

Department of Minnesota Executive Committee Meeting
Saturday, March 4, 2017
Legionville, Brainerd, Minnesota

The Department Executive Committee meeting was called to order by Department President Carol Kottom on Saturday, March 4, 2017 at Legionville in Brainerd, Minnesota.

The following were present: Department President Carol Kottom, Department Second Vice President Jean Walker, NEC Shirley Frederick, Department Parliamentarian Karen Thygeson, 1st District President Cindy Nelson, 2nd District President Kathy Burket, 3rd District President Marcie Baysinger, 4th District President Connie Anderson, 5th District President Bonnie Brenna, 6th District President Theresa Rudnicki, 7th District President Betty Underthun, 8th District President Anna Eells, 9th District President Joanie Krantz, 10th District President Linda Deschene and Department Secretary Sandie Deutsch. There were 15 guests present. Department First Vice President Donna Arends was excused for personal reasons.

Marsha Bible was called upon to offer the opening prayer, Department Second Vice President Jean Walker led the Pledge of Allegiance and Parliamentarian Karen Thygeson led the Preamble.

President Carol welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked each member to give a 2 minute overview of their year so far.

First District President Cindy Nelson; Riding in the Apple Annie parade in LaCrescent and the First District Mid-Winter.

Second District President Kathy Burket; attending the Gift Shop in Luverne and the Second District Mid-Winter.

Third District President Marcie Baysinger; the Hastings Veterans Home Christmas Tree Decorating and Gift Shop.

Fourth District President Connie Anderson; watching the Fourth District become a true American Legion Family.

Fifth District President Bonnie Brenna; wrapping gifts at the Gift Shop.

Sixth District President Theresa Rudnicki; Gift Shop at the St. Cloud VAHCS and attending the Staples Unit meeting where a presentation was made to a female veteran.

Seventh District President Betty Underthun; going to the smaller Unit meetings and seeing how The Legion family works together.

Eighth District President Anna Eells; Silver Bay Pheasant Dinner

Ninth District President Joanie Krantz; Unit Visits and seeing how hard they work as a family.

Tenth District President Linda Deschene; Pine City Unit Meeting, the Leadership Training and Open Discussion meeting Robin Dorf led and the pheasant dinners.

Second Vice President Jean Walker; Leadership sessions, working with Strategic Planning and the Washington DC Conference.

NEC Shirley Frederick; Veterans dinner in Hackensack, presented our programs, what they are and what we do.

Department Secretary Sandie Deutsch; working with President Carol to make the year successful. Sandie is very proud of the Department office and how we have updated things and cost cutting that has happened.

Parliamentarian Karen Thygeson; thanked everyone for the cards, well wishes and prayers.

President Carol wanted to thank everyone for the first half of the year. Everything has been wonderful. Carol reported that membership is going well, could be better but it seems everyone has been working hard. Carol encouraged everyone to visit the Veterans Homes.

President Carol called for an approval of the October 27, 2016 Executive Committee minutes. A motion was made by Anna Eells to approve as written was seconded and carried.

Secretary Sandie was called up for her report on the office. Sandie gave a Department Convention update and gave information on housing at the Shooting Star Casino. Official family letters will be going out next week. The National Convention hotel will be at the Peppermill Hotel in Reno. More information will be forthcoming. A copy of the Department Secretary's job description was given to each member for review. Sandie would like everyone to review it and make suggestions or changes. Sandie brought up the District bonding issue. After research the Districts are not covered under the Department or Unit Bond. There are two ways the Districts can be bonded. They can purchase their own, as a group, for a cost of \$289.00 per year to be divided between the 10 Districts. When reading the Department bond terminology, if a District is a subsidiary of the Department, the officers would be covered under the Department bond. The Districts are not subsidiaries, as they have their own tax id numbers. Secretary Sandie asked how long scholarships should be kept open for disbursement of funds to the award winners. Also, how long does the information need to be kept as far as files. We have files from 30 years ago. Norma Tramm reported on the National level that it depends on the scholarship and how much money it involves. Secretary Sandie is to write a letter to the Chairmen of the committees involved in awarding the scholarships to determine how long a student has to claim the scholarship. A suggestion was given to keep them 7 years. Sandie stated that they can all be scanned into our cloud to have permanently. A website update was given. Sandie stated that the best solution for a new website recommendation by our IT person is to use the Word Press online website. Weebly is very restrictive – the Word Press system is much more flexible. Our IT person, for \$100.00 per year would take care of the entire website, posting, changes, etc. It would cost approximately 1,500.00 to write the website program. This will be included in the office budget figures for next year. Sandie reminded all people who want reimbursement from the office, you must fill out a voucher and get it into the office. Receipts must be attached.

Carol Kottom stated that the Department Treasurer and Department President's Executive Secretary are to put together Blue Books.

Jan Lauby, Department Treasurer was called upon by President Carol to give the Finance Report. Jan reported on bank balances and investments to date. On-line dues is at 432 to date. Bonding fees are almost all collected. We are still waiting on 47. Jan reported on items that have occurred to save the office money. We are through with the old copier lease, cutting August workshop and the finance budget meeting to one day each, cutting the Unit Mailings in half and handing out the membership packets at Department Convention has saved us over \$27,000.00 so far this year. Jan was called upon to explain the handout regarding Units and Districts that have lost their tax exemption due to not filing. Jan had compiled a list for each District to see what Units have lost their exemption. Jan would like everyone to go through their list and get any changes or corrections to her. President Carol suggested that each District President put their list in their next newsletter to let them know that they have lost their exemption. Carol Barbknecht stated that the government come up with a form for 501(c) (19) that would make it much easier to regain their exemption. President Carol asked that Carol draft a letter to the IRS and send it to Secretary Sandie to put it on letterhead and forward it on to our Congressmen. A motion has been made by Anna Eells, seconded and carried to have them come up with a form for 501(c) (19) that will make it easier and less expensive to have their exemption status reinstated.

President Carol stated that Jan and Julie of the office staff get their information updated on the website.

Marsha Bible asked that as of June 1 there be a link on the website on the front page to take members right to the Girls State information. President Carol also asked to check if there is a way for Linda Kropuenske to be able to download the newsletters directly to the Girls State website immediately rather than have to send them to the office and get them posted the next day. Jan will work with our IT person to make this happen.

President Carol gave a report on her Department President's Project. Her donations to date are 17,415.65. There is also \$1022.46. in the Pocket Angel donation account. Marge Machgan has been giving these out at the Armed Forces Center. She also gives those Veterans going on the Honor Flights to DC. The Honorary Junior President has donations of \$2,711.00 at this time to purchase socks and undergarments for homeless veterans. Kiana has purchased \$500.00 worth of merchandise to date. Carol has her golf cart on order. The rest of her project money will go to the other facilities. She would like each one to get \$1,000.00.

President Carol asked for any new Unit possibilities of Charter concerns. Cindy Nelson stated there are none in District 1. Kathy Burket reported nothing new in the 2nd District. Marcie Baysinger reported nothing in the 3rd District. Sandie Deutsch reported that the Eagan American Legion has grown tremendously in the past year. Sandie will contact the Post Commander, per President Carol's request, to see how we can form an Auxiliary Unit. With the passing of Herb Davis, the Lester Tjernlund Post will be turning in the Charter in the 4th District. The Unit is talking of folding as well. Connie Anderson will be talking to President Mary Ann Davis to see how this will be handled. They have 31 members. Bonnie Brenna reported no issues in the 5th District. Theresa Rudnicki spoke with Royalton and they are moving along, having meetings

and trying to make things work. There is concern with the Deerwood Unit. The long time Treasurer passed away and the other members don't know what to do. Marsha Bible will work with President Theresa to reorganize this Unit. Betty Underthun gave a report on the reorganization of the Granite Falls Unit. The Montevideo Unit will be mentoring Granite Falls to get them going strong again. President Carol, Secretary Sandie, President Betty and Membership Chairman from the 7th District Karla Minnick met with both Units to answer questions and offer solutions to get them going again. Anna Eells in the 8th District has had a few Unit issues. Biwabik has decided to continued running as is. In December Anna received a call from Ely stating they were going to turn in their Charter and give all their money to a community item. A meeting notice was sent to members and only 3 attended. 2 members stated they were not going to turn in the Charter. They took over the officer positions, collected 25 memberships and are going to continue on. Anna then received a call from Orr. Anna will be attending their next meeting to try and get them going as Ely did. They have 37 paid members. Grand Portage has sent in their membership. Joanie Krantz reported there was no issues in the 9th District. Perham only has 4 memberships and she is thinking those are life memberships. Joanie is working with them. Linda Deschene reported the Tri-City Unit is having problems. A letter was received in the Department Office. They have 88 members. President Linda told them they didn't have to have meetings every month. They will be having a meeting on March 28. Linda Deschene will attend this meeting to help them out. President Carol gave a thank you to the District Presidents and District Membership Chairmen because of the hard work they are doing. Department Officers are willing to attend and help out with these Unit issues.

President Carol stated that the formation of the Strategic Planning Committee has been a very positive thing for the Department of Minnesota. Chairman Sandy Fredrickson has done a fantastic job getting this committee very active. She called upon Sandy for her report. Sandy went over the Resolution that will be presented at Department Convention with the recommendation of the Department Executive Committee. This Resolution is to make the Strategic Planning Committee a Standing Committee of the Department which would include the following Champions and Chairman. Sandy stated that the Champions this year are Robin Dorf, Jean Walker, Michelle Leonard, Judy Ackerman and Karla Otterness who have worked very hard to get this committee moving. There is also an Initiative Group of Carol Kottom, Sandie Deutsch, Jan Lauby, Shirley Frederick, Raleen Tolzmann, Chris Ronning and Sandy Fredrickson, along with Donna Arends and Jean Walker. Sandy stressed that all of the members on this committee has been strictly volunteer, there is no reimbursement for mileage or per diem. Most of the meetings have been done via phone conference. Sandy is asking for the support of the Department Executive Committee to recommend this Resolution go to the Department Convention for a vote.

President Carol brought up the Minnesota Disaster Fund which was set up in 1996/1997 when there was major flooding in the Northwestern part of Minnesota. Currently there is \$32,553.78 in the fund. A Resolution was brought forward in the 2013/2014 year but it was voted down at the Department Convention. President Carol read the Resolution from 2013/2014 to the Department Executive Committee. President Carol asked Shirley Frederick to come forward and offers suggestions on how to disburse this money. Shirley believes this money must stay in the state of Minnesota. Raleen Tolzmann came up with an application form as she had been appointed Chairman of the Ad-Hoc Committee in 2013/2014. A new Resolution will need to be written

and presented at Department Convention. Carol Barbknecht came forward as to why it didn't pass in 2013/2014. The Finance Committee felt the first one was too restrictive and when it was rewritten she stated it was too vague. President Carol stated that this will be on the agenda in July and the DEC will decide if they will make a recommendation to accept or not.

NEC Shirley Frederick came forward with her NEC report from the meeting held during the Washington Conference in February. Shirley went over items Departments should be following for the protection of the organization. President Carol then called upon alternate NEC Chris Ronning to give a short report on the National Commanders hearing. This year there was a change and the meeting was by invitation only.

President Carol stated that our Governing Rules Committee is still going through the current Standing Rules to get them all in order. Carol then called upon Parliamentarian Karen Thygeson to read the Resolutions, she asked President Carol to read them and Karen would answer questions posed. This process was for discussion only, no voting at this time. There were no questions regarding Resolutions 1 & 2. Carol stated that Resolution #3 was written as a Department Policy rather than a Resolution. It is up to the DEC to decide which way to go with this item. It is regarding the National Convention pages, color bearers and honor guards during the National Convention parade. After discussion it was decided to make this item a Policy rather than a Resolution. Secretary Sandie will make the appropriate adjustments. President Carol read Resolutions 4 through 10. There were no questions or comments. Carol stressed that any questions and/or changes should come into the Department Office so changes can be made before the July DEC meeting.

The Audit Committee along with the Department Secretary and Treasurer met with Casey, Menden and Faust via phone conference to discuss the outside audit that was performed. President Carol called upon Audit Committee member Lynn Spilman and Finance Liaison Carol Barbknecht for their report. Chairman Pat Ecker was excused to do just having surgery. Chairman Pat made three recommendations to the outside auditors. All recommendations that the outside firm makes should go to the Audit Chairman and Department Office in writing or email, the Audit Committee meeting should be held at the end of January as it would be more convenient for all involved. The Department Office needs to update the Audit Committee members contact information as changes are made within the committee. Secretary Sandie will forward all new Audit committee members contact information to the outside auditing firm as changes in the committee happen. Sandie will also get the changes to our Standing Rules to the auditing firm as to the new Standing Rules that were voted on in July 2016. Carol Barbknecht reported on the National side of the Audit Committee as she is a member of that group. The 990 is a very important item that each Unit needs to get current. Carol presented a copy of the Risk Assessment Annual Pulse Check – Checklist that can be used on the Department level.

President Carol stated that a call in was made to Sandy Fredrickson, Lynn Spilman and Carol Barbknecht so we need approval to pay them per diem and mileage. Linda Deschene made a motion to approve, was seconded and carried.

President Carol announced that there would be no Musical Extravaganza at this year's Department Convention.

President Carol asked for input from the District Presidents as she would like to have each District's Honorary Junior President to be in the processional at Department Convention along with their District President. We would pay each District Honorary Junior President a \$50.00 stipend but no mileage for attending. A letter will be drafted by Secretary Sandie to each Honorary Junior President to see if they would be willing and able to attend. Carol will be announcing this new item at the Junior Conference in April. Each Honorary Junior President will be asked to give a 1-2 minute update of their year.

President Carol stated that this year during Department Convention, she has invited Bill, the Veteran from St. Cloud to perform Thursday evening from 7 – 9 p.m. There will be a cash bar, socializing and dancing is welcome. This is for all of The American Legion Family.

Anna Eells stated that the 8th District Convention date was changed to April 22. President Carol went over all of the Testimonial and Convention dates to make sure what she had down was correct. All of these dates are posted on the home page of the Department website.

President Carol stated that we would have our gift exchange after the meeting was adjourned which will be after lunch.

Secretary Sandie was called upon for announcements. The Department Office received a couple of thank you cards, one to the Department from the Little Sauk Unit for the great job that they do. The other was a thank you card from the St. Cloud VAHCS with signatures from everyone that received a gift at the Gift Shop. The next Department Executive meeting will be held on July 12, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. at the Shooting Star Casino. The Appreciation Membership Rally will be held immediately after this meeting is over. The Department Presidents Testimonial will be held on March 25 at the Buffalo American Legion Post.

Linda Deschene made the announcement that Ginny Dwyer had passed away and her services will be held on Saturday, March 11.

President Carol asked Norma Tramm to give the closing prayer.

President Carol thanked everyone for their attentiveness and contributions to the Executive Committee meeting. There being no further business, a motion was made by Joanie Krantz to adjourn, was seconded and carried.

Submitted by:
Sandie Deutsch, Department Secretary