

**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF NEW JERSEY**

Minutes of the Department Executive Committee Meeting

The American Legion Auxiliary, Department of New Jersey, Department Executive Committee meeting was held on **Saturday; August 12, 2023** at Neptune Post 346, Neptune NJ

The meeting was opened by President **Sharon Knight**.

Color Guard presented the Colors

Department Chaplain: Lisa Mayer offered prayer

POW/MIA Chairman: Acting Chairman Lisa Mayer for Geraldine Fisher draped the POW chair

Americanism Chairman: Linda Oleszek led the Pledge of Allegiance

Soloist: Marianne Dispoto led the National Anthem

Governing Docs Chairman: The preamble was recited in unison, led by **Debbie Noble**

Color Guard is excused

Greetings: Greetings were extended by NEC Maggie McMahon, Sshe shared that the Department has received notice of 2 (two) new resolutions for voting at National Convention. She said the first resolution is pertaining to delegates; each department automatically gets 5 (five) delegates and 1 for every 1,500 thereafter. The resolution would make it seven delegates automatically. Second resolution pertains to 10 (ten) senior members to start a charter, but we would not need to keep 10 (ten) senior members to keep your charter. That would not allow any Department to cancel anyone charter even if they have 1 (one) member. Debbie Noble asked if 1 (one) person can be a unit can 1 (one) unit be a County/division? Maggie said National does not recognize us (Department) as Divisions, so that will be up to each Department, but we cannot cancel charters with less than 10 Senior members once the resolution is voted on. I will ask Dawn to send out the resolutions to everyone, the NEC's did not hear this first, it is going right to the floor for a vote.

Past President Parley Chairman Jane Babli extended greetings for a productive, speedy meeting and a successful year. Hospitality Chairman Dori Miller welcomed everyone and wished a speedy meeting, no phones please and Department 1st Vice President Charline Gladden wished a speedy & productive meeting and a great year.

Roll call was taken by Department Secretary Dawn Burger and noted in the attendance records. 8 Department officers were present. 15 County Presidents or representatives were present and 13 Past Department Presidents present.

Minutes: were emailed. Discussion: hearing none, Motion carried. (1st Charline Gladden & 2nd Dori Miller)

Treasurer's Report: was emailed. Motion to accept & report will be placed on file for audit.

Advisory: Susan Griffiths no report

Americanism: Linda Oleszek Americanism Essay Contest 2024 cover sheet and flow charts have been placed in the County Presidents baskets. Essay title: "What does Freedom mean to me". Deadline for essays is March 15, 2024. No essays will be accepted after April 1, 2024. News just in..." Star Spangled Kids". How to promote Star Spangled Kids have been distributed to the County Presidents bags. Linda will be comprising an Americanism Activity spreadsheet to aide your county and units in reporting. When finished, and upon approval of President Sharon, they will be distributed. "We all know the importance of reporting", Linda is looking forward to receiving 100% reporting from all counties. She wishes you all much success during this administration year. Thank you, members!

Spirit of Youth: Marianne Dispoto no report at this time. If you do report, please mark in the subject line "Department reports and which Committee". The essay will be written this year and will keep everyone informed when she receives updates.

Essay Contest: Fran Derin

Audit: Terry chase introduced herself as chairman. Carolyn Lundy, Chairman emailed PDP Colleen's final report on August 29th, 2023: the following months were audited on August 12th, 2023; February, March, April, May & June. Receipts, disbursements, bank statements and random transmittals were reviewed. No major issues. Three members of the 2023-24 audit committee were invited to observe the audit process. The committee would like to thank Dept. Treasurer/PDP Debbie Noble for all she has done in providing all the financial documents.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund: Laurinda Miller she would like to beat last years' total donation to National of \$3,200.00. She has passed around the water bottle for dimes. A table to the right of the room had stepped it up to a bigger bottle to collect quarters. Please pass around a bottle at your meetings for donations. She has put more information into the County Presidents' bags

Cavalcade of Memories: Maggie McMahon

Children & Youth: Charline Gladden We have 2 children & youth awards; Youth hero award and the Good Deed award. You can go onto the American Legion Auxiliary National website and look up any children & youth information. April 15, 2024 is "Purple up Day" to support our Military children. Charline explained how they came up with the color purple to be official color of Military Children

April Showers: Roberta Francis President Sharon's Military children project is Mental Health. Roberta has reached out to the Endeavor School and they have a program there, we will be working with them and the children with disabilities.

Special Olympics: Marianne Dispoto she is looking forward to working with everyone this year.

Child Welfare: Edna Iverson Long no report

CMN: Donna "Pumpkin" Godfrey reports she was a wee bit disappointed at the Walk-a-thon, but she thanks all those who showed up and donated and/or walked. Since June 10, 2023 she has received \$255.00 in donation which she is presenting to the Department Treasurer today. She Thanks everyone who has made personal donations. Building the pot can start now and continue to June 2024; so, put out a jar at meetings or maybe come up with a small fund raiser for this program.

Ronald McDonald House: Dori Miller she has placed the reporting form in the county bags and it is on our department website. You can take all kinds of can tabs; i.e., Cat food tops, tuna fish tabs, soups tabs etc. You can bring the tabs to the DEC meetings or contact her to arrange pick up. Laurinda Miller reported that he has collected 82 lbs from her granddaughter's team and cashed the tabs in at the recycling center, her unit will be making that monetary donation to Ronald McDonald House. Dori asked that the check be mailed into the department, so that we can get credit for the State of NJ. Your Unit and county will get credit for it, but the donation must come from department in order for NJ to get the credit.

Community Service: Heather Mullary Unit 129 reported \$1,000 donation each to the Toms River First Aid and Fire Departments and Berkely Township. Community Service Reporting forms are in your bags.

Day of Service: Dori Miller 911 is now a Day of Service, if you attend any events, please report them. Dori will put together a list of dates to put on the web page

Department Presidents Project: Margaret Kube is a joint affair with the Department American Legion and Detachment S.A.L. President Sharon announced that she has put the joint project on the web site

Education: Jamie Cangialosi-Murphy no report

Sharon Knight for Colleen Breen-Lopez As per a zoom meeting on August 8, 2023 with National Education Chairman Starr Purnell there will be a few changes in the Scholarships this year. I cannot go into detail right now but after the National Convention there will be some good news for the upcoming year. The National Scholarships Online Applications will probably not be up until this October.

It was mentioned that National only received 9 applications for the Non-Traditional Scholarships last year. I can say that they are opening up the eligibility for this scholarship, hoping we will get more.

Elsie Bailey Grant: Alice Lewis Early once she has the forms, she will get them out to everyone.

Claire Oliphant Grant: Charlene McConville no report

National Presidents Scholarship: Pam Jengo no report

Department Grants: Leslie Woodward no report

Finance: Linda Carroll reported for Leila Newell: asked that everyone check out the Auxiliary table in the back of the room.

Charline Gladden announced the Country Store will be October 14, 2023. Asking for donations of gently used or new items for the auction.

Debbie Noble announced that the assessment sheets will be put in the county baskets for each county president, so they have a hard copy for themselves and can copy and give to their units. Sgt.at Arms please distribute them.

Girls State: Debbie Noble We had a very successful 2023 session where we hosted 200 delegates. We did not have anyone go home from the program this year and that is, I believe a first! Our 2 Senators were also very successful at Girls Nation and both were elected or appointed to congressional positions.

We hosted members of the AL Jersey Boys State committee for lunch in the mansion. They approached us about the possibility of combining the 2 programs, since they feel it would be economically beneficial to both programs. It appears that the cost of supporting a program at Ryder is becoming feasibly uneconomical since the Boys State committee did admit their main reason for reaching out to us was financial. Attending the meeting from ALAJGS was co-director Laurel and herself, Assistant Director Sandra Wittner and Past Director Maggie McMahon. While those of us on staff who have had the displeasure of attending a program at Ryder are reluctant to go back, we did, in the interest of good faith, let the Boys State team know that we will bring it up to our Trustees for discussion. There will be a Trustee meeting schedule for September where we will share more details with the Trustees. We did agree to consider a limited joint participation activity, such as a trip to Trenton for the Senators, etc.

We will be returning to Georgian Court, at least for 2024. The dates will be June 23-27, 2024 (a week later than normal)

Governing Documents: Debbie Noble Received and reviewed documents from Bergen 310 (amended) and Morris 423. Both have been returned to the unit for corrections and/or clarification.

Pending from prior to convention are Bergen 136, Essex 105, Middlesex 253, 306, 401- these were previously returned for corrections to be made.

Discussions will continue this year on a variety of topics that were initially worked on by last year's committee. Some of those topics include:

- 1) Instituting a Letter of Interest that members can submit to be considered for Department committees. The letter would be presented to the candidate for Department President who can go over them as they prepare for their administration.
- 2) A clear and concise procedure for convention pre-registration
- 3) Review of Department convention rules, with rules committee
- 4) Consideration of districts within the department
- 5) Clarification of the meaning of an endorsement versus a nomination
- 6) Electronic voting procedures

Units if you have not updated your governing documents, please do so and send them to us for review, so that we can make sure you are in adherence with the rules.

Question: if a unit updates their governing documents do they have to send their governing documents to the County before they send them to the Department? Answer: They do not have to send them to the County, they can send them directly to the Department and copy the county on them, but it is the Department that reviews them and sends them back the approval. The Department must have a copy of your governing documents on file, because you are under the umbrella of the Department not just the County.

History: Lisa Natale reported she put in the packets information for the Junior & Senior history book. The website will be updated after National Convention with information.

Hospitality: Dori Miller & Margaret Kube: no report

Junior Activities: Ruby Cramer County Presidents in your bags are some really useful information, **Shannon Widmer** is my co-chairman, Shannon explained what is in the folders and went over the documents, she asked that the information please be shared with our Juniors. Ruby asked that the Juniors sign into Zoom for a meeting scheduled for August 20th, she will send out the link. Ruby explained that our juniors are out there doing great things, so lets highlight them. Shannon explained there is a junior t-shirt contest and the information is in your packets and on the National website. Alice Lewis-Early also gave ideas that she used to do with the juniors. Doreen Gallagher has submitted a junior member award to national for unit member of the year, that is going to be awarded at National this year to Rosie.

Leadership: Doreen Gallagher no counties or units reporting. The Department held a Zoom meeting for all Department chairmen to review their rules and responsibilities on July 31, 2023. Camden County is holding a Leadership on August 20, 2023 and has invited her to attend.

Legislation: Deb Lasky 1 County Reported - Ocean

On 6/29/23 – 7/1/23, 14 members from 4 Units responded to a TAL Action Alert and wrote to their representatives regarding The Major Richard Star Act, H.R. 1282. This Act would ensure that combat-injured veterans with less than 20 years of military service receive their full benefits by repealing any offsets or deductions.

On 7/18/23 – 7/22/23, 13 members from 3 units responded to a second TAL Action Alert and wrote to their elected officials in support of the Major Richard Star Act.

On 7/1/23, 1 member wrote to her representative in response to a DAV legislative alert regarding the Love Lives On Act, H.R. 3651. This legislation would eliminate the remarriage age for survivors in receipt of Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

2 TAL Take Action Alerts responded to and 1 DAV Legislative Alert responded to; 1 county reported; 4 units reported; 28 members took action; 28 total hours spent.

She is working on a Legislative Reporting Form and hope to have it emailed out soon.

Membership: Ellie Zaleski Welcome to the beginning of our 2023-2024 Membership year.

The Department Membership Committee has been working during the summer to get things going for the amazing year ahead. Each County President projected at the Department Meeting on Saturday June 10 how many members will have paid their dues by September 11. She is very hopeful that all will achieve their goal. All Officers and Committee Chairman should pay their dues by September 11.

First Department Membership Goal is 25% of all Members paid by Patriots Day September 11.

Then in July the Membership team along with President Sharon meet on a Saturday morning to put all the membership packets together. This takes some preparation before that day and it was so good to get better acquainted with each other. Packets then were distributed to all County Presidents or their representative, who then distributed to all Units during the month of July. Unit Membership Chairman now are receiving the renewals of their members for 2024 and sending them in to Department.

All Presidents please contact your Units and see how they are doing.

Membership round-up, please give them to Dawn so that she can enter them

Dawn announced the 2024-unit goal numbers are being work on, we go by number of paid members plus 1 for each unit and we are trying to match National goal they gave to the Department for awards.

Memorials/Book of Prayers: Lisa Mayer it is an honor to be Department Chaplain this year, the book of prayer has been distributed into your bins, thank you to Roberta for helping and thank you to Sharon & Dawn for your help putting this together. it was a pleasure to put all of the prayers together and the prayer booklet will be on the website as well. Lisa's email is: msirishlam@hotmail.com. Lisa sent a sympathy card to Anita Cavanaugh

National Security: Lisa Natale on Zoom, everyone should receive their packets today with reporting forms and information to help Veterans. POW/MIA service will be held in Neptune on October 14th, after our DEC meeting.

U.S.O: MC Fetherman flyers are in the county bags, if you would like to make donations, please bring them to the meeting on October 14th. They are not taking cookies any longer.

POW/MIA: Geraldine Fisher no report

Gold Star/Blue Star Families: Ellie Zaleski Researching to see if there are any Chapters active in New Jersey. Chapter One which Ellie is a member of is no longer active and will be handing in their charter. She has renewed my 2024 dues to National. Waiting for responses from National and several Chapters listed in New Jersey.

The last Sunday in September has been designated as Gold Star Family Day. This year it will be on Sunday September 24. She will send out a bulletin in early September and ask/remind Auxiliary members to reach out to Gold Star Families in their community and to report if they attend any services.

Parliamentary Advice: Lynda Stadtler no report

Past Presidents Parley: Jane Babli remember to introduce your Past Department Presidents, as they are important.

Sharon announced the Past Department Presidents at the meeting

Nurses Scholarship: Carol Palangi no report

Unit Member of the Year: Lisa Mayer no report

Woman Veteran of the Year: Kat Parent gave a brief bio on her years of service with the Marines. She hopes to have a better report for our next meeting.

Sharon announced she has been updating our website

Personnel: Susan Griffiths no report everything is in good shape

Sub Committee: Office Facilities: Sharon Knight for Colleen Breen-Lopez My understanding is we are still waiting to get the office file cabinets cleared out so we can move them and painting can be done. After the painting is done the carpeting will be put down.

Poppies: Ellie Zaleski reported for Rae Ann Wallace Poppy kits order forms have been filled out and 100,000 have been ordered. All Poppy makers have been spoken to, asked to make Poppies and all said yes, they want to make the Poppies.

We are looking for more Poppy makers (for the future) to continue the tradition of making Poppies. This year we are planning on having a Poppy making class, so more can learn. Date to be determined.

Question: is there an increase on the Poppies this year. Answer: Sharon announced it is \$160.00 per 1,000 this year.

Sharon announced she has sent the old Poppy contest forms to the respective chairmen and the Poppy Centerpiece is in your bins.

Public Relations: Anastasia Goldberg no report. Sharon announced she is having a baby and as everyone can see the website is being worked on. For now, please send everything to Dawn

Resolutions: Caroline Koveleski no report

Soloist: Marianne Dispoto no report

VA&R: Trish Muller no report

Year-Round Fund: June McGreggor no report

Service to Veterans: Jane Keely & Pat Corbin Jane reported in your bins you will find a package with a new program called Veterans 101. Information is in the packets, along with a copy of the application.

There is a flyer that madam President approved to send out, requesting cards for the Military, if you have any question contact jane or Pat.

Creative Arts Festival: Roberta Francis no report

Volunteer Pins/Patches: Jane Babli please give pictures of the events you are volunteering for. It is very important to reach out to our Veterans in our homes. We lost a Veteran that she was very close too.

East Orange: Mary Beth Berry no report

Lyons: Sharon Knight no report. Report will be emailed.

Menlo Park: Pat Dunn no report

Paramus: Andra Akridge reported hearing from 1 County; Bergen County. The Department of New Jersey together with Bergen County, donated 8 life like dolls and 6 stuffed weighted cats and dogs. Department of NJ donated \$384.33 and Bergen County donated \$167.64 for a total of \$551.97.

Vineland: Suellen George no report

Vets Haven North: Fran Derin a few weeks ago Dawn sent out the wish list for Vets Haven North, she has also put a copy of the wish list the county presidents' bags. They are in need of laundry pods. I had asked for donations to be made today, and some of you have. I will be collecting throughout the year; county presidents please pass the list out to your unit presidents.

Vets Haven South: Shannon Widmer reported for Par Grimming & Jane Babli reported August 160 Veterans served, 44 Volunteers, 168 volunteer hours, \$5,342.00 total volunteer hours amount, over \$3,000.00 in donations received. Counties reported were: Burlington, Bergen, Mercer, Ocean, Camden & Monmouth. July, we played bingo and we started out with 10 guys and we are now up to 30 veterans. Donations are appreciated. The Annual Picnic with the S.A.L. took place and everyone enjoyed themselves. If you were there but did not sign the donation sheet, please email Pat or Jane so they can get your time reported.

Auxiliary Materials Table: Evelyn Boyd \$118.00 collected so far. She went over items that are in stock.

Birthday Luncheon: Sharon Knight for Colleen Breen-Lopez As you know it will be after our December 2, 2023 DEC Meeting, it will be catered, so please save the date. Details will come after the National Convention.

Sharon & Dawn gave the value of hours as \$31.80.

Ella asked if we have Past Department Presidents ribbons in stock? Dawn explained that per Finance Chairman Leila, we do not keep extra PDP ribbons in the office, they order 1 (one ribbon) prior to the outgoing Presidents Convention.

Board Meeting Reservations: Doreen Gallagher 34 reservation & 14 seats.

Color Guard: Carolyn Lundy no report

Department Convention: Maggie McMahon reported that this coming years parade will be on the Wildwood boardwalk, that is what the Wildwood police want.

National Presidents Project: Charline Gladden put a "Save the Date" flyer in each County Presidents basket. Date is July 28th, 2024 to July 30th, 2024. Stay tuned for details

Ways & Means Table: Shirley Beck & Maggie McMahon \$309.00 collected. We sold out of the magnetic patches.

Elections: Debbie Noble no report

Department Officers Guidance Committee: Caroline Koveleski The committee met via zoom a couple weeks ago to come up with some discussion items for the officers and mentors. An agenda was determined.

On August 1st the committee had a zoom meeting with the officers and mentors and went over these items. Each officer was given a chance to clear any questions or concerns they may have been having. Everything went well. Once again, we want to be clear we are here to help and not criticize or harm. If any problems come up, we are here for you at any time.

50 years ago, Ethel Huggard served as our Department President. The PDP's have decided to send her a snack basket and a certificate of appreciation. As a side note President Sharon; the tea cup that was in the basket said "be kind" on it and has a bee on it.

Unfinished Business: Linda Carroll announced the Fare Share/Pot of Gold raised \$216.00 total

\$50 winner: Andrea Drzyzga

\$25 winner: Fran Derin

\$15 winner: Terry Chase

Announcements/Correspondence: President Sharon stated county presidents please don't forget your goodies in your bags.

Watchfire is September 16th and the address is on the flyer

Bills for Payment: Debbie Noble none reported.

New Business: hearing none

Closing Prayer: was offered by Chaplain Lisa Mayer

Closing Obligation: was read by 1st Vice President Charline Gladden

The POW/MIA chair cover was retrieved

Colors retired

President Sharon Knight announced that she has door prizes, please wait. President Sharon declared the meeting adjourned.

Submitted by,

Dawn Burger

Dawn Burger

Department Secretary