

Department of Minnesota Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, October 27, 2016
Ramada Inn, Marshall, Minnesota

The Department Executive Committee meeting was called to order by Department President Carol Kottom on Thursday, October 27, 2016 at the Ramada Inn, Marshall, Minnesota.

The following were present: Department President Carol Kottom, Department First Vice President Donna Arends, 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 16 guests present.

Department First Vice President Donna Arends offered the opening prayer, Department Second Vice President Jean Walker led the Pledge of Allegiance and Parliamentarian Karen Thygeson led the Preamble.

Department President Carol welcomed The American Legion National Security/Foreign Relations Chairman Jim Kellogg and to come forward with his information on Armory visits. The American Legion is having a hard time finding nominations for the outstanding enlisted person of the year. Each District this year has been asked to visit an Armory in order to show the face of The American Legion Family. This has nothing to do with membership. We will tell them what we have done for the veterans in the past and what we are trying to do in the future. The Veterans will also be asked what they would like us to do for them. The Third District already has a date set up in Red Wing in November. Jim is asking the Auxiliary to be a part of this endeavor. He would really like members from the local Post and Unit to attend these when they are at their locations so they can see what the local organization does. The District Commander and National Security Chairman will have all the information for each person's area.

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 working on membership.

Second District President Kathy Burket; being in parades and attending County Council and Unit Meetings.

Third District President Marcie Baysinger; attending the Wright County Fair, parades and Unit visits.

Fourth District President Connie Anderson; being part of the Fall Fashion Show and Unit visits.

Fifth District President Bonnie Brenna; attending Department Convention.

Sixth District President Theresa Rudnicki; attending the 6th District Past Presidents Parley event and the St. Cloud VAMC Pheasant Dinner.

Seventh District President Betty Underthun; visiting Units, visiting Marietta, the National Convention and the Pheasant Dinner.

Eighth District President Anna Eells; the Department Convention Installation ceremony.

Ninth District President Joanie Krantz; Unit Visits making donuts at the Fergus Falls Nursing Home.

Tenth District President Linda Deschene; Camporee at Legionville, parades, Past President Parley luncheon, Conventions and the Pheasant Dinner.

Second Vice President Jean Walker; meeting with the Hospital Home Representatives at the annual meeting.

First Vice President Donna Arends; attending the membership dinner in Nisswa for President Carol.

NEC Shirley Frederick; very honored being elected at the NEC from Minnesota and watching our members working their way up to leadership roles.

Parliamentarian Karen Thygeson; just pleased to be in attendance.

President Carol called for an approval of the August 13, 2016 Executive Committee minutes. A motion was made by Anna Eells to approve was seconded and carried.

Secretary Sandie was called up for her report on the office. Sandie brought up the Budget Meeting timeline. She asked if there were any questions or changes to the timeline. Sandie wanted to give Sandy Fredrickson much credit as to all the work she has put in regarding the Strategic Plan for Minnesota. Sandie went over the Fixed Asset Policy. The Auditing firm recommended that we change our Fixed Asset Policy to read "all individual items purchased with a cost below \$2,500.00" from the \$500.00 that it reads today. President Carol asked if there was a motion to change this policy. Jean Walker made a motion to change the policy to the auditor's recommendation, was seconded and carried. Sandie gave a report from our Financial Advisor. We are doing quite well with our investments. Sandie reported that the Girls State Committee came to her with some fund raising ideas. Both of the fund raisers would have to be run through a 501(c) (3) fund of which we don't have. We have used The American Legion Foundation for our Girl State registrations that we receive from organization gambling funds but The American Legion's auditors don't feel that we use the Foundation for any more fund raising programs as it would raise a red flag to the IRS. Laura Weber, Finance Liaison for The American Legion suggested that we form our own foundation at the Auxiliary. Sandie has our

auditing firm researching the costs to set up this foundation. Sandie reported that she just received a check in the amount of \$350.00 which will be put in to the Girls State fund. This was given to us from Al Zdon from the sale income from his books. Sandie reported that one of the Minnesota Boy Staters was the winner of a \$20,000.00 Samsung Scholarship and one of the Minnesota Girl Staters won a \$750.00 Samsung Scholarship. President Carol did make the Committee aware that we are able to use the National Foundation to run funds through for our programs.

Jan Lauby, Department Treasurer was called upon by President Carol to give the Finance Report. Actual report will come out through the end of October. Our investments are back over \$2,000,000. Online membership payments are growing and the Units are paying the bonding fees. Jan will be handing the District bonding fees invoice out today. In cost savings areas, the Xerox copier lease is now gone. This is a savings over 12,000.00 per year. August workshop was cut to one day. We have cut the Unit mailings in half, to only 5 per year. We lowered our payment to the Legionnaire by \$2,000.00 this year. Linda Deschene stated that maybe being the meeting is always in October, Jan could report her financials through the end of September. She will do this in the future.

Audit Committee Chairman Pat Ecker was called upon for her report. Pat was not in attendance at this time.

President Carol gave a report on her Department President's Project. Her donations to date are 5,676.65. There is also \$710.00 in the Pocket Angel donation account. The Honorary Junior President has donations of \$850.00 at this time to purchase socks and undergarments for homeless veterans.

President Carol brought up the Department Unit 1982 dues. Currently the annual dues are \$20.00 per year. There has been an increase in membership in this Unit as anytime a charter is turned in all members automatically go into this Unit. Also, if a woman goes to the National website and signs up as a new member, she automatically goes into the 1982 Unit as well. Carol is asking for discussion regarding the amount of dues collected. The Department Office administers this Unit and currently there are 246 members in this account. Sandie stated that the \$2.00 doesn't cover mailings out to these members to try and get their dues collected. Carol asked that Sandie send all District Presidents a copy of the 1982 Unit membership roster. Theresa Rudnicki suggested that when membership cards are sent upon payment, let them know what Units are in their area. Sandie will start doing that immediately. Anna Eells made a motion to increase the dues for 2018 to \$25.00, was seconded and carried. Zandy Kessler, Department Membership Chairman suggested getting the members a letter stating dues are going up and give them Units in the area that they can transfer to.

President Carol called upon Karla Otterness for her update on the Dr. Hielscher memorial project. Karla gave an overview of who Dr. Hielscher was and what she did for the organization. Karla stated that at the last Department Convention she proposed getting a bronze statue. She was asked to try and find something less expensive. Karla now researched a painting by a local artist. Karla thought that rather than just having Dr. Hielscher on the painting, to have a painting with more of the Auxiliary history incorporated into the painting so it is a tribute to the entire

organization. The artist's name that Karla is working with is Terry Fogerty. He has two murals on buildings in Marshall and also one in the Red Baron Center. In order for Karla to continue with this project she is asking for the Executive Committee's approval to hire the artist and start a fund raising committee, along with getting approval to solicit funds from the Units. The cost of the painting is between \$15,000 - \$20,000.00. Karla stated that this is something that will increase in value. Members will also be able to purchase prints of the painting. Marie Goede asked if there was only this one artist contacted or was it put out for bids. Karla only went to this artist as she didn't know any others to ask. President Carol asked if there were any art grants available. Karla will be looking in to that if the Committee approves the project to go forward. Before grants can be applied for, the work has to be started, we can't apply for grants before that time. The Auxiliary would have to pay for the painting in thirds, with the first third due up front. President Carol asked if the Committee wanted to take any action at this time. Jean Walker doesn't feel the Units will be willing to donate to this rather than to the Veterans programs. Karla stated that the Auxiliary needs to start promoting themselves and this would be a way to start. President Carol asked everyone think about this and we will readdress it.

President Carol called upon Bonnie Brenna, 5th District President, for an update on her project for the year. Her project with The American Legion is to purchase two clavinos for the Minneapolis Veterans Home. Bonnie made a motion to accept this updated project, was seconded and carried.

President Carol asked each District President if there are any new Charter possibilities. There being none Carol went on to Charter concerns. There was some comments previously made that Lakeville may want to re-establish their Unit. Nobody has contacted them to date. Marcie Baysinger, 3rd District President stated that Winthrop is having issues. Marcie will be meeting with them on November 11. Betty Underthun, 7th District President reported that Granite Falls is having some issues. The Unit President and Secretary sent letters to all members (51) that they will not be officers next year. This is an elderly Unit which does not meet. They showed interest in joining up with Montevideo. Betty is to keep Sandie Deutsch updated on this. Linda Deschene, 10th District President reported that Dayton has only 5 members at this time. Linda will check with Robin Dorf, who worked with this Unit in the past for an update. Anna Eells, 8th District President stated that Biwabik has only 5 members and is considering consolidating with Aurora. Connie Anderson, 4th District President will be meeting with Attucks Brooks President Marion Pearson in November to go over rules, positions and what everyone should be doing. President Carol stated that she is more than willing to attend these meetings to help keep the Units going. Per Zandy Kessler, she is all in favor of consolidating Units, just don't lose members. Zandy is going to work with Granite Falls to grow this Unit. Montevideo is willing to mentor Granite Falls to reorganize them and keep them on their own. Zandy doesn't want to combine the Units unless all else fails.

President Carol stressed that the Districts Presidents need to keep their Membership teams working on getting dues paid. Carol, Zandy and Sandie are willing to assist in any way they can. If a Unit wants to turn in their Charter they must follow the rules that are in the National Unit Handbook.

President Carol now brought forward the Employee Handbook to be gone through for any changes. Everyone was sent a copy to review before the meeting. President Carol asked Executive Secretary Sandie if there is anything that would she recommends to have changed. President Carol asked Treasurer Jan Lauby if she had any recommendations. Linda Deschene suggested that the Employee must make a contribution to the 401K plan in order to receive the 2% that the Auxiliary gives to each employee, as stated in the Employee Handbook revision dated October 22, 2015. Linda Deschene then made a motion that the employee must make a contribution in order to receive the 2% from the Auxiliary. President Carol asked for a second. There being none, the motion failed. There being no changes to the Employee Handbook, President Carol stated that it will stand as presented.

Alternate NEC Chris Ronning came forward with her final 2015/2016 NEC report from National Convention. There are currently 8,498 Units in the National organization. NEC Shirley Frederick was then called on by President Carol to give her report from the first 2016/2017 NEC meeting at National Convention. Shirley stated that all girls attending Girls State must be told this is a program through the American Legion Auxiliary and must be told what our organization is all about.

President Carol called Sandy Fredrickson to give her report on the Department Strategic Plan. Sandy asked if all attendees knew what the Strategic Plan was. She stated that this is a huge project. It must be successful for our organization to grow. Sandy stated that there was never an Initiative Team set up at the onset a couple years ago. Those recommended by Sandy to be on this team are as follows; Department President, Department 1st & 2nd Vice Presidents, Department Secretary and Department Treasurer as automatic committee members, Lori Skallerud, Shirley Frederick, Chris Ronning, Raleen Tolzmann, Sandy Fredrickson. This will be a Standing Committee of 5 years. Upon the current Department President's year being completed, she would become a member on the committee and committee member number one would drop off, such as our Finance Committee operates. Anna Eells made a motion to go forward and prepare the resolution to be presented at the next Department Convention to make this a Standing Committee of the Auxiliary, was seconded and approved. Sandy has been working with Robin Dorf, Judy Ackerman, Karla Otterness, Jean Walker and Michelle Leonard as goal champions. They have done a fantastic job. Sandy Fredrickson wants to make sure each of the Executive Committee will commit in this plan to make it a success. Sandy then brought up the DEC 101 document. Sandy strongly encourages that the Department adopt this as policy. This would also be able to go to the District and Unit level. Sandy reported that the committee will be ordering and selling the Minnesota family bracelets. It will be up to everybody to sell them. 500 will be ordered soon. Sandy will be promoting and selling the Member Handbooks during this Fall Conference. She will also be selling the Department blue shirts. President Carol stated that the Minnesota initiatives to the Strategic Plan have had some minor changes made to them. Karla Otterness asked that the Executive Committee approve a Goodwill Ambassador Award be given out for Unit member work on the Strategic Plan. The award will come out of the Strategic Plan funds. Cindy Nelson made a motion to approve this award, was seconded and carried. President Carol went back to the DEC 101 document. In order for all members to have time to read and understand it, it was tabled until the March Executive Committee meeting.

The annual Gift Exchange was brought up. This is always held at our March Executive Committee meeting. A motion was made by Betty Underthun, seconded and carried to continue with the gift exchange. Sandie Deutsch has the names to draw and the limit is set at \$20.00.

Deb Rottman came forward to report regarding an amendment needing approval on the 2016/2017 budget. At the Finance meeting in July, Secretary Sandie came and asked for an additional \$3,000.00 to be added to the budgeted payroll total to cover overtime to the two hourly employees working at Department Convention and Fall Conference. Finance approved this amount but didn't update the final budget total as they thought it was for the previous year. Finance had an email vote in September to recommend this amendment be presented to the Executive Committee meeting on October 27. They passed the recommendation. The income would be 684,150.00 and expenses is 816,035.00 showing a deficit of 131,885.00. President Carol asked for a motion to accept the amendment to the budget. Theresa Rudnicki made a motion to approve, was seconded and carried.

President Carol asked for a motion to pay Sandy Fredrickson per diem for attending this meeting and giving her presentation. A motion was made by Marcie Baysinger, seconded and carried.

President Carol asked the committee if they want to readdress the Dr. Hielscher memorial at this time. It will be brought up again at the March Executive meeting. Everyone should read over the materials and research the project or alternative plans.

Secretary Sandie was called upon for announcements. Sandie announced that Department Commander Denise Milton will be having a Veterans Walk on Friday afternoon beginning at 1:00. Everyone is invited to participate but must keep in mind that our Conference will reconvene at 1:30 and all members should be back at that time.

President Carol reminded all members that our workshop will be starting at 7:00 tonight on Leadership, Membership and Strategic. All members are encouraged to attend. The next membership rally is Pearl Harbor on December 3 in Waite Park. Sweetheart Rally is February 4 at the New Prague American Legion Post. The next Executive Committee meeting will be held before the Appreciation Rally on March 4 at Legionville. The Department President's Testimonial will be held on March 25 at the Buffalo American Legion Post.

A closing prayer was given by First Vice President Donna Arends.

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

Submitted by:
Sandie Deutsch, Department Secretary