. This is Jack Sikes from 3B. With the addition, I would now request the record to reflect the appropriate number of voting members in the DEC and not the head count of the ones on the floor. Thirty-eight was the previous number that --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Correct.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: -- was called out --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: It would --

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: -- as voting members.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: -- be 39.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: I don't think that's right.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: The correct number, Mr. Commander, is 38 [sic] members present, 4 not voting, for 34 total voting members. I'm sorry. Forty-three members present, 34 voting members.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, Adjutant.

Did everyone hear that? Okay. Make sure we reflect that. We still have a quorum.

Department Adjutant, do we have minutes from the last DEC meeting?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Yes, sir. They are available in the office or by e-mail, but not here and

present today.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Adjutant, have we sent those out?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: There has been limited distribution. They are available to be distributed to everyone. And I failed the DEC to get them distributed. My apologies.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes John Bloxom.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: Commander, I make a motion that we dispense with the reading of the minutes and that they be provided electronically to the members.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: I second that.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Please stand up and announce yourself.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 3B DEC. I second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I have a first and a second. Is there any further discussion?

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, District 1B. DEC 1 has been sent out. I don't know if it was to everybody because I know there was an e-mail problem. But there are issues with it. Can we discuss those?

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: Karen, let him finish the vote first.

You have a motion on the floor.

(Crosstalk.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: That's all right. If there's no further discussion, I'll take a vote. All in favor, say aye.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER SIKES: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Let it be known.

Now, Karen.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: We haven't approved DEC 1. I believe they've been mailed out to everyone, and there's errors in them. But don't we have to motion to approve DEC 1 first before we can discuss it? DEC 1's been mailed out. We have not approved those.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Mike Harris, District Commander, District 5A. With the fact that the error has been seen and addressed, I don't think we need to have anything done to the minutes except as that as an amendment to the change -- or, just change the minutes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Because, you understand, we do not approve the minutes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Right.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Oh. We don't approve them?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Okay.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: They're held for record.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: All right. So, with DEC 1 minutes being mailed out, I motion that we adjust them to show that we had voted and approved Sons to open their own account and manage their money, and those were not in the minutes. I'm moving that we amend them to show that.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Very good. Thank you.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RITTER: Karen Ritter, 1A District Commander. I'll second that.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I have a first and a second. Is there any further discussion?

DETACHMENT SAL COMMANDER THOMAS: Steve Thomas, Detachment SAL Commander for the detachment of Oklahoma.

What we're referencing, there actually needs to be another amendment to your amendment.

As part of the resolution, that was approved by the DEC, of the detachment of the Sons of the American Legion

on July 12th of '24 and passed through this body that was approved on December 1 -- at DEC 1, we do need to add what was not originally put in the minutes, as adding the department finance officer, along with the detachment finance officer, the vice commander, and the commander.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Okay.

DETACHMENT SAL COMMANDER THOMAS: In the original motion that was passed, the department finance officer was not included on that.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All right. First off, the rule of things. If you have an amendment or you have a motion on the floor, we have to deal with that one first. So standby. We will deal with the first one first, and then we'll deal with the next amendment. Okay?

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: I would like to adjust my amendment to include the department finance officer as a signing officer.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Now do I have a second?

DISTRICT COMMANDER RITTER: Karen Ritter, 1A District Commander. I'll second that.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I have a first and a second to an amended constitution -- or, to the amendment to our minutes. Is there any further

discussion?

DISTRICT COMMANDER RITTER: Karen Ritter, 1A District Commander. I never received the meeting minutes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Okay.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RITTER: Not everybody has been distributed for DEC 1 meeting minutes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Okay. We'll make that happen.

Is there any other discussion? Seeing no further discussion, all in favor to the amendment to correct the DEC 1 minutes, say aye.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Motion carried.

Adjutant, ensure that we have the minutes corrected for DEC 1, please. Thank you.

Surgeon General, do you have anything that you would like to put out?

DEPARTMENT SURGEON LOOSE: I have no report.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Mike Taylor, anything to add from this morning? No? All right, buddy.

Wayne Flowers, no.

Bobby Stewart, Chaplain? And I'll get your name right this time.

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN STEWART: No report.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No report.

Ed Lager?

Dale Haynes?

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: None.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Sam McPherson?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: Of course.

Sam McPherson from finance. You may have already heard the report from the adjutant. I don't know if he'd already covered that or not, about our tax return and our audit.

It seems like the company that we thought we had engaged has gone dark on us. And from what we were able to ascertain is we had a -- I don't even know what they call it -- a letter of engagement, but I guess it wasn't executed.

So the adjutant has been proactive on this, and he's already engaged a company to, first, clear up our taxes, because we want to make sure we have our tax returns correct to make sure we maintain our tax exempt status. So he's already engaged with that. We were supposed to have a meeting, but it had to be rescheduled. And then,

he's actively looking for a firm to do our audit.

From what we understand, the audit is no longer required by the state for the reasons it was in the past. However, our constitution and by-laws still require us to do an audit. And it would be very dumb not have an external audit because that's probably how we got into the problem we got prior to having our issues before.

So I wanted to cover that first.

Basically, the finance report is out. If you were at the finance meeting, I've already gone over most of this. In you have any questions, I have no problem answering questions if you send me an e-mail to clear something up. In fact, there are two people that typically send me a page or half a page of questions, and I try to answer them to the best of my ability. Sometimes they're satisfied with those answers; sometimes they're not. But I have no problem doing that.

As of the end of December in our accounts, we had 322,556.90. That's a little bit more than showed on that form.

The biggest thing that's come up that I will have to get your permission for is our retirement account. It was very hard for us to get any information about this. And it's funny because Rick Redden has been able to get more information and been able to get an actual call from

the company that handles the retirement accounts out of Indianapolis. So we've, finally, kind of got a handle on that.

We have gotten, basically, a bill from National for our retirement fund for just shy of $30,000.00. Do we have that in the budget? No. But we have more than enough money to pay it. We do have money that, for lack of a better term, we received and we set aside in a building fund, which is -- oh, I forgot it off the top of my head, but it's down here (indicated) -- $138,656.00. So, if we have to dip into that, we can. I would prefer not to. Because we haven't had our audits the carryover money -- because the last -- I know we've had a surplus the last two, if not the last three, years. That money has not been assigned anywhere, that surplus. So I believe we probably have that surplus that's not really accounted for. But until we get our audit, we don't know exactly how much that money is. But I have a feeling that we have plenty of money to cover that retirement payment.

Just to give you a history on the retirement system, National had it offered for a number of years, and we bought into the system. But it was basically -- the retirement fund ended in 2008. It's about 23 entities with about 8 or 10 states participating. We are one of

those states. We have a small fraction of that. Our portion to be fully funded, our retirement should be -- let's see -- it should be just shy of $600,000.00. Currently, the actual funding we have in our retirement account is 333,000. We have, right now, we have seven retirees; four beneficiaries, basically, the spouse of a retiree; and we have one that's vested but has not collected anything yet. We pay out annually. Well, right now, we pay out annually in retirement payments, in the pension, $62,755.00. This payment, this $30,000.00 payment is basically for four years.

So the question that we asked them was, "Should we pay over and above the amount, or should we pay a certain amount every year?" And they said, "Don't pay anything more than we ask you to"; and, "If you want to set aside money, set aside money and earmark it and set it aside in your own accounts, but don't pay anything forward to National until we ask for it." So that's the information we got from them. So they said, "Don't pay anything early. Don't overpay. Just, if you know it's going to be roughly that amount every year, just earmark that and set it aside, but don't send it in to us unless we ask for it because all of those people may die next year, so there's no need to pay in."

Now, chances are, because of all the number -- I

don't remember the total number of people in the system. Like I said, we've got 12. I know National's got over 150 just themselves. So there's quite a number of people in this fund. We can't get that money back. Maybe 80 years from now once everybody's aged out and died out of that system, the money left over, they will probably divvy it up by some type of apportionment, and we may get some money back. But I'm not looking at ever getting any money back. I'm just trying to pay the least amount of money we can in. And right now, we've got to pay in $30,000.00. So that's the big hit. It's not in our budget, but I think we can cover it easily.

But that's basically it. If you have any questions, I'll be glad to answer any questions.

Yes, sir? Come to the microphone, please.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 153, 2B DEC. My question is, when talking about this retirement fund, what's in it? Who's in this fund that's eligible for it?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: They were only employees from the state. And I'm not sure when it started, but it cut off in 2008. But they were all employees of the state. They had to -- a portion of their pay paid into the program, and they had to be in the program for five years in order to be vested.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Okay.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: And like I said, everybody right now -- out of the 12 people that are in there, 11 of them are drawing a pension, and one is vested, but I don't believe -- he's not eligible to draw a pension until 2035.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Okay.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Jack Sikes, 3B.

Sam, for two years now we've been asking about the names of this and wanting more information on the policy. Do we have any idea of the black and white verbiage of what we're paying $30,000.00 or $62,000.00 a year for? I just believe it needs to come before the body and it be re-evaluated and looked at and understood.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: Okay. We didn't ask how much it would cost us to get out of the requirement, so we don't know that. But the rest of it, we've got to report. We can just -- we can probably just scan that and send that out to all the DEC member. I don't see a problem with that. We do also have a list of the people that are drawing and the person that's vested but not drawing yet. We don't have amounts per person, but we have the names.

All right. If there are no further questions, I guess I would move that we pay this bill, and we'll

figure out where we're going to assign it at a later DEC meeting, unless somebody wants to amend that.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, 1B District Commander. I second that.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Wait.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: I made the motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Oh. You made the motion? Okay.

Again, we have a motion and a second. Is there any further discussion?

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: Commander?

I understand that you want to pay the bill, and I understand that you want to take it out of the building fund. I object to that. That was set aside specifically for our future headquarters. What else can you take the funds out of?

Two, it isn't a one-time shot. It's a recurring expense. We cannot rob ourselves. We need to plan for this.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Currently, right now, what we are looking at is about $7,500.00 a year. We do have a couple of items that we can draw from. Right now we have a -- we still have money on a second vehicle, about $11,000.00 that we can pull from. There's

a couple of other resources that we're looking at. The building fund would be the last stop. But right now, like Sam said, we do believe we have the money to cover that. We just have to be creative about how we get there.

Seeing no further discussions, all in favor, say aye.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: That was way too close. Since we are too close to determine that, we're going to do a show of hands.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please, if you would, assist me.

All that do not wish to do this, all the nays, please raise your hand.

(Hands raised.)

DEPARTMENT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS LAGER: Ten nay votes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER MARTIN: Twenty-four in favor or -- or abstain.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER MCNEAL: Point of order, sir. Did we assume that 24 number, or are we subtracting that from our voting? There may be abstentions.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah. Looks like we're going to have to do a show of hands.

All in favor, raise your hand.

(Hands raised.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Everybody raise your hands again, in favor of.

(Hands raised.)

DEPARTMENT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS LAGER: Fifteen in favor.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Fifteen in favor. The ayes have it.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Commander, point of order. Would you state the whole purpose of the vote and the results for the stenographer, please?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The purpose of the vote was to pay the bill for our retirement fund. It was 14 in favor of and 9 nays.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Fifteen and ten.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Correction. Fifteen and ten. Fifteen in favor of.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: The funds are going to come out of -- were you talking about the building fund earlier?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: We didn't say.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We're not. We've

got to investigate that before we take it anywhere. We think we have the funds available, but there's a couple of others like the adjutant's vehicle that we had that we're still paying -- or, we have in a line item as $11,000.00. That's $11,000.00 that's been assigned but not used.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Did we not just vote to pay that bill --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Correct.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: -- without....

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: Yes, we did.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes. But we'll have to come back to you with where we're getting it from.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Okay. All right. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We don't know yet. We have to look at that. That has to be a determination that's been made.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Excuse me, Commander. Did that end the finance?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: Yes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: I wasn't finished with him.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: Oh, okay.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Sam, my understanding is four people are going to drop off your committee annually; correct?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: Approximately three or four. Yes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Wouldn't this be the perfect time for you to tell us what four need to be replaced? I mean, we're the DEC. We're supposed to be briefed by the committee chair people at every DEC meeting. And I'm saying, where's the four that are dropping off? Who needs to reassign?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: I would have to look at that list. I believe -- I believe the ones that were dropping off were reinstated by their districts, but I would have to go back and check that. That would have happened back at convention. That was six months ago.

DISTRICT DEC REP CRUICE: Karen Cruice, 1B. Do you give minutes for your meeting? Like, can we find out if our person represented at mid-winter for your meeting? Do you have a roll call of who attended your meeting?

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: I have a roll call. I don't know if I have minutes.

DISTRICT DEC REP CRUICE: A roll call? I just want to know if my person's showing up.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: I'll have to go

back and look. But I can do that, yes.

Any other questions?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: That concludes my report, Commander.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Vice Commander West -- I'll ask again -- Shirley May, do you have anything to put out?

DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER WEST MAY: I do.

I was asked just to remind everybody about the 1889 newsletter, that the e-mail that it needs to be sent to is talok1889@gmail.com; and, that, when you send in your submissions, please state the post and the district, and, if you could, carbon copy your district commanders so that way they know what's been sent in, also. Pictures, they'd like to limit it to three so we can keep the newsletter at a manageable -- manageable document. And receive -- she would like to receive it by the 15th of the month so that it can be published the 25th of the month.

The one other request for this upcoming newsletter is if there have been any deaths since December 1st to please send in a small obituary, and we'll get those added to the newsletter. Thank you.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Commander, in regards

to the newsletter, the addresses on that list that they're going out to is in serious error. Okay? There are people who are not getting it that should be getting it, and there's people on there who are no longer with us that shouldn't be getting it. We need to clean up our electronic envelope or address book. It's terrible.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: At the department or at the Constant Contact?

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: It depends on which one's sending it out. I'm receiving it from two different locations. Mine is correct on both of them. But I understand from people in the field that, "No, I'm not getting it. No, I'm not getting it."

You need to let Rick know so that he can update the department and whoever is sending out the Constant Contact.

It's a soup sandwich. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you.

DISTRICT DEC REP KILMER: Tina Kilmer, DEC, 8A and Editor of 1889. I do not update the Constant Contact addresses. I send it to Rick, and he sends it out. But, in the past and still, it's a little bit wrong on the actual website. So, if you go to the part where the 1889 is on the state page, that's -- that's where -- it can also be accessed there, not just through e-mail. That's

what I was getting at.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Does everybody understand that? It's on the website.

DISTRICT DEC REP KILMER: If you don't get an e-mail, go to the website.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Any other saved rounds or alibis?

Vice Commander East Patricia Kerr -- Mathes-Kerr. I'm sorry.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER EAST MATHES-KERR: Patricia Mathes-Kerr, Vice Commander East. Who was not here this morning when I spoke?

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: (Raised hand.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER EAST MATHES-KERR: Jackie, get with me after.

That concludes my report. Any questions?

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Vice Commander?

DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER ALEXANDER: Negative. No report.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No report.

I would only reiterate what I said this morning, things are changing. We're making sure things are happening. We are getting those things that you are concerned about such as contacts. We're trying to get

those straightened out. You have to remember we can only do what we can. There's only 24 hours in the day. We are continuing to work at that.

Rick put out this morning -- our adjutant -- about the blue book. You know where to go to find that. You can go look at that. And if you find problems, please let us know. I cannot fix what I do not know.

That concludes my report.

Is there any other Unfinished Business that needs to come before this body?

VE&E COMMISSIONED OFFICER CRUICE: Are you still taking committee reports?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

VE&E COMMISSIONED OFFICER CRUICE: All right. VE&E Commissioned Officer for National. I would like to first say, anybody thinking about running for commander, when you do appointments, if we could look at our National appointments, it would be nice if the same person was doing both. So I do it at the National level, the VE&E. And Texas wins every year. So, if you guys send out to your posts, if you're a district commander, we look for small, medium, and large -- veteran employees of the year, disabled employees of the year, old people employees --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hey.

(Laughter.)

VE&E COMMISSIONED OFFICER CRUICE: I'm not sure. It's got the word "old" in it.

-- employers of the year. Texas is always winning, because I sit on that commission. So talk to your posts and get names in.

And then, at the state level, VA&R, I just got the report that I was chosen as the chair for that. If your post has gaming, if you could get me that, because I need to follow through with the resolution that was passed at Brett's last meeting. I can't remember what DEC that is.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Five.

VA&R CHAIR CRUICE: Five. At DEC 5, I need to get a committee going, as we approved. So, if your people have gaming, if you could send me those post numbers so I can get some names and just get that started, please.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, Karen.

Ed Lager is about to throw something at me, so I'm going to correct myself now before he does it. Please limit your committee reports to about four minutes, three minutes, if you can. Let's go with three minutes. And any responses after that for two, please.

DEPARTMENT MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEEMAN KERR: Mike Kerr, Media and Communications. As expressed

earlier, there is a blue book on the website. There is also the 10 fundraising draw that we just held, not a gun raffle. It's a fundraising draw. That is on the website in two different locations. Please direct your people there.

If I do not get information, I cannot put information on there. The website was down for about four months because of technical difficulties. Get us the information, and we will have it on there.

The primary use: 38,840 website hits in a month. About 40,000 hits on Facebook for our department. If you don't have one, get one. There's a lot of departments around here that have Facebook websites that are doing great. Their newsletters are great. (Unintelligible.)

THE STENOGRAPHER: I can't hear you. Would you turn around? Thank you.

DEPARTMENT MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEEMAN KERR: The websites are great. The Facebook pages are great for these posts. The newsletters are great, a lot better than mine.

So, please, reach out to your members via those media, train them if they do not know how to do that. Have a second meeting a month, commander's time, train your people.

If you want more information, please look at our

website. I am now posting the media from National and the statistics of the various types of media being used. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, Mike. John McNeal?

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER MCNEAL: Commander? John McNeal, 6B. I've got to ask if you are receiving just reports from committees appointed by the department, or do you want any information from any of the national committees?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Both, yes. Both from National and the department, yes.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMISSION REP MCNEAL: Okay. Let me just give the information that I've received sitting as an Oklahoma representative on the National Cemetery Committee and Commission. There are some interesting and new things from the undersecretary for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

And I'm not going to turn around, but please know that I'm addressing the audience behind me. But it's better for our stenographer I do not turn around.

If you're not familiar with it, take a look at it. It's the VLM, Victor Lima Mike. That's the Veterans Legacy Memorial. There's ten million veterans, deceased veterans, approximately, in that system now. They don't

have to be buried in a national cemetery for that information to be out there. I found my dad. He's buried in a cemetery back home in Pittsburgh. You can go out there and find the actual GPS location of your deceased loved one or friend on the ground in those cemeteries.

What's new that has been added to do that -- mind you, these are for deceased veterans. What's new is I can now go before I'm deceased and offer information to that page and share things that I want folks to know about me while I'm still alive. You can go to the VLM.gov site -- or, the VA.gov site and click on VLM, and you'll get all the latest and greatest. And you'll also find out how you can go and look up someone. And it's interactive. When you find them, you can make comments, post pictures, and, of course, once they're approved, they'll be posted to the site. That's one very good thing.

The other is there was 155 VA national cemeteries. Now they classify 61 of them as closed. We know that those cemeteries don't close because there's perpetual care. When we hear that there's 61 closed, don't be mistaken. They are open still for internments of a second person going in, but there's just no room for initial burials. So we still have lots of space in some

of those.

I can speak for Fort Sill National Cemetery. We have 10,854 as of Thursday, but we could go to 45,000, so we've got plenty of room. And I think if we fill up, we're going to ask Fort Sill for some more land on the other side of that.

But some cemeteries are reaching out to get land, and that's what our committee sits on, to approve and help write petitions for grants of land. And we did get some land granted up in Minnesota. There was a philanthropist that donated 7,000 acres to be used for national cemetery purposes. So it's out there.

I just wanted to make sure that you were aware of that. I'll be going up to Washington in the next month to sit on that committee and commission for you, bring you as much information as I can.

Danny, are you going there with me, sir?

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER GROSS: Yeah.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMISSION REP MCNEAL: Danny Gross is also one of the Oklahoma delegation going up, and he'll be sitting in on that at the Washington conference on that committee.

So look forward to more good news coming from that end.

Thank you, Commander.

DISTRICT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, John.

Any other committee reports?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Our adjutant sent out a letter -- or, an e-mail here a while back. Again, I'm going to assume that certain people didn't get it. But that was to have committee reports ready for today. We've received four out of thirty. We'll be looking into this and see if there was an e-mail problem. Rick has asked me -- our adjutant has asked me to make sure that I start pounding on these committees to make sure that they get the report that they need to get in here. This is not a hat situation. This is work for this department, so be prepared.

Unfinished Business: Right now we have a couple of posts -- Arnett Post, I think, still has some paperwork we've got to finish up on. I think Ryan Post -- where's Jim at? I think Ryan Post is done, if I'm not mistaken.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Jim Rees, 6B District Commander. Yes, all the paperwork's turned in. Rick has sent it to National. We're waiting for National to provide feedback at their spring conference.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, guys. I appreciate it.

Summer raffle.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: Drawing.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Drawing. I'm sorry.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Commander, can we get an update on Healdton?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Healdton is one of those that need to be closed. Their information is done. We're just waiting on National. Believe it or not, National takes Christmas off, too, and it takes them a while to get re-energized.

The summer drawing, if you have not noticed -- well, now all of the posters are gone. I'm going to have to start frisking you guys before you get out of here.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: But we had posters. I know Post 12 has one.

I am hoping, John, you got yours. Yeah? Okay. Good. Whew.

I was about to get in trouble there for a second.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There's still some sitting over there.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Oh. The big posters? No, no, no. The posters.

DISTRICT DEC KUNTZE: Oh, the big signs?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah, the big

signs. Yeah, we've got plenty of posters, trust me.

We've got over 15,000 tickets, so we're good on that. But make sure you get your tickets. Make sure you look at them. There is no price on there, but that does not mean you're limited. Charge 15.00 if you want. As long as the department get their 5.00, go for it. No, I'm just kidding that's a joke. No, it's $10.00. Unfortunately, we will be deciding here shortly when the dates are for this, that's why there's no date on there. It just says the summer convention, July 2025.

John Bloxom?

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: John Bloxom, Post 126. Is the department mailing tickets and posters to those posts that are not present?

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Speak up a little bit more, John.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: He's asking if the department is mailing tickets and posters to those posts that aren't here or don't have access. If those posts contact us, we will do that, but we will not do it blanket. Because, as you know, that costs a little bit of money.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Elmo May, Post 146, District 7 Commander. Okay. I'm going to take some for District 7. I go visit my post. I give them a poster.

I give them cards. That saves the department money and saves me money because I've got to go see them anyway.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes, that would be the preferred method.

But if they need something like -- we're not talking the initial one. We're talking, basically, four months from now when, hopefully, a post sells them out. A post can contact us. We will mail them.

But, yes, the district commanders should be using that as an excuse to visit every post.

All right. Let's move on. Are there any other questions about the summer raffle [sic]?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All right. Post 1, Ms. Karen Cruice?

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, District 1B Commander. The building has closed. They are still in the process of moving out. They are renting a space. It's at 1315 North Utica Avenue. And just so you know, their membership was at 100 percent before the end of the year, and they have 70 new members so far.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Outstanding. Make sure you get that address to our new adjutant, and information, so we can keep you updated and make sure we get that information out to the posts.

Is there any other Unfinished Business that I am not aware of at this time?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: If so, we'll close that, and we'll move into New Business. Got one in the back.

DEPARTMENT MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEEMAN KERR: Mike Kerr, Media and Communications. On the website, under "Committees, DEC," you will see DEC 1 and DEC 2 meeting minutes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, Mike.

As Past Department Commander Martin put out earlier, that's where we're going. If you're not visiting that website at least three, four times a week, you're selling yourself short. And if you find problems, please let us know.

All right. Let's move into New Business. Unfortunately, we have individuals that have either stepped aside, things that have prevented them from doing their job, whatever we want to look at. But right now, we have to have some committee appointments. I've got to get them approved.

The first one off the bat will be the parliamentarian. I told you last time that we need to get one. A young lady by the name of Sue Dyer has

requested to be the parliamentarian. I have touched based with a couple of others in that process. I'm not going to give their names, but I have asked them. They are too busy to do it. This young lady wishes to do so.

The second one I have is Resolutions. The original chairman resigned. The backup took it over, didn't really do much with it. I need to get him replaced. So I need a new Resolutions. Again, I would like to put in for Sue Dyer for that.

CB&L [sic], Constitution and By-Laws, we've been having an issue with that. Again, someone has stepped to the side of that. John Bloxom has graciously asked to become that again. And notice I said "again." Hopefully, we can train someone to take over for John very shortly. So, hopefully, by summer or next mid-winter, we're looking at somebody else. John's done it for a number of years. His hands are all over the constitution and by-laws, so he knows it inside and out. And I can't think of anybody more qualified to do that at this particular time.

So right now I have Sue Dyer for Parliamentarian and Resolutions and John Bloxom as Constitution and By-Laws.

DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER EAST MATHES-KERR: Commander?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes?

DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER EAST MATHES-KERR: To add to that, I stepped aside as the committee chair for the Women Veterans Council or Committee. I have actually made contact and recruited Karen Ritter, who is willing to take my stead, and then we have Tina Kilmer as a co-chair if you so choose to agree.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Commander, I have a question.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes?

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: I'm not sure on the parliamentarian. Is that going to be a committee, or where are we going to put that position?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: It would be a chairman.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Chairman. Okay. Thank you.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: State that one more time, please. Clarify.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: A lot of the states have parliamentarians. National has a parliamentarian. This would be a chairman -- a chair position as a parliamentarian to advise the membership and your front table if we're making mistakes. Now, understand something, I don't want people to think that this is a way that we're going to try to get around our

constitution and by-laws. It is not. They are not allowed to voice their opinion unless asked. All right? Again, we have to ask.

Yes, sir, Jim Rees?

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Jim Rees, District 6B Commander. We don't have any discussion, wording or other, in our constitution and by-laws. It's not addressed in our DEC rules. Are we going to follow what Robert's Rules state on how the parliamentarian is supposed to conduct business? Is that what we're going to follow?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Correct. Until we can get it into our constitution and by-laws, if necessary.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: And can we add in that the parliamentarian needs to get that training at the constitution convention to help us get better at what we're supposed to be doing?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Absolutely.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: In fact, if you don't know, this is a parliamentarian book on the American Legion website. Everyone in this room should have that downloaded. That would prevent some of the arguments that we have in here.

So, at this time, I will take a motion to approve my appointments.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Jack Sikes, 3B. Let me make sure I get this right. We want Karen for --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Women Veterans.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: -- Women Veterans? We want Sue for --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Sue Dyer.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: -- Parliamentarian --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: And Resolutions.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: -- and Resolutions. And we want John for CB&L [sic]?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Constitution and By-Laws.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: I make that motion.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 2B DEC. I second the motion.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can't hear you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Curtis Deer?

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 2B DEC. I second the motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER MARTIN: Is there any further discussion? Is there any further discussions?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: If not, all in

favor, say aye.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: You agree on something finally? Good. Outstanding.

Motion carried.

The district commanders are the ones that heard me yesterday on this topic. John's been very vocal on it, thank goodness. We were going to look at doing some revitalization in our districts. We have to do that. We have to get back to our membership. I put a challenge out to have 3,000 members by the end of April. It's doable. We just have to work together. And what I mean by working together, I mean National, the department, the districts, and the posts. We are not a separate organization. It's all one. Are there any comments? There's nothing to motion on this. I'm just letting you know that's what's going to happen.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, 1B District Commander. I'll comment. We need to do more as district commanders. I don't know because we don't talk to one another enough about this, but we need to take that data and we need to do something with it. We need

to be contacting our posts. We should all know which posts in our district haven't had a growth and for how many weeks. You know, have they not grown in a week? In two weeks?

I have one that hasn't grown in six weeks. She only needed two more. She got them this week because I challenged her.

But we should know what our posts are doing, and we should ask them if there's problems. It's not just looking at a report and hoping that the numbers go up. We should know which posts have had new members and which haven't and be calling them. So hoping an praying and doing one thing isn't enough.

When I went through -- because I had one of my posts want that honor ribbon, and I went through the data because there was some questions, "What is this?" I didn't know. Rick and I talked things through. I did a national search. There are about 15 to 20 posts that missed it by one member. If they would have known that their deadline was December 31st -- that's the stuff we need to be getting out there and motivating.

People are motivated by getting something or being rewarded. Do we know that we have 17 posts that made 100 percent by December 31st? That would have been a great thing to hear today when our whole body was here. But we

need to celebrate. We need to do more than just talk about it and talk about the struggle and things. We need to celebrate, and we need to ask questions if we're seeing a problem.

There's a post that had over 100 members last year and has zero right now. Is somebody talking to that post? Do they know what the problem is? We just need to do more than just talking here.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Agree.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. District is kind of near and dear to the heart. But when I -- unless I am a --

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Dale, speak up, please, into the mic. The stenographer can't hear you.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. When I was district commander, unless they have changed it, if the district commander gets on My Legion, there is a little report down towards the bottom. I think it's called "activities report," if I'm not mistaken. It is a very interesting report. It will show you what activity your posts have been doing as far as membership. It will show you when the last time they went on My Legion, if I'm not mistaken, and a few other things. I accidently found that. Many of you may not know it's there. I'm pretty sure it's called an

"activity report," and it will tell you all those things that Karen just said it would be nice to know.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, Dale.

Last summer, unfortunately, once again -- I would like to pull up my video of all the cats being wrangled, running across the river because herding cats seems to be quite the job at this department. Last summer when we shut down, I had to go into District 1 -- or, DEC 1. The next thing I know, I'm getting a report, everything is packed up. Well, it was packed, but it wasn't packed very well. Commander Martin -- Past Department Commander Martin and our adjutant got together before we came here, and they did their due diligence. They checked everything. There were a lot of things that need to be addressed.

Commander, would you like to speak on that?

PDC MARTIN: I would love to.

(Laughter.)

PDC MARTIN: Brett Martin, Past Department Commander. We spent over $6,000.00 on brand new equipment that's not a year old. And when it was torn down last summer, it was just thrown. We've got broken mics, broken mic stands. We've got cables that are broke. Nothing was put back in the box that it was originally put in. There was no due diligence done. It

was a bunch of people just wanting to get the hell out of there, so they throw the stuff away. The stuff is now a year old, and I would say 78 percent is probably good, but we've got 22 percent that's not so good anymore. And there's no reason for it.

We have to be good stewards with the stuff that we buy because this is one poor department. It's one poor department. But we can't keep shooting ourselves in the foot with these self-inflicted wounds.

And I'll get off my soap box. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: He's absolutely right. You've got to remember, guys, this is your money. It is membership money. If we buy something, do something, it's your money. You own it. Think about that. You own it, not me. Well, I own $13.50 of it.

Membership update: We had a nice little discussion earlier about membership. I don't think there's too much more to cover other than the fact that we are hitting the bottom of the barrel. We are at the same basic point as we were last year, maybe a little lower.

PDC MARTIN: No. Actually, last year, we were at 49th place. We had hit every goal all year long. This year, we haven't hit one goal, and we're almost 2,000 people behind.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Actually, closer to

3,000, but, yeah.

PDC MARTIN: Okay. So don't compare it to last year, because it's not even close.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Again, we see the numbers. I was asked to send out a report. I will start doing it, but I have a concern. I can see your retention. I know exactly what every post's retention is, every post's, without exception, without fail. I know the posts that are already at 98 to 100 percent. I know the post retentions that are at 44, 43 percent. I've talked. I've called. That's why we're going to look at doing the districts thing. We've got to do something.

Our membership recruitment is good. I'm not going to say outstanding, but I would say great. I would say it's above average. We recruit every year about 700 to 800. There's one year we had almost 1,000. That's good. I'm still telling you to recruit every one for every one. If you've got a member, they need to be recruiting a member. But that is not the end-all and be-all. That is strengthening the department.

We need to be looking at our retention. What is driving our people away? I'm not going to call all of them. There's 6,000 people. There's 365 days. Do the math. I cannot stay that much on the phone every day.

It's not going to happen. So the posts have to take the responsibility for this. If you have people that's not wanting to sign back up, ask them why. Ask them why.

Because I did do a little bit of research in my district at one time. One of the things I got from it was, "Well, I went to my post, and he said this," and I quote, "Why are you here? You don't look like a veteran." We don't deal with that. You can't say things like that. Welcome them.

Sergeant-at-Arms, do your job. I'll tell you right now the Department of Oklahoma has probably one of the best sergeant-at-arms because he makes sure, every time I'm up here talking, he goes (indicated). "Stop talking." He does his job. That's what I fully expect.

Make the phone calls. Find out why your people are walking out the door. Get the retention up. Retention should be about 75 to 80 percent right now, not 68 -- was the last number that I saw. I mean, we're close, but we need to get that bigger. And then we can continue working on trying to recruit new members. But let's get that 95 to 98 percent retention. That's what drives up. That's what helps us. Get the people back in our posts.

Any questions on that? And I will be sending out the percentages of your retention, but like I said, I do have a concern. That does not mean you stop. Don't

stop. June 30th is your deadline date. You don't stop until that date, and even then it's not done.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: Commander?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes?

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: Without coming to the microphone, may I make one request? If you're sending something to my post address, there is no one there, ever, except on a meeting night. Do away with that post address. If you want something to reach my post, send it to me. If you don't send it to me, they don't get it. If you send it to my district commander, I will never see nor have I since he became commander. And that's probably not just District 4.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Commander?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Hang on. I'm thinking. My brain's -- you can probably smell the smoke up here right now.

John, if I do that, if I send it to your address, which I don't have a problem with -- yes, I understand now. Yeah, we can do that at the department level, but at the National level, we always have to have the information for that post. So we kind of have to separate that out. But, yes, we can do that.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: When I do my post data report, I put my e-mail address on it, so

National has it. I get e-mails from them.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: I don't know about your e-mail. I have several e-mail accounts, as many of you know. Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. I forward all of that to my other e-mail. So you might check and see if you can forward that e-mail to wherever you want it to go since nobody's monitoring it, and that way you'll get to see it. I just make that as a suggestion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Jim?

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Jim Rees, 6B Commander. We use a post e-mail -- which is a good thing -- so when I can unplug, the next person can take over and it's there. They also ask for the commander's e-mail and your adjutant's so you have multi e-mail that reaches the leadership of that post, and that's what we should be using.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Agreed. Commander Martin and myself, that's what happened just recently. He had a talokcommander@gmail.com. I shifted it over. I changed the password and did everything I'm supposed to. So I started sending out e-mails, and I'm sure Commander Martin was probably going "What are you talking about?" Because if you don't change it on your end of the receipt, it still shows him as being the commander. So

you have to update your system. Because I didn't find out about this until just a few days -- probably a day ago. I'm like, "What are you talking about? Commander Martin's not doing it."

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: That's the new thing that's on that e-mail now?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Oh. That's another one. I don't know who this is talcommander@gmail.com.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's a spam.

PDC MARTIN: It's spam e-mail.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I don't know. But please do not mess with that one, either.

PDC MARTIN: No. It's spam.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah.

DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER EAST MATHES-KERR: Patricia Mathes-Kerr, Vice Commander East. I have received, like, eight, and they all sound like him. AI's caught him. And so, this AI thing is being weaponized, and they're using him in different e-mails. If you go scroll to the e-mail coming in, you'll see there are a whole bunch of numbers. It will say post president, command post, a whole bunch of numbers. Guys, block and delete. It is a spam. And they sound like they're trying to get you "Hey, do you have time to call?"

Right after our summer convention, I got one that

said, "Hey, I need you for a minute." It sounded just like him, the same way he would verbalize stuff. So I said, "Dude, did you send me an e-mail? Do we need to meet? Is there an emergency?" And he's like "I don't know what you're talking about."

So, no, it is spam, and it's coming from outside the United States. There's no recourse for us on that end unless you get in with INTERPOL.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Unintelligible.)

DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER EAST MATHES-KERR: Yeah, we don't need gift card. Please don't do that. And don't send them any.

So we do know that there are spam e-mails coming through that have Commander Woods' name all over it, and it sounds like him, too. Always follow up if you have a question.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you.

Yeah, it was three days after the election, and we started seeing those. People were calling the department. People were calling me. I'm like "Nope, that's not me."

DETACHMENT SAL COMMANDER THOMAS: It's happening on the detachment side, too.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah.

Rich, whatcha got?

DISTRICT DEC REP CONN: Richard Conn, District 1A DEC. So, to me, what it just sounds like you said -- correct me if I'm wrong -- but the website has been infiltrated out of the country by AI?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER MARTIN: No. What it is, anyone, all eight billion people on the planet, can access our website. They can go to that website and say, "Oh, look at that." Or they see the things that we do on Facebook and "Hey, there's a new commander at the American Legion. Half the people probably don't know who it is." So they start -- they spoof it. They use that with our names and with a different e-mail address and numbers. Like she said, there's numbers. One I saw was from me from the UK. I've never lived in the UK in my life.

DISTRICT DEC REP CONN: But they found it from the website?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes. But they use my name with their own e-mail. And we can't do anything about it because it's a public website.

Yes, Don?

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Don Kuntze, Post 353. About a week and a half ago, I got an e-mail from Jamie Jannett, Adjutant. What's with that? She's been gone a long time.

PDC MARTIN: Don, check in your address book on your local computer. If you've got the adjutant's e-mail saved under Jamie Jannett, it's going to come every time to your computer as Jamie Jannett.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Mine's going to change it? Oh, yeah?

PDC MARTIN: You have to change it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah, you have to change it.

PDC MARTIN: Because it doesn't recognize the name. It recognizes the e-mail address.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Right.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Oh. Okay. So I'm going to get a big hammer, and I'm going to strike any key.

(Laughter.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Don, mine still shows Carl.

PDC MARTIN: Right. But you have to change it on your end.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Okay. Got it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All right. Is there anything else under New Business? Anything that I forgot? Any brags that anybody wants to do?

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Yeah. Mike Harris,

District Commander, 5A. For the last two or three years, we invariably have had issues on when mid-winter convention and when summer convention is going to be held. Last year, we had a date in July chosen, and then something happened and it got moved forward.

I've been thinking about this for at least the last year and a half, but since this is a good time to bring this up, I think this body needs to accept two weekends in the year. And if you really think about what I'm getting ready to suggest, it makes complete, perfect sense. I suggest that the summer convention be held the first weekend in June every year, bar none, the first weekend in June. There is nothing going on in that weekend. You get finished with Memorial day. You have the entire summer to plan your vacation. And the summer convention will be done.

Our biggest complaint with summer conventions is, right when we get done, we've got to gear up and go to National Convention. There's not a whole lot of time if we have conventions in July. So that's why I suggest doing it the first weekend in June every year, bar none.

DETACHMENT SAL COMMANDER THOMAS: Boys State, Boys Nations doesn't allow it.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Boys State is May 24th through May 31st, is it not?

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: This is the exception this year.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Which means it's the last weekend in May because it covers Memorial Day.

DETACHMENT SAL COMMANDER THOMAS: Not this year, but most years.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Well, you can adjust that if you need to, but I still say it needs to be held the first weekend in June.

Moving forward, the mid-winter convention needs to be held the first weekend in December, that way you don't have to worry about all the snow and ice and hazardous driving conditions in January. But if you hold it the first weekend in December, you're done with Thanksgiving, and you're plenty time out before Christmas, and then you still have all these months in between these conventions to plan your spring and fall conferences, and you're not trying to do everything within a month and a half.

My suggestion, and I think we ought to move forward with it. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you.

I will let you know on this. Also, there's something else that comes up in August that a lot of people don't think about unless you're a department officer. Once you roll out of your elections in July,

you roll right into the membership planning and activities, and your MPA (phonetic), and your membership stuff that has to go on around the first week, week and a half of August.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: John Bloxom, Post 126. New Business. Summer convention site location. Can we discussion it now?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We sure can. Thank you.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: There was a selection committee or a study group put together to find a suitable site for the summer convention. The adjutant sent out a request for proposals to multiple cities, anything big enough to handle us, chambers of commerce, hotels, and they responded, eight of them. Eight hotels came back and unfortunately not all eight of them were capable. But the committee went out and revisited, checked the hotels, looked at their proposals, eliminated four. We had four left. We eliminated the Marriott in Tulsa. We eliminated the Renaissance Hotel in Tulsa.

The Renaissance looks great on the outside. The proposal looked good, but they just entered a year long revitalization of the hotel. You can't host a convention there when you're rebuilding your building.

We looked at what they were charging us for, what we

could bargain about. "Do we need to rent all of your AV equipment? Can we use our own?" Yes, we can in some. No, you can't in others. "What's your room rate? Can you give us per diem?" The answer is yes in the ones that we've talked to. In all of them, no. "Do you charge us for parking? Do you have a parking facility? What's your tax rate? What's your meeting space rental? Can we bargain on that? What's your cost of a banquet? Can we bargain on that? Are there any discounts available?"

Well, we came up with two that we'd like to recommend that we consider. But before we enter into any contracts -- or, the adjutant enters into a contract, he needs to do a little more bargaining without all the rest of us involved.

I'll get down to the point. We found two: Warren Place in Tulsa and the Grand Casino in Shawnee. Both of them will offer us per diem. Today is $110 per room per day. Both of them will give us free parking. Both of them run, basically, the same on their tax rate. The Warren Place is $18.10 and Grand is $17.88, based upon their community. So, basically, our room rate per night would be at Warren Place $128.16; the Shawnee Grand Casino's $128.88 -- a wash.

"Hospitality suites, do you have them? Do you

charge for them, or can you just give them to us?" They both have them. They both charge $110.00. So that's an even.

Meeting space rental: The Warren Place says they'll give it to us but we have to meet a food and beverage and board. So we have to have so many rooms, we have to have so much food and so much beverage. It's really reasonable. The food and beverage is 15,000.

The Grand Casino says "We want," basically, "10,000 to rent our meeting space, but if you meet your food and beverage, we'll drop it down to 4,000." That's a 6,000 drop right off the bat. They want a food and beverage count of 20,000, so there's a $5,000 difference. Okay.

Estimated cost, $15,110 if we meet our food and beverage at the Warren Place in Tulsa. The Grand Casino would be 24,000 plus or minus a couple hundred bucks.

They can both offer us the dates we asked for in July. The problem is the Warren Place is in Tulsa -- the distance to travel from the west, northwest, and southwest, and the south. The Grand Casino is centrally located. So we have a choice. Do we want to have a centrally located meeting, or do we want to do something in Tulsa? Both places are willing to give us the exact same treatment on a three-year contract, no change.

So I present to you the two recommendations: the

Warren Place in Tulsa or the Grand Casino. We need a vote.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: John, does Warren Place offer free breakfast like the....

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: No. They do not. No, they do not, but --

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Well, the Grand Casino doesn't either.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: No, they don't. But we have to meet the food and beverage.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Okay.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: The adjutant has figured out a way to use breakfast at the Warren, and I don't know what we'll do at the Grand Casino. The Warren will allow us to have our own breakfast, like a buffet, for a set price. The adjutant would sell the tickets to it. If you don't have a ticket, you don't eat. If you go into their breakfast buffet, it's a flat 20 bucks. The Grand Casino will set us up a buffet. I just don't know what it is. Okay? So that's part of meeting that 20,000 -- or, $15,000.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: You said the Warren is 15,000?

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: The 15,000 is at Warren, yes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Okay.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: Now, like I said, the Warren is in Tulsa, but it's a beautiful facility. It has all the space that we need. It's in a park-like environment. If you've ever been in Tulsa, you know where the Saint Francis Hospital is. It's right across the street in that big park area. There's a restaurant in the hotel, but right in the grounds around it, there's seven. Across the street half a block, there's another food industry. LaFortune Park is across the street, so, if I need to run, jog, play golf, it's right there. So it's a good place to go. And like I say, park industry, and a parking garage. They have a swimming pool. They have an exercise room. They welcome children. If you want to go outside on the patio, they welcome it. The hallway or vendor booth are free. We control it. There's an advantage there.

At the Grand Casino, all the vendors came inside the main ballroom. Okay?

So that's the two options. What do you want to do? So we just need to decide.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Would the main hall at the Warren be big enough to put the vendor booths around the outside like they do at the Grand Casino?

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: On the interior

of the building of the conference room, no. But they have one-fourth the width of this room, length-wise, right outside the door. So you can set it up in the hall out there and still have walking space.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Where that hallway is -- and I've got a method to the madness of why I'm asking. Where that hallway is, is that the only entrance and exit to the main hall?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: It is. Yes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Okay. And the reason I ask -- like I said, there's a method to this madness -- if you're going to be passing all the vendor booths going in and out of the main hall, I don't see an issue with having it out in the hallway. Whereas, at the Grand Casino, they were (unintelligible) other ways you could get out of that main hall.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Hey, guys? You need to be talking into the mic. Stand up or talk louder or something because she's having trouble following. Yeah.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: I'll share the mic with you.

With the Grand Casino, if you -- because we had, the last times we were out there, we had the vendor booths at the back side around the end. When we had breaks, that kept the body of the meeting in the hall, and those

vendors could still operate and still have -- be able to talk to. But that's why I was asking you about the hallway, coming and going. They'd still have to be able to sell their goods.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: Yes --

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Thank you.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: -- I understand the question. The main ballroom is split right down the middle. And then each half of the main ballroom --

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Speak into the mic, please, John. We can't hear you here.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: The main ballroom is split in the middle and then split again. That's all controlled out of the doors over there (indicated). Okay? If you go back to the breakout rooms, there's doors on either end. So I could go out another hall. But I control those doors, so those two -- so, A, B, C, D, E, F; A, C, and F will go through those doors, these over here (indicated). The main hall is off to that side (indicated), so they'd have to come around. Yes.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: I just have a quick question. Curtis Deer, District 2B. There was a reason we left the Grand Casino.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: Yes.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Have those issues been resolved, or are we going to end up revisiting those in another year?

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: What was the issue?

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: They weren't cooperative.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: They're very cooperative. They always have been. Now, many not to an individual.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: I've heard that, from what I was told, the reason why we couldn't use them anymore is because they were becoming uncooperative and jacking the prices up.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Scuttlebutt.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Well, we left. We voted away from them.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: No. That's not the reason we left.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Okay. What was the reason?

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, District 1B. I know that they went under construction and that was a problem. Our auxiliary had to go all the way around outside and back. So that's probably done by

now. And then the next year, they were doing construction on their -- where we ate. And so, that became an issue. There was no place to eat.

So both of those would be a limited time, but it was just year after year, which frustrated us.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: Those problems have been resolved. The buffet area that we went to is now five different buffets. You still go to the same point to get to it. You still have the two upstairs. You still have the Oriental place downstairs. You still have the breakfast thing. Breakfast is the problem.

Now, when the adjutant goes in and negotiates with them, he should be able to negotiate with that contract. Because that breakfast buffet is a contract to the hotel to extend their hours.

At the Warren Place, it's not a problem. We control the hours because we're going to run the buffet with the adjutant.

So I think we can get what we want at either place. It's just a matter of what the preference is.

The only problem with the people complaining about the casino -- no one twists your arm and makes you go over and put your quarter in the machine.

(Laughter.)

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: And at the

time, casino, I get coffee free if I walk around to the vending machine.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And ice cream.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: And ice cream. At the Warren place, I'm going to buy a service. It will have coffee, tea, water, and I'm going to pay for it.

I mean, like I say, I have two places that are basically equal. Actually, there's a third place. There is a downtown version of the Warren Place. We can get almost the same thing down there, but you're downtown, and I mean it is downtown Tulsa. And you're inside the IDL. There's two ways in, two ways out. And it's directly across the street from the convention center. There is nothing there, no place to go until I get a few blocks, then there's all kinds of stuff down there. But there's no transportation. And you're going to place $15 a night to park the car.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: First of all, I want to thank you because that was an amazing presentation, so your committee did amazing.

Second, I would love to hear some people from the west. Because, even though I live in Tulsa and that would be ideal, we're one family. So, if I could hear from some of the districts and your thoughts that are all

the way over there.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: I don't like Tulsa.

(Laughter.)

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Elmo May, Post 146, District 7 Commander. Okay. If I have any chance of getting any of my people from out west to go to a state conference, we've got to go to Shawnee. I'm just saying they're not going to drive four hours to go to Tulsa for four or five days. I can't even hardly get them to come to district meetings. You know? So, if I have any chance of getting them to go, it's going to have to be Shawnee.

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN STEWART: I'm here.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: I know you, Bobby. You go to everything.

(Laughter.)

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: And we really attempted to find one in the south, one in the southeast. The one at Durant is very helpful. Sure, they'll take us. But how many people are going to go to Durant? The same complaint except it's much further. Now, would I go to Durant, to Calera to the casino down there? You bet you. It's a nice place that offers everything.

But I understand what the complaints are. Can I go down 35 to Thackerville? Sure. Except they said, "We

don't want you. Sorry. Thank you for asking. But we're busy." Can I go to a couple of the others in the Tulsa area, yeah, they'll take us. The Hard Rock, no, not interested. Can I go up 35 toward Wichita, yeah, but the only thing up there that remotely --

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER MCNEAL: Hey, John?

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: -- comes close is Tonkawa.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER MCNEAL: It's going to be better if you were facing her and speaking into that mic. She's having a real rough time.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: Okay. Let me change sides.

If you want to go north, I can look at the Osage Casino in Tulsa, which is too small. It doesn't have the facilities to house everything we want to do. It's more like the hotel on northwest -- up in the northwest, that little Embassy Suites up there. I can't find anything big enough west. So where do I go?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, you've done great, John.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: You've done great.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: We have very limited choices of where we can put a convention.

DISTRICT TREASURER MCPHERSON: Sam McPherson,

Treasurer. I really don't care. Like I said, I think the committee did a fine job with what they were able to put together.

I personally think that it, especially a convention, should be a destination. And so, I think it could be anywhere. I know there were some people they ran into, actually, Texas VFW down in Durant.

Was it Durant?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Durant.

DEPARTMENT TREASURER MCPHERSON: So they came from another state. I wouldn't want to go to another state, but I figure anywhere in the state should be a destination for a convention. That shouldn't really matter. But that's just my opinion.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: So you're looking for a motion?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah. If you want to feel a little weird, walk into an I-HOP and see a bunch of Texas Legionnaires or VFW members with their covers on.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Are you looking for a motion?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, District 1B. I motion that we have this summer's

convention at Shawnee.

DISTRICT DEC REP CONN: Richard Conn, 1A DEC. I second that motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Here's the question that I want to pose to you. We've got a motion on the floor to accept Shawnee as our future site for the summer convention. We have a first and a second. By doing that, you realize that you eliminate the Warren Place completely. You understand; right?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Okay. So is there any further discussion?

DISTRICT DEC REP CONN: Richard Conn, District 1A DEC. That is for a three-year contract; correct?

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: We're doing it right now for this summer. But we'll go out again and renegotiate. And they've all specified they're interested for three years, identified their interested for our three years, every hotel. And then he will negotiate a contract for a three-year period. Now, that's both the convention and the conference.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah. The reason we're doing that is so that you get to see them. Most of us has been to the Grand. We understand the Grand.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: We started out

working just for this summer convention. But the RFP says, "We're looking at changing this to a three-year site. Are you willing to give us this?" And when we talked to them, they said yes. In fact, the put it in writing right across the bottom of their proposal.

Now, there was one hotel in Tulsa that could not, but it was a week later in July, which is what we didn't want to do.

But they're all willing to accept a three-year contract. He will have to negotiate that.

DISTRICT DEC REP WATSON: Larry Watson, 6B Rep. Is this location off the table in the summertime?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No. Now, if we vote today and we vote to go to the Grand, then it is. That's why I'm asking. I'm almost tempted to give you five minutes to discuss it amongst yourselves for the very simple fact we've seen this in the past. One motion is made. We accept. And then everybody assumes that that is what we're going to do. If there are two locations, we have to give both locations the fair opportunity and the membership to determine that. Now, if it's an overwhelming -- if it's a unanimous aye, then it's the Grand. If it's 50/50, I think we may have to look at it again with raising hands and determining which one we really want.

DISTRICT DEC REP WATSON: Well, the locale here, and if it's a 10,000 or 15,000 savings, I think this is something that certainly needs to be taken into consideration. And it's a wonderful facility. It's the first time I've been in here.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes. Well, again, this is just for one summer. This is the summer. There's nothing that says we can't bring it up again, or, at a future date, coming back here for another mid-winter.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Rick Redden, Adjutant. I just wanted to clarify a couple of things in case you got confused. We asked for a one-year, this summer only, proposal from a dozen different places. I also at the same time said "We would consider looking at '26, '27, and '28 as a package deal," not 2025. It stands alone. But I was trying to give them a little carrot. We would never contract for three years without the DEC's agreement that that's what we should do.

Based on what Mike said now, the dates are an issue, well, we can't change the dates for this summer for sure. At the same time, if we can contract both mid-winter and convention for three years, based on other departments' experience, we can have a significant discount. On the other hand, we're stuck at the same place for three

years. So it's a lot to think about.

But right now what I'm really concerned about is what are we going to do this July?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: So the motion is to go to the Grand Casino for 2025. I have a motion, I have a second, again, for the Grand Casino, 2025. Is there any further discussion?

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Only for summer --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Summer 2025.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: -- of this year. That's it. This year. Nothing else. I don't know why we're going back to the same place we already know.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Steve?

DETACHMENT SAL COMMANDER THOMAS: Steve Thomas, SAL Detachment Commander. Mr. Redden, I know in the past we have always had a motion that is allowed for the detachment to hold their own standalone. We have not decided on our date because we are waiting for this body to decide on what the TAL side was going to do. With the negotiation that you have there, is that setting aside if the auxiliary and the SAL are there to be able to accommodate those rooms as well?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Yes.

DETACHMENT SAL COMMANDER THOMAS: Thank you.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: That was a yes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Any further discussion? If not, I'll call for the vote. All in favor for the Grand Casino, 2025, say aye.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Raise your hands. All any favor, raise your hands.

(Hands raised.)

DEPARTMENT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS LAGER: Twenty-two in favor.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Twenty-two in favor.

All those opposed?

(Hands raised.)

DEPARTMENT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS LAGER: Six opposed.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, Ed.

So we will be going to the Grand Casino, 2025 summer.

The dates that we were looking, I believe, was the 3rd through the 9th -- no, correction -- 9th through the 13th. That will be on our website. That will be posted. So please review that, keep track of that, Grand Casino, 9th through the 13th of July 2025.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Commander, can we have a discussion on my suggestion on whether it's going to be carried forward? I understand this summer can't be done, but --

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER MCNEAL: Can't hear you.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Mike, you've got to get up to the mic, please.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER MCNEAL: This is part of the minutes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Thanks, John.

Mike Harris, District Commander 5A. Can we have a discussion on my suggestion on having the mid-winter and the summer convention the same weekend of both December and June and get that taken care of to where it's going forward? I do understand this summer it's locked in place in July. But we need to start with December '25 and go forward with that.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Mike, I would be kind of hesitant. I agree with you, because you and I have talked offline, so you know my feeling, personally, on that. But I think it has to be from the standpoint of the department heads and the department to investigate that to come up with a better set of dates. I agree we should probably shift it to the left just a little bit for the very simple fact, like you said, we are rushing,

we are doing things, but we cannot override or interfere with any other organization, such as the Sons, or anything like that, or even Boys State. But we will look at it.

I would ask that you bring this back up, after we've reviewed it for the next couple of months, to bring it up at DEC 4. Would you be acceptable to that?

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Yes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Rick Redden, Adjutant. I want to remind you-all that our constitution calls for the next convention to be announced and determined at the current one. We have missed that by six months. We should have, last summer, settled where convention was going to be. Let's stick to that. That means this spring I need to start finding what we're going to do for '26. Okay?

And I would like at least a brief discussion about whether I should pursue a three years notion or not and whether or not I should pursue mid-winter and convention at the same location. Looking for direction. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Rick, I think, on what you're asking, I think we can actually propose a motion right now. The dates are always going to be moveable. The idea of having it at the -- the mid-winter

and the summer, that's a hard and fast. That's all we're asking, is, "Hey, can we do mid-winter, summer, at a single location for the next three years?"

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: I don't know if he heard you, but I'll answer it. Yes, you can. But it's a whole new request for proposals because the hotels have to weigh in, and they have pretty standard business. Okay? But if we want to do that, I don't have a problem with the first week of December. I do have a problem with the first week of June simply because all schools are not out in the state of Oklahoma. That's a problem we have with Boys State. We have to get districts to allow kids to leave school early in order to attend.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: And Boys Nation also.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I believe a motion, if we were going to do one, would be simply to state that we have our adjutant do the negotiation for a contract for the same location for the next three years without the dates being on there. Because, again, those dates will change. There could be flexibility. There has to be something that we can look at.

I think what Rick is really wanting is that we confirm that "Hey, we want mid-winter, summer, same location, and we want to be able to negotiate a three-year contract with them."

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is that both locations?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: What?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Both locations would be at the same -- or both events would be at the same location.

DISTRICT DEC REP WATSON: Point of order. Larry Watson, 6B Representative. I understand this to be a separate issue of discussion to be opened up. I probably shouldn't have sat down earlier. I should have continued on. We just got hit with $30,000 we didn't know we were going to have to pay. If we can save $15,000 or possibly even make $15,000, then I think that's something that needs to be pursued and we're a little premature in committing for three years.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Rick Redden, Adjutant. Just to clarify, not only am I looking for guidance on the three years but also approximate dates. The hotels will want to know approximate dates. So that is a part of the issue. Thank you.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: Misunderstanding: The 15,000 and 20,000 is coming out of your and my pocket. We just guarantee it. So what we have to be careful of, if I have 300 rooms reserved, and I only fill 299 of them, I bought the other one. So that's part of that 15,000. My food cost is a set cost.

If we're going to have a banquet, then we have to guarantee such a price. So combining our rooms and our food, we have to reach those costs. So that's coming out of your and my pocket unless we don't meet the number we set. Then we have to eat that cost. We can actually do a convention at the Warren Place and, other than paying for my breakfast and my room, not pay for anything else. But that's you and me paying, not the Legion. Is that clear?

DISTRICT DEC REP WATSON: Sure, it's clear.

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: Okay.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor is open.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Commander?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes?

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Don Kuntze, 353. Why don't we let the adjutant bring all the possibilities to the table -- having the convention and mid-winter in one spot, having the convention in one spot and the mid-winter right here, several different ways we can do it. We're sucking air on money, so we've got to be frugal. And let's bring the possibilities that we have or can get. And we've got six months to do it.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: If our retention continues to go down, we're looking at it.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Yeah.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Rick Redden, Adjutant. I think that's a perfectly fine notion, but I do not want the whole DEC doing that. So let's create a committee or use the one we currently have, beef it up as possible.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Bingo.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: But let's not try to get 40 of these people involved. But that's all.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Oh, of course not. Never was intended that way, Rick.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, District 1B. When we're looking at these and we're talking about numbers, a caution occurred to me that if you go to Tulsa and you're required to have numbers, your biggest turnout will stay home and show up in the morning. So I didn't think of that before, but as you're talking about this and requiring a certain amount of numbers, they come out of -- at least this last summer, we had to take four more rows than was allotted to us -- they come out of District 1B, and we sit together, 1A.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I agree with everything you've said here. I think the committee should be the one making that and bringing it back to you. I do not believe we need a motion at this time for that, but I would like for you to think about it. I

would like to have something that our adjutant can have by DEC 4 in about two months. He works pretty diligently. Let's give him all the hands we can get.

Is there anything else to come before New Business?

Yes?

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Dale, can you give me a second?

Jack Sikes, 3B. Mother Nature saw that I prayed to the porcelain god here for a couple of days, so I missed your district training, but I would like to back up to the district revitalization. I, out of my own ignorance, have learned recently all of these different reports that are available to the district commanders in Personify. If I'm speaking Greek to anybody, you really need to dig into that and, inasmuch as you can, make all or anybody in your district have access to that database for new web signup, retention. The reports that you're talking about, the district commanders can pull those.

Dale, as you taught me.

You can also assign the responsibilities so that anybody in your district can go in and pull those same reports. So it's not like you're out there by yourself, or shouldn't be, whenever it comes to your revitalization. I just thought I would bring that up.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you.

Somebody else was approaching earlier. Okay.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Amanda just asked me to clarify this. Mike Harris, District Commander, District 5A. You said summer convention was the 9th through the 13th?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I believe so.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: When did we move to a five day summer convention?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I'm sorry. Our pack-in day is included in there. I'm sorry.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Okay. So the summer convention is the 10th through the 13th?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Yes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Well, some of you guys need extra training.

(Laughter.)

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Yeah, some of us do, but I'm sitting here looking at the calendar. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, Mike.

DISTRICT DEC REP CONN: Richard Conn, District 1 DEC. Could we get together before -- like the weekend before the convention, go through all of the equipment, make sure it's in good working shape before we take it down there? Then, that way, we will not have this

catastrophe as well.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Absolutely.

Let's take a 15-minute break. All rise. HAND SALUTE. TWO.

(WHEREUPON, a brief recess was held. Thereafter, the following transpired:)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All rise. With the colors of the nation still in place, HAND SALUTE. TWO.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. Well, we got all the hard part off. Now we're down to the easy part; right?

I mailed out some information to the DEC -- hopefully everybody got it -- addressing --

PDC MARTIN: Are we in executive session, Dale?

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: No.

PDC MARTIN: I'm just looking at the slide behind you.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: We may or may not go into executive session. I'll leave that up to you folks. What we're going to talk about right now we don't need to be in executive session. The next one, could be but I don't think so. The third one, maybe, maybe not. The fourth, fifth sixth -- no, I'm just kidding.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYES: Article X. I

sent out information to you from the judge advocate. I told them in the Constitution and By-Laws Committee I tried to get as much information from the national judge advocate in writing as I could. Some of it was on the telephone. I'll try to summarize it and make it as simple as possible.

Basically, the national judge advocate has ruled that discipline, such as suspension and expulsion from a post of the American Legion, the post members, to include post officers, is reserved to the post based on the discipline and post members section of National By-Laws, Article IV Section 1. Simply stated, the DEC does not have the authority to discipline a post member or a post officer.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Say it again.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: The DEC is not authorized -- does not have the authority to discipline a post member or a post officer. That is a post function according to their national by-laws, Article IV Section 1.

If a member -- this is something they told me -- if a member, including an officer, is violating the law, they should be referred to local law enforcement.

If we have somebody that's doing something, in the past we've had them come into the DEC, and say, "You need

to go investigate this. You need to go take action." Okay? If they're violating the law, it's the law enforcement.

It was brought up earlier -- I'm getting off track now -- about them not paying their taxes. Okay? Not my problem. Not paying their taxes is a post problem between them and the tax commission. Okay?

If they have an officer having a problem, the post can take action to remove that officer from their position. They can also take action to suspended or expel a post member, including an officer, from the post.

If they expel them from the post, in essence, they expel them from the American Legion because you've got to be a member of the post to be a member of the American Legion.

The Department Executive Committee is the appealing authority for the post disciplinary actions. The DEC can either sustain the punishment or send it back to the post and say, "No. You didn't do it right. You've got to do it over again." Again, it is a post problem.

A member that has been expelled -- this one gets a little interesting. If they have expelled a member, like I said, we are the appealing authority. We can uphold that. However, if that member has been expelled from a post, they have the right to come back and request to be

moved to another post. They have to do that to the post, ask the post, "Can I be transferred to another post?" If the post says yes, even though they were expelled from that post, they can be put into another post. If the post says no, the person that was expelled, the member, can request the DEC to override that and let them go to another post. The DEC can make the decision either yes they can or, no, we're going to leave you out. The DEC decision on these appeals is final. It doesn't go to National.

This is what really got it started: I have never understood, since I've been on the DEC, how we can tell somebody that they can appeal a DEC decision to the DEC. It didn't make sense to me. So I asked that question of National, which is what got this started. And they said, "It's real simple. Your DEC should not be doing that to start with." Okay? So that's how we got started on this.

The DEC may take disciplinary action against a department officer and possibly a district officer. That action cannot be to expel them from the Legion because, as I just said, that is a post function. That is reserved for the post. We can remove them from the office. We can suspended them from their office, but we cannot take action on their membership.

So where does this leave us? National has ruled that our Article X as written is not consistent with their guidance. We can no longer apply those portions of Article X where it talks about us going and taking action against a post officer regardless of what the post has done. That is a post function.

So we've got to make a decision. What do we want to do with Article X? I say you have to make a decision of what you want to do with Article X. Basically, we can do one of three things: We can remove all of that portion of Article X where it talks about taking actions against an individual. You can go back and revise it and say that you want to be able to take action against a department officer to remove them from their position or suspend them from their position. And you can include the district officers if you want to do so.

The decision that you need to make now -- and I'm going to be looking for a motion on that. The decision you need to make will give us guidance -- us being me and the Constitution and By-Laws Committee and perhaps the Internal Affairs -- to write the rules of the DEC on what we've got to change. But I don't feel like I can do anything, nor can they do anything, unless the DEC tells us which direction you want to go.

Before you say anything on it, I will remind you

that if we're going to take action as the DEC against a department officer or against a district officer, it should be for a serious charge. It shouldn't be just because of the fact that they did something -- made a minor infraction or upset somebody, for example, if they're lying, cheating, and stealing, or something like that. Okay? So this needs to be a serious charge.

At this point I'd ask, what is your pleasure?

PDC MARTIN: Brett Martin, Past Department Commander. Dale, I've just got one question. I understand everything crystal. I read that quite a few times at home. And you're right, we need to change it. But if we change it, there's ramifications. And what I'm saying by that is because we've processed some people over the past couple of years that, certainly, you would have to say you would want to review those again. Do we go back and look at it, or do we as the body say, no, from this day forward?

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: In my opinion, I don't know that we have an obligation to go back and review all of the disciplinary actions that were taken. But if somebody comes back and asks, you know, we're not going to put them back in an officer position, for example, and we're not going to come back and reinstate them as an officer.

If they've been expelled from the American Legion and they come back and ask the post that expelled them -- well, first of all, they don't have a post that expelled them. Okay? That's one of the problems that we've had --

PDC MARTIN: Right.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: -- that the DEC has expelled somebody so they can't go back to post. If they come back and ask the DEC, I think the DEC would have to make a decision whether they're going to honor that or not honor that.

The question I asked to National was "Does this need to be done within the time frames of the appeal?" And they said no.

PDC MARTIN: Yeah.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: So they can come back at a later date and say "I want to be reassigned to Post X, Number Y," or whatever --

PDC MARTIN: Right.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: -- and we'll have to make a decision.

In my opinion, the simple answer to your question, it would be if somebody comes in and goes forward, then we'd have to address it. Going back and digging up graves, I don't think we should do that.

PDC MARTIN: Well -- and why I ask this is because Ms. Cruice has asked this question multiple times about Joe Meyer. Post 1 never took any action on Joe Meyer. Joe Meyer was transferred to 308, but we as the DEC banished him. So, if we vote on this and we ratify this, I think Mr. Meyer should be put back in good standing and good faith as part of 308.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: In my opinion, it doesn't matter whether you ratify it or not because National's already said that our action was improper.

PDC MARTIN: Yes, sir, I agree with you. But we as a DEC have not said our action was improper. Do you understand what I'm saying?

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: I understand.

PDC MARTIN: No one has told him, "Hey, Ollie Ollie in come free."

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Yeah.

PDC MARTIN: You know?

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Well, in that particular case -- and like I said, it would be taken on a case-by-case basis. I am familiar with that one.

PDC MARTIN: I know you are.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: I don't think it's going to be a problem. The only problem is he was

actually requested to go to another post.

And I think we need to make a decision and get that done. Okay?

PDC MARTIN: Okay.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: But the bottom line, without getting into personalities and individual cases, I think we need to take it from this point forward and handle it whenever they come in and give us an appeal, and then we'll take care of it.

PDC MARTIN: Okay.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Now, when we make that decision, what should we look at? I had one person tell me, "Oh, well, the DEC made a decision. They're going to have to back it up. We need to look at what the charge was, look at what the action was, and make a decision at that time. They deserve due process."

PDC MARTIN: Yes, sir. You did a great job explaining this, Dale. Thank you.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, District 1B. So you're asking us to make a decision on which option. I guess I want to say, we remember Joe Meyer and things, but 141 also, right about the time I was -- we've expelled people --

DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER BLOXOM: Karen? Karen? And I'm not trying to shut you off.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: I don't want to say the wrong things.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEE CHAIR BLOXOM: We are in conflict in our constitution and by-laws with National. There is no option. When we are notified that we're in conflict, we must change our constitution and by-laws. It doesn't require a vote. But when we start discussing Joe Meyer, 141, and a whole bunch of others, you're opening up a bucket of worms you don't want to deal with. We change it. It becomes effective the date of the published revised American Legion, Department of Oklahoma, Constitution and By-Laws. You don't want to go where we're headed. You don't want to go there. We've already been in federal court.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: I don't disagree with you.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEE CHAIR BLOXOM: We don't want to go back there.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: I don't disagree with you, John. And I think that's basically what I said. We're not going to go back and dig up old graves. But if somebody comes to us and, basically, appeals or asks us to review that, we're going to have to review it. We can't go back and say "Well, we did it wrong and we're going to stick by our wrong decision," so

forth.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Jack Sikes, 3B. From my understanding on this, Commander, we have made an error that was against National's constitution and by-laws. In our by-laws and in National's, it clearly states anything that is contrary to National is null and void at that point. I don't think we need an amendment. I think we need to go in and correct our error in our constitution and by-laws and get in step with National.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: There's no question about that.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: As far as the graves being dug back up, I'm not about all of that. Let's get right with the law.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: There's no question about that. The question is, do you want to just remove the portion about individuals being disciplined by the DEC or do you want to clarify that the individuals being disciplined by the DEC must be a department and/or a district officer? That's the question.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Only after the post has taken the post action. If it's a post member, it's a post issue -- cut and dry.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: It depends on

what the issue was, Jack. You're talking about a department officer?

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: No, sir. I'm talking about posts.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Posts is cut and dry.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Absolutely.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: If it's a post officer or a post member, it is a post problem.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: So we don't need to rewrite that part.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, we do.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: We're not looking at Article XII of the by-laws. We're looking at Article X of our constitution which says that we can go in and take action against a -- it gives you about six different options, but, basically, it is a district or above officer or even a post officer; any post officer or above, any officer in the American Legion, we can take action against. We can no longer do that.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Check.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: But we can take action against some of them. Two of them being a department officer or a district officer.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Check.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: So we can take that.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Check.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: My question is, do you want to write it so we can continue to do that, or --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: -- do you want to take it out completely?

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: I defer to John.

(Laughter.)

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEE CHAIR BLOXOM: I think we have to correct it and make it like National. But we have to understand this: We have a newer judge advocate. He's a kindler, gentler guy, but he's also very, very good. The previous judge advocate -- some know who he is and some don't -- was a hang them high guy, and his interpretation of those goes along with what we have written.

I think, since we've been told in writing, simply give the Constitution and By-Laws Committee time and permission to rewrite it and make it correct. We don't need membership's approval. We don't need the DEC approval. We've been told by our higher headquarters "You're wrong. Fix it." Let's fix it.

As the chairman of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee as of today, I will call a meeting of the members, and we'll start working on it, and we'll have it done before summer.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Okay. The only thing I would disagree with you on is the part that National has come back and said is not valid or basically said we're not valid. That part needs to be taken out. Okay? But that will require us to change our constitution. Yes, we can say we're doing it because of the National, but I still think we need to take it back and change the constitution and let the members know what we did and why we did it.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEE CHAIR BLOXOM: I don't argue that. But they don't have a choice. Once National has defined it as in contradiction, we have no choice. We must correct regardless of what the membership says.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: You have to comply with that, which, in this case would be take out the part about post membership -- post officers. Because now it allows us, if you can get through the wording on it, to say that we are allowed to take it on any post officer, which is getting ready to come up in my next subject when we're talking about a post adjutant where

action was taken. Now, we will have to take that portion out of it. There's no question about that. If that's what you decide to do, then so be it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Gentlemen, at this point in time, we have exceeded our time limit for this discussion.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: We need to make a motion; right?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No. There's no motion that needs to be made.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Use your mic.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The constitution and by-laws has to be corrected in accordance with National.

PDC MARTIN: Use your mic, Hayden.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: But the question does need to be answered. Do you want to continue to take action against the department and district officers? And I think the consensus may be yes, but I need to make sure that we agree with that.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: What I was going to say is do we need to make a motion to say we want to fix that to match National's requirement?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No. There's no motion required for that. It has to be done. We don't

have a choice.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: I'll just point out to you that National doesn't really address us taking action against our officers anywhere that I have found in their constitution and by-laws. So I would love for somebody to show me in their constitution and by-laws where it says that we are authorized to take action against our department and district officers.

(Crosstalk.)

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Your question was, should district and department officers still be included in the writing? And my motion or my feeling, whatever -- I don't know what I'm supposed to do -- but is that it is not a blanket -- it needs to be specified. Because in Post 1's case, the violation was a post violation. It was not --- even though he wore a white hat, you should not be able to go after somebody who has a violation at the post level because he wears a white hat.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: The post is separate. Okay?

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: But he wore a white hat, and leaving that wording in there gave the authority.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEE CHAIR BLOXOM: No, it did not.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No. That's what we're trying to say. This is the classic example of what we're discussing here: If you're a blue hat and you're going across as a blue hat, you're a blue hat. If you're a white hat, you're going across as a white hat. But what happens, in this particular case, when you have a post commander who happens to be wearing, not a blue hat, but a white hat? That's where the issue becomes. We are on full agreement that should have been handled at the post. It should not have been done the way it was. We are in agreement with that.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: But the writing says it can be.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Currently. Currently, it does. That's why it needs to be changed. We're going to give John the opportunity to do as a committee chair to fix our constitution and by-laws so we are compliant with National.

Jim Quinn, please talk.

PDC/DISTRICT DEC REP QUINN: I'd like to address the Staff Judge Advocate, please?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

PDC/DISTRICT DEC REP QUINN: Dale, I think what we need to do is make a motion that we instruct the Constitution and By-Laws Committee to draft for the

approval and according to the constitution and let them come up with what they need to come up with and let the membership worry about it at the convention.

Is that what everybody's saying?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: No.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEE CHAIR BLOXOM: It's not a membership question.

PDC/DISTRICT DEC REP QUINN: No. I'm talking about the white hat issue, John.

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Microphone, please, Jim.

PDC/DISTRICT DEC REP QUINN: I'm trying to get this white hat issue into the conversation.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: John and I are having just a little bit of a disagreement on that. Because the way I read the constitution, it says amendments will be changed at convention. We're going to make an amendment to the constitution. Why we made it was because National told us that we were in violation. How we go about wording and fixing that is a different story. I think that National has told us we need to do an amendment. They did not tell us what to say. They did not tell us how to write it. And for that reason, I think it is an amendment, and I think that we need to take it as a change to the constitution. And John and I

disagree about that.

PDC/DISTRICT DEC REP QUINN: Well, I think that the committee needs to come up with some words and then the -- maybe I'm out of my depth here, but I'm thinking that it needs to be -- doesn't it need to be approved by the membership at the convention regardless?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: I say yes. John says no.

PDC/DISTRICT DEC REP QUINN: Okay. All right. Then I'm getting rocks from both sides, so I'm going to duck and sit down and shut up.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The issue becomes this: Is it necessary to write a resolution to change this? No. Does it need an amendment to change this? No. Because you don't use those, there's not necessity to vote. We give the opportunity to Constitution and By-Laws to come into compliance with National. That's all we're doing. That's it. We're not changing that to -- we're coming into compliance. We're not going against National. That's where I think the confusion is, kind of, lying. We're not doing anything that we're not supposed to be doing. We're actually trying to do things that we are supposed to be doing. So, therefore, it

doesn't require that.

Because what you're saying is we do a vote. Here's what you're saying. If we let John write that constitution in accordance with National, and then we come back and we vote and we decide not to vote for that, we're back out of compliance again. So why vote on something that you're already trying to be in compliance with?

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: You're just modifying it to bring it into accordance.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: You're just modifying it. That's a good word, "modified." That's all you're doing.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEE CHAIR BLOXOM: John Bloxom, Post 126. It is no different than when the state law changes. When the state law changes requiring us to have this man's position and to do a three year audit and to provide ten copies to the Secretary of State, we have no choice. We must meet that requirement, which changed our constitution and by-laws. Did we have to vote on it? No. The law changed. We must comply.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All right. Moving on. Next topic.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Next topic. This one gets a little bit iffy because we do have a

person's name attached to it. I don't think it requires an executive session, but we'll see.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can't hear you, Dale.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: What I'm getting ready to tell you is in the DEC minutes in DEC 4. So, if you want to go into executive session, that's fine with me, but what I'm getting ready to do is tell you what was in the DEC minutes from DEC 4.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: If it's got a person's name in it, you have to go to executive session.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: It's already public record.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: It's a public record. It's in DEC minutes.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Okay. Do you want me to continue?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: In DEC 4 on April 27, 2024, the commander at the time, Commander Martin, raised an issue about "Larry Talbott going outside the issue [sic] of proper chain of command," and asked for a vote from the DEC. There was no motion or second recorded in the minutes, and no action was specified in the DEC minutes. However, the vote was to investigate the actions of Talbott and the possible

disciplinary actions following an executive session. The DEC action was to follow it up by a letter from Judge Advocate Teel on May the 8th authorizing an internal affairs investigation of Talbott, who at the time was the post adjutant in Kingfisher, Post 5, in accordance with the by-laws in Article X Section 3. It should be noted that article and section does not reference the post officers. The constitution, in Article X Section 4, also referenced in the letter, have previously been interpreted to permit the DEC -- to prevent [sic] the DEC from disciplining any post officers. However, the National -- I'm messing up here. Okay. It was interpreted they could. The judge advocate has said we could not do that. Okay?

It is my understanding, except for the letter from the judge advocate, there was no written or signed change presented to initiate the action against him. It is also my understanding that he was not officially informed of the investigation, and no action has been taken on that investigation; the vote of the DEC was taken without a motion or a second; the action was not initiated in accordance with our established rules, and there, apparently, was no action taken on the investigation by either the previous or the current administration. The National JA has also ruled the DEC lacked authority to

discipline post members, including post officers.

Therefore, I would make the motion that the DEC terminate the investigation of Post 5 Adjutant Larry Talbott that was taken under the DEC 4.

Simply stated, I make the motion that we terminate that investigation.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: I second that motion. Karen Cruice, District 1B.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I have a first and a second. Is there any further discussions? No? All right. All in favor of terminating the investigation of Larry Talbott, Adjutant at Post 5, Kingfisher, say aye.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Very good. The ayes have it. The investigation will be terminated.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: We currently have another investigation that has just been completed. It was alleging misconduct by a department officer. However, before we move into the report, it's important that the DEC understands the procedure. Simply stated, in my humble opinion, in the past, we have sometimes confused investigations and hearings. Okay? So I'm

going to go down through what our rules are for the DEC to take a disciplinary action.

Written charges are presented to the department commander or the adjutant. That's according to the DEC Rule 7-H, paragraph 1.

Secondly, the charges are referred to the department judge advocate who will appoint an investigative committee. This is by-law Article X Section 3.

Third, the investigative committee will provide a report and a recommendation to the DEC. We're getting ready to do that in a few minutes. Okay? The DEC either decides to dismiss the allegations or proceed with a hearing. The DEC decision is final. And this is according to National By-Laws Article I Section 8 [sic].

If a trial is determined to be appropriate -- and I use the word "trial" instead of "hearing" because that's what you used in the DEC rules -- the DEC shall designate, appoint, and authorize a subcommittee to hear and make written findings of fact or recommendations. The accused is also entitled to present his or her case before the DEC as a whole. This is in the department constitution Article X Section 5.

The DEC is also required to ensure that a copy of the charge clearly stating the violation of the department constitution and by-laws based upon

disloyalty, neglect of duty, misfeasance, dishonesty, or conduct unbecoming an officer of the American Legion is provided to the accused at least 30 days prior to any trial. This is DEC Rule 7-H, paragraph 2(a).

The accused may also, upon the hearing within 30 days of the service of the charge -- within 30 days of charges upon him or her from the DEC, they may insist on a hearing -- and the full DEC is what I'm trying to say. This is DEC Rule 7-H paragraph 2(b).

We're going to be presented with a report in just a second. And after that -- that report be by the lead investigator, Doug Hale, and it will also include a recommendation. As previously stated, upon receiving the report from the DEC, the DEC must decide to either dismiss the charge or proceed with a hearing. If you proceed with a hearing, you need to set the date, time, and place, and give the accused 30 days.

Does everybody understand that?

Are we going to go into executive session now?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: Okay.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Just before you do, can I get an understanding to the appeal process to what you just said?

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: The appeal

process?

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Yes. The appeal process according to the rules of the DEC that the individual has to take if action is found negative toward him.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: I would have to go back and look that up, Jack, because I figured that could come out after the hearings.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Okay.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: It says here -- he's wanting me to read the appeal process. It's any member that has been disciplined has a right to appeal to the Department National Executive Committee whose decision on the appeal is final. The appeal must be in writing. If the punishment is suspension or expulsion -- which it won't be because of the fact they're already ruled that expulsion is not appropriate from the DEC level -- from the American Legion, the accused my also appeal personally before the appeals committee.

I made mine 14, Jack. You could have blown this up a little bit.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: The committee named by the department commander shall report its

findings and recommendation of the Department Executive Committee.

I think, simply stated, they can appeal to National. We've got to preserve all of the information. We've got to send it all out so they can make sure we did it right. That's what the long story is.

I purposefully stopped a while ago at the end of the decision after trial because if that is your decision to have a trial, then you're going to have 30 days to get that done, and I'm going to have 30 more of reading time. Okay?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you.

So, at this time, I will entertain a motion to go into executive session to discuss the disciplinary actions and any other items that need to be discussed during that time frame.

PDC MARTIN: I make the motion to go into executive session.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I have a first. Do I have a second?

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The first was done by Brett Martin, PDC, seconded by Curtis Deer.

DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE HAYNES: I would request that the investigative committee be allowed to

stay.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes, the investigative committee will be allowed to stay.

All others that are not part of the DEC, Department Executive Committee, must leave the room, please.

All rise. PRESENT ARMS. TWO.

(WHEREUPON, executive session was held from approximately 16:25 to 16:56 hours, and then a brief recess was held from approximately 16:57 to 17:07 hours. Thereafter, the following transpired in regular session:)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: HAND SALUTE. TWO. Please be seated.

We had one item of discussion in our executive session. At this time, I will entertain a motion to follow the recommendation of dismissal of Charlie O'Leary's charges by Chair Doug Hale for that investigation team.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: I move -- Karen, Commander, 1B. So moved.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 2B DEC. I second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you.

All in favor of dismissal of the charges, say aye.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Present.

(Laughter.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The charges against Charlie O'Leary have been dropped at this time. Thank you.

I move to go to the Good of the Legion.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, District 1B. It's come to my attention that DEC 1 minutes, though they've been transcribed, were not given to our stenographer in completion. Remember, they were done by phone recording. Things were left off of that phone recording through transition. Probably no one's fault. She never got them. Therefore, one of the major things that was left off that must be put into public record is our vote on the Sons bank account. So I'm going to ask Steven to read what the resolution was so that we can put it back into the minutes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I thought we amended it already.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: We amended something that's not in the record.

DETACHMENT SAL COMMANDER THOMAS: There is literally nothing for the stenographer to put into literature because there is no recording of it in existence. Steve Thomas, Detachment of Oklahoma

Commander.

"Sons of the American Legion, Detachment of Oklahoma, Pre-Convention, December 2024, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 12, 2024.

"SAL Resolution Number 1: Pre-Convention, December 2024, titled "Detachment of Oklahoma D/B/A Account.

"Originator: Chris Cook, National Executive Committeeman."

"Whereas, the Detachment of Oklahoma was established and is overseen by the Department of Oklahoma, and;

"Whereas, the Detachment requires more administrative support and responsibilities as the program grows, and;

"Whereas, the Detachment has a fiduciary officer that should be responsible for receiving funds and paying debts on behalf of the Detachment; now, therefore be it:

"Resolved by the Detachment Executive Committee of the Sons of the American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on July 12, 2024, that the Detachment establish a bank account for the normal operation of the Detachment of Oklahoma; and, be it, further:

"Resolved that the responsible parties for this account will be the Detachment Treasurer and Detachment Senior Vice Commander, Detachment Commander," which it

was actually added when we approached you guys about that and also now adding the department finance officer as well.

"Resolved that all transactions shall be recorded and presented to the Detachment Executive Committee when so required and to Department Finance Officer/Treasurer when requested; and, be it, further:

"Resolved that the Detachment shall follow all procedures and policies as set forth by the Department of Oklahoma and the standard business practices for the non-profit organization; and, be it, finally:

"Resolved by the American Legion, Department of Oklahoma, in regular meeting assembled in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on July 19th through 21st, 2024, that the Detachment of Oklahoma establish a doing business as, d/b/a, account under the Department of Oklahoma tax ID and business name."

That was the resolution that was presented, and this body voted unanimously for approval at DEC 1, and we are, for technicality and legal purposes, so it is in writing, we are asking that the vote be redone. Which, obviously, I am not a voting member, so I will need somebody. But there we go.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: So I move that we have the vote for passage of that bill -- of that

resolution. Excuse me.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RITTER: Karen Ritter, 1A District Commander. Second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Is there any discussion?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All in favor, say aye.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign.

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The ayes have it. Resolution carried.

(Applause.)

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: I have something for the Good of the Legion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Okay.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: I wanted to announce to everybody --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Curtis Deer.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: I'm sorry. Curtis Deer, 2B DEC. I wanted to announce that in Post 153 our Riders have just purchased a hearse [sic] for the motorcycles for ceremonies and stuff. If you contact -- his name

just went away -- their commander.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mike Marxen.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: Yes. They can get you the details of how to get it used and that stuff. But they just purchased it, and that's --

DISTRICT DEC REP KUNTZE: Talk into the mic, please.

DISTRICT DEC REP DEER: -- what it's available for, for funerals and such. All right? I just wanted to put that out to the state. Thank you.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Elmo May, Post 146, District 7 Commander. I just wanted to let everybody know that we are in the final stages of purchasing our own building for our post out in Sayre.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Anyone else for the Good of the Legion?

(No response.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All right. We will go into our closing ceremony. Please rise.

Chaplain, could you lead us in the closing prayer?

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN STEWART: Boy, will I. Let's pray.

Lord, this has been a long day, but I hope that things have been done that will make this department a

better department. Help us to leave as we go from here to make our posts better posts, to make our districts better districts, and make our individual Legionaires better Legionaires. Give us traveling mercies as we go home, and dismiss us from this meeting. We pray, with your grace and your love, in Jesus's name, Amen.

COLLECTIVE GROUP: Amen.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Sergeant-at-Arms, please recover the POW/MIA flag.

(WHEREUPON, Sergeant-at-Arms Lager retrieved the POW/MIA chair cover. Thereafter, the following transpired:)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Re-cover.

Till we meet again, let us remember our obligation to our community [sic] can only be fulfilled by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state, and nation be ever a main objective of the American Legion and its members. Let us be ever watchful of the honor of our country, our organization, and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of justice, freedom, and democracy.

HAND SALUTE. TWO.

I now declare the Mid-Winter 2024 [sic] adjourned.

(WHEREUPON, the 3rd DEC meeting, held January 18, 2025, was concluded at approximately 17:16 hours.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF OKLAHOMA)
) SS:
COUNTY OF MUSKOGEE)

I, Jessyca Guerra, Certified Shorthand Reporter within and for the State of Oklahoma, do hereby certify that the meeting held January 18, 2025, at 1:30 p.m., at 400 Thunderbird Street, Norman, Oklahoma, was taken by me in stenotype and thereafter transcribed by computer is true and correct; that I am not an attorney for or a relative of either party or otherwise interested in this action.

WITNESS MY HAND THIS 3rd day of February, 2025.

Jessyca Guerra, CSR #2027

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