

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
March 9, 2024**

The NEC meeting was called to order on Saturday, March 9, 2024.

Attending from Michigan were Nancy Middleton - NEC, Kathy Keizer - Dept. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice, Gloria Hall - District V President and of course, Allison Aldrich - National Scholarship Officer.

Normal procedures were followed (invocation, pledge, roll call of Officers, roll call of NEC Women, roll call of Dept. Presidents, roll call of Past Presidents)

National President Amy Stopyra welcomed everyone. She spoke about the many places she has traveled to and some of the highlights.

**Guests:**

One of the first items discussed was a visit from Joe Chenelly, National Executive Director of AMVETS. He discussed the relocation of National Headquarters from Lanham Maryland to Washington Pennsylvania. They have been looking for a new headquarter location and think they have found it in Pa. It is a former synagogue which can be converted to the National headquarters. It will take a lot of renovations which may take 6 to 8 months after they acquire the property.

There is also an old school building on the property which may be converted to housing for homeless Veterans and their family. We are looking at a Grand Opening in possibly two years. One of the main considerations is the cost of living in the Washington DC area. Some of the office workers will be making the move to PA – but some have opted not to make the move and will look for employment elsewhere.

The Auxiliary will not be relocating to Pennsylvania. They, along with the Sons of AMVETS, will be staying in another building owned by AMVETS in Lanham.

There were several questions asked of Mr. Chenelly and he answered each of them. Of course he could not pinpoint a timeline on the move and the remodeling, but seemed to do his best to answer everything else.

The NEC members were invited to attend a presentation on the AMVETS floor concerning Freedom's Foundation. It was a very short presentation, about 2-3 minutes. They have merged with another organization, Union League Legacy Foundation, and will now be called Founding Forward.

**Guests:**

Following this news, we had a visit from John Meko who is the President, David Harmer, Director and Jason Raia, Chief Learning Officer. AMVETS will continue to have their youth conference in November. This year there will be no classes from July to October because of remodeling which will be going on.

Each year 2,000 students visit Founding Forward. The remodeling will upscale and improve the facility. There is no plan to increase the cost for the students or the teacher seminars. Although the price will remain the same, the cost will increase. They will make up the difference with fundraisers, donations, etc.

Again, there were many questions. John, David and Jason were very encouraging and seemed to think this merger was only going to benefit the ideals of both organizations.

**National 1<sup>st</sup> Vice** Cindy Rice repeated a few (necessary) reminders: #1 No renew to life until September 2024, #2 you MUST use the new life member form along with the D&R, #3 locals do NOT send memberships directly to National. Her chart of memberships showed Michigan with a total of 1,768 as of 12/31/23 which does not match the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice/Secretary records. The National records would show all those who were members on 12/31 and the Department records show those who are renewed/new for 2024 (and does not include the local members who have not renewed by 12/31/23).

**National 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice** Mary Lanphere discussed the donations to National for John Tracy Center (JTC). On the midyear reports, Michigan is shown with an evaluation of \$61,366 which is in the top five nationwide. Mary also stated April is John Tracy Center Month.

**National 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice** Laura Bugaj (pronounced boo-GUY). Laura thanked Michigan for their hospitality when she visited PAWS in November (with the Sons of AMVETS Commander Bobby Bryant). We will be supporting the PAWS Canine Development Center with those donations this year. Michigan is shown with a midyear evaluation of \$85,956 which is in the top 10 Nationally. March is PAWS Month.

**National Treasurer** Barbara Guth stated in comparing membership totals nationally, we are down about 27% as of 2/19/24. On the other hand, donations to national programs are up by 47%. The pre-registration for National Convention needs to be sent in by July 10<sup>th</sup>. The cost of \$40 or \$60 for payment at Convention. Discover, Master Card or Visa is accepted. No debit card is accepted!

In June, Barb will be sending out a list of checks received at headquarters by 5/31. This will be sent to all Department Treasurers and needs to be verified by each Department.

**National Americanism Officer Debra Gass stated they would like more students to attend the Youth Conference in November. A motion was made to use money raised to send more students to Founding Forward in November. The motion was carried. Tickets are available for the 2025 Seminar raffle at a cost of \$1 each. At the 2025 seminar, they will be visiting a medical museum in a haunted prison!! Deb noted it would be nice to get more of the AMVETS involved (and Sons).**

**Wear red on Fridays, but hours for it cannot be claimed on reports. The same is true for flying the American flag. You cannot claim those hours on reports. Michigan has an evaluation of \$24,749 on the midyear reports. This figure does not register in the top 10 nationally.**

**National Scholarship Officer Allison Aldrich reminded everyone to have their applications for scholarships postmarked on or before July 1, 2024 and mail them to National Headquarters. February is Scholarship month. Michigan's Scholarship evaluation on the midyear reports is \$7,005 which is in the top 10 Nationally.**

**National Chaplain Laurie Shea stated she has received several duplicate death notices. She requested the notices are sent to her asap.**

**National Hospital Officer Donna Tolland reported there was not a in-person visit to St Jude Research Hospital this year, Total midyear evaluations are up over \$80,000 over last year's numbers. Michigan's midyear totals are \$31,337 which are in the top 5 Nationally.**

**National VAVS Representative Marie Rorrio reported she has received 26 joint reviews. If any of our VAVS's have not received a letter from Marie, contact your VA.**

**National Parliamentarian PNP Heidi Dineen-Serpis reported on Departments which need their by-laws reviewed. Michigan was not one of them so we are good. According to the National Bylaws, NEC Women need to submit a report to their Department within 45 days following the close of NEC meetings with a copy to the National Parliamentarian.**

**A motion was made to increase the donation on the death of a National AMVETS or Auxiliary Officer, Past National President or Past National Commander from \$50 to \$100. (SR #1)**

**I questioned why we were leaving the Sons of AMVETS from this Standing Rule.**

**\*\*Motion PNP Patti Piening/2<sup>nd</sup> PNP Carol King to amend Standing Rule #1 to add Sons of AMVETS. CARRIED as amended.**

**National Convention Chairman Debby Dant stated there are 2 hotels in Springfield Illinois for the National Convention: The President Abraham Lincoln Springfield (a DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel) and the Wyndham Springfield City Center. The hotels are 50 feet apart. The Auxiliary**

meetings will be held at the Wyndham as will the Sons, Junior's, Riders, Sad Sacks and Sackette's. The AMVETS Convention sessions and other events will be at the BOC Convention Center which is about 100 feet from both hotels. The Wyndham has a shuttle from the airport but the Abraham Lincoln does not. Room rates for both are \$120 + tax per night for one king or two queen beds. Convention dates are 8/5-11, 2024.

National Training Committee Chairman PNP Linda McGriff talked about the Training session on Tuesday at National Convention. A two-page instruction list was distributed on "Becoming a National Officer". It is very informative AND...this is the time I learned that myself and several other NEC Women broke rule #2 – All candidates for National Office should be announced NO SOONER than the business session at the Spring NEC meeting. Oops! We announced candidates from our State at the Council of NEC Meeting.

The NEC Women lined up to give a synopsis on the happenings and in their State and some of the candidates for National Officers. (Thanks to Kathy Keizer for taking notes while I was lined up with the NEC Women.)

- ★ President:  
Cindy Rice – Ohio
- ★ 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President:  
Mary Lanphere, New York
- ★ 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:  
Laura Bugaj, New York
- ★ 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice:  
Laurie Shea, Illinois  
Deb Gass, Indiana
- ★ Chaplain:  
Shirley ?? New York
- ★ Sgt-at-Arms:  
Kathy Hays, Kentucky  
Mary McKinnon, Maryland
- ★ Hospital:  
Sherry Maracek, Florida  
Donna Tolland, Maryland
- ★ Scholarship:  
Allison Aldrich, Michigan

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15pm.

Nancy Middleton  
NEC Woman/Michigan  
4/8/2024