

DEC 5 Minutes, July 10, 2026

Transcript

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Overview

The meeting covered several key points: the approval of Ethan Starr as the American Legion baseball chief of umpires, the success of the 10-gun drawing with a \$6,900 surplus, and the transition to a cash drawing fundraiser with potential revenue of \$80,000. The department achieved a 90.7% membership rate, exceeding the goal by 0.7%. The budget was presented for review and discussion, and included an \$80,000 gift from an estate given in the spring of 2026. The department also received recognition for its membership performance, finishing first in the Midwest region. The meeting concluded with a motion to go into executive session.

Action Items

- Coordinate distribution of the American Legion Freedom Drawing materials by posting the flyer on the department website, emailing it to all district and post leaders, and providing printable larger-format versions to posts that request them.
- Ensure that the Freedom Drawing flyer is available for download on the department website so that posts can print their own copies and scale them to larger sizes as needed.
- Recruit and vet additional certified American Legion baseball and softball umpires using NCAA and/or OSSA certification lists, and proactively contact existing high school officials who are not yet working Legion games to encourage them to officiate.
- Develop and present to DEC 2 proposals from four prospective advertising partners for Oklahoma Department-wide marketing and advertising, including recommended pricing and terms for approval.
- Finalize and circulate the updated department budget reflecting the minor adjustments agreed at yesterday's commission meeting, ensuring the financial report columns reflect the correct figures.
- Plan and execute outreach to approximately 1,000 members who did not renew this year to understand their reasons for non-renewal and identify retention opportunities for next year.
- Serve as the point of contact for DEC members who intend to attend the national convention, confirming receipt of their convention applications and reminding them to return completed applications by the end of the month.
- Monitor release of the updated national VSOs procedure manual and plan how the department will implement any changes once the revised manual is issued.

Meeting Outline

Honors to the Flag of Our Nation, Pledge of Allegiance, POW/MIA Ceremony

- Dept Commander Thomas directs the Sgt at Arms to lead the salute to the U.S. Flag, and leads the Pledge of Allegiance and introduces Chaplain Stewart for the invocation.
- Chaplain Stewart offers a prayer for the success of members and the community.
- Department Commander explains the significance of the POW/MIA chair and the POW/MIA flag while the Sgt at Arms puts the POW/MIA chair/cover in place, calling for a moment of silence in honor of missing service members.
- The group recites the preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion, emphasizing its purpose and values.
- Department Commander declares the meeting officially convened and calls for the roll call of members.

Roll Call and Quorum Confirmation

- Adjutant Davis calls the roll and confirms a quorum of 25 members, exceeding the required 20.
- Commander Thomas welcomes past national commander Rick Cook and other program directors.
- Commander Thomas moves to forgo the reading of the minutes from the last DEC meeting, which is seconded and approved.
- Commander Thomas invites committee members to give their reports, starting with the fundraising committee co-chair, Chris Sherborn.

Committee Reports

- Chris Sherborn presents the current status of the 10-gun drawing, noting a \$6,900 surplus and the success of the new ticket ordering method.
- Sherborn introduces the American Legion Freedom Drawing, a cash drawing fundraiser, and explains its benefits over gun drawings.
- He details the revenue potential of cash drawings, citing research on disposable income and the preference for cash prizes.
- Sherborn outlines the Commander's Freedom Challenge, encouraging posts to aim for high fundraising goals and offering recognition levels for achievement.
- He concludes with a slideshow and flyer for the upcoming drawing, emphasizing the importance of community support and participation.

Nomination and Approval of Ethan Starr

- Baseball Commissioner nominates Ethan Starr for the position of vice commissioner of umpires for baseball and softball.
- Baseball Commissioner provides bio of Ethan Starr, highlighting his experience and qualifications as an official.

- Ethan Starr provides additional details about his officiating background and plans for recruiting officials.
- Baseball Commissioner asks about Starr's military service, and Starr confirms his grandfather's service.
- A motion to approve Ethan Starr as the American Legion baseball chief of umpires is made and seconded, and approved, with no opposition.

Media Communications and Constitution and Bylaws Report

- Mike Kerr, provides updates on the American Legion magazine, including changes to save costs and improve relevance for younger readers.
- Kerr mentions upcoming AI branding regulations and potential department-wide marketing and advertising opportunities.
- Karen Ritter, reports that the Constitution and Bylaws revision has been tabled for further review.
- Jack Sikes, discusses the rewriting of the procedure manual for VSOs and the importance of certified umpires for American Legion baseball.

Treasurer's Report and Officer Reports

- Sam McPherson, presents the proposed budget, noting minor adjustments and a break-even forecast.
- McPherson explains the allocation of funds, including the building fund, retirement fund, and oratorical scholarship fund. Budget is tabled for further updates.
- Debbie Gordon, reports on the membership achievements, highlighting the 90.7% membership rate and the need for improvement in retention.
- Lance Larson, congratulates the department on its membership success and encourages continued efforts in the coming year.
- Karen Cruice, reflects on the training plan at the department convention and the importance of communication and collaboration within the department.

Adjutant and NEC Reports and Executive Session

- Adjutant Stark Davis, thanks the department for their patience and support during his transition into the role.
- Charlie O'Leary, reports on the department's recent activities, including the visit of the national commander and the upcoming national convention.
- Rick Redden, reminds members about the application process for attending the national convention.
- The meeting concludes with a motion to go into executive session, which is approved, and then resumes with the regular agenda.
- The meeting is officially adjourned with a prayer led by the department chaplain, and a final salute to the U.S. flag..