



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

104TH ALA NATIONAL CONVENTION

THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 2025

POST-CONVENTION

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

8:46 A.M. - 9:57 A.M.

Tampa Convention Center Room

122-123

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS .....	3
CONSENT AGENDA .....	10
PROPOSED FY '26 BUDGET .....	17
PROPOSED ALA FOUNDATION '26 BUDGET .....	59

P R O C E E D I N G S

PRESIDENT RAY: National Executive

Committee meeting will now come to order. Please disable all electronic devices or place them in silent mode. Please rise and remain standing for the opening ceremonies. National Chaplain Nancy Magginnis will lead us in our invocation.

Following the prayer, Americanism Chairman Diana Sirovina will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance and the national anthem, followed by Constitution & Bylaws Chair Sallie Rossman leading us in the Preamble to the Constitution.

MS. MAGGINNIS: Dear Father. As we begin a new administrative year in the American Legion Auxiliary, we ask that You remember, that we remember You are the potter, and we are the clay. In the song, "The Potter's Hand" by Darlene Zschech, we ask that You take us, mold us, use us, fill us as we give our life to the potter's hand. We know You will guide us, lead us, and walk beside us. We thank You for all that You have led us to do during the past

administrative year, for our veterans, our children, and our communities. We know that, as each of us takes on new responsibilities in the American Legion Auxiliary, that you will be there for us to continue to touch lives and assist us in our efforts to bring healing where it's needed. Father, help us with our decisions today, that they may be made following the wisdom you have given each of us. Help us to remember that we are here for *Service Not Self*. In Your name, we pray. And all God's people said Amen.

IN UNISON: Amen.

(Pledge of Allegiance)

IN UNISON: Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light. What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming? Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight, o'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming. And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof through the night that our flag was still there. O say, does that star spangled banner yet wave,

o'er the land of the free, and the home of the  
brave.

For God and country, we associate  
ourselves together for the following purposes:  
to uphold and defend the Constitution of the  
United States of America; to maintain law and  
order; to foster and perpetuate a 100 percent  
Americanism; to preserve the memories and  
incidents of our associations during all wars; to  
inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the  
community, state, and nation; to combat the  
autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to  
make right the master of might; to promote peace  
and goodwill on Earth; to safeguard and transmit  
to posterity the principles of justice, freedom,  
and democracy; to participate in and contribute  
to the accomplishments of the aims and purposes  
of the American Legion; to consecrate and  
sanctify our association by our devotion to  
mutual helpfulness.

PRESIDENT RAY: You may be seated.

Before we begin the business of the day, I want

to take a few minutes to welcome you all to your new role as the 2025-2026 National Executive Committee. Welcome.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT RAY: I want to thank all of you for attending this morning with Chris Dickey. She provides much needed strong information for all of you to conduct your jobs well.

Those present who are eligible to vote today and at the subsequent NEC meetings, are the NEC members, including National Executive Committee person from each department, the five national division vice presidents, the national chaplain, national historian, national treasurer, national secretary, national vice president, and the national president. Those present at the NEC meeting with voice, but no vote, are our wonderful Past National Presidents.

We welcome our visitors and remind you that you may listen to the discussion, but are not permitted to participate in debate, nor to vote.

Members of the National Executive Committee, you are now serving in a national role. You are part of the board of directors, with a fiduciary responsibility to the national organization. As a member of the NEC, you no longer have the interests of your department as your primary focus. You are serving as national representatives of the national organization, and you must be making decisions in casting your votes according to what is in the best interest of the national organization.

For future meetings, you will again receive information in advance, and you will be expected to have read those materials in preparation for the next meeting. Your role is a very important role, and we appreciate your diligence in attending to your duties thoughtfully and responsibly on behalf of the national organization.

Now, to get to the business at hand. The chair asks that those of you wishing to address the meeting make your way to a

microphone, as this is the only way your remarks can be heard for recording by our professional court reporter for the transcripts of this meeting. Also, please be sure that when making any remarks, you address the chair. Your attendance today was recorded electronically when you entered the room. If you are a voting member of the NEC, and did not get checked in upon entry, please see a staff member before you leave today.

For this meeting, and future NEC meetings, the minutes will be approved by a Minutes Approval Committee. The chair appoints the NEC from Kansas as the immediate Past National President's NEC, Massachusetts as the vice president's NEC, and Idaho as the Minutes Approval Committee responsible for approving the minutes for this year's NEC meetings.

There is a correction on your appointments list. The third is to be Idaho, not Illinois, under the Minutes Approval Committee. Idaho NEC, would you stand so people can just

know -- the three of you stand so they know who you are? Kansas, Massachusetts, and Idaho.

Thank you. There we go. Then we know.

It's my pleasure to introduce to you the head table. Your national vice president, Coral May Grout.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT RAY: Central Division national vice president, Ann Buchanan.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT RAY: Eastern Division national vice president, Ree Ross.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT RAY: Northwestern Division national vice president, Shareen Johnson.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT RAY: Southern Division national vice president, there she is, Vickie Thrower-Mills.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT RAY: And our Western Division national vice president is still in Ireland. She didn't get home overnight.

But I know she's having a wonderful time, and she did send her greetings, and apologies.

National historian Nancy Magginnis.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT RAY: Oh, sorry. See, and I had that fixed in my head, I had it fixed in my head, but they got it this way, so we mixed up. Nancy Magginnis, national chaplain.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT RAY: And national historian, Hilary Ott.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT RAY: National secretary, Kathy Daudistel.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT RAY: National treasurer, Marybeth Revoir.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT RAY: And our all-important convention parliamentarian, Chris Dickey.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT RAY: Today's consent agenda

has been updated, including the change I just made for you on the appointments list. It now includes ratifying the national president's appointments and adopting the amendments to National Standing Rules, Article VII, Committees, national committees ALA Girls Nation. A list of the appointments was on your chairs when you arrived, and the amendment you received in your meeting packet. As a reminder, the national president serves as an ex-officio member of all committees. Does anyone wish to remove anything from the consent agenda?

Hold, please. As Trish would say.

OK.

MS. SEELEY MORRIS: Excuse me. Madam Chair?

PRESIDENT RAY: Yes, Glynis. Chair recognizes Glynis.

MS. SEELEY MORRIS: I've lost my voice. PRESIDENT RAY: I know.

MS. SEELEY MORRIS: The way you just said, I'm just trying to get a clarifying question in --

PRESIDENT RAY: Yes.

MS. SEELEY MORRIS: -- the way you just said that, is that including the Girls Nation resolution --

PRESIDENT RAY: Yes.

MS. SEELEY MORRIS: -- in the consent agenda?

PRESIDENT RAY: That was in the consent agenda, yes, ma'am. Yes. And we now have -- we've passed this amendment, and so I have named a Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee that I would like to add to this appointments list. The chair, which is the Western Division member this year, will be Linda Boone. She will be on a two-year term. The vice chair, who will be the Southern Division rep, her term will end in 2029, Rhonda Dohr of Texas. D-O-H-R.

The Central Division member ending in 2030 will be Suzanne Knapp, from the Department of Michigan. The Eastern Division member ending in 2028 will be Anne Gobi, from the Department of Massachusetts. The Northwestern Division member, ending in 2026 -- as you can see, they're staggered years because we're just getting this

first year started. So, one will come off, and a new one will be named, and so on. Does everybody understand that? OK.

The Northwestern Division is Jean Walker from the Department of Minnesota. The Finance Committee liaison will be Past National President Lisa Williamson of Alaska, and staff members will be Executive Director Ben Hendricks and Deputy Executive Director Tamara Shumate. And the other one that I noticed that I did not see on that list was the Louisville National Convention chair. It will be Doris; she goes by Dee, Schutz, S-C-H-U-T-Z, from the Department of Kentucky.

Does anyone have any questions about those additions? Which one? The whole thing.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The whole list.

PRESIDENT RAY: The whole list. OK.

I'm not going to go through their years again, is that all right?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

PRESIDENT RAY: OK, the years too?

OK. Long-Range Strategic Planning, Western Division, Linda Boone, who will serve as chair. Her term on the committee will end in 2027. Southern Division, Rhonda Dohr, D-O-H-R, Department of Texas, will end in 2029. Central Division, Suzanne Knapp, K-N-A-P-P. Her term will end in 2030, Department of Michigan. '30, 2030.

Member for the Eastern Division is Anne Gobi from the Department of Massachusetts. And Gobi is G-O-B-I. And her term will end in 2028. The Northwestern Division member, term ending in 2026, is Jean Walker, from the Department of Minnesota. The Finance Committee liaison for this committee is Lisa Williamson from Alaska.

And the staff will be the executive director, Ben Hendricks, H-E-N-D-R-I-C-K-S, and deputy executive director, Tamara Shumate. S-H-U-M-A-T-E, as if we all don't know how to spell her name. And the Louisville National Convention chair will be Doris D. Schutz, C-H-U-T-Z (sic), from the Department of Kentucky.

You got it?

IN UNISON: Yes.

PRESIDENT RAY: Awesome. That was not the reason that it was not there; we didn't know if it would pass. So, we had to wait and see. OK. So, I will ask again. And does anyone wish to remove anything from the consent agenda? OK. The chair will assume a motion to adopt the consent agenda.

All those in favor of adopting the consent agenda, please say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

PRESIDENT RAY: Those opposed, please say no. The ayes have it and the consent agenda is adopted. What is that? Is it me? Oh, it's not me. OK. I'm like whoa. OK. So, we are trying to figure out the speaker. Hang on.

In the meantime, we're going to keep going. You received a copy of the resolution concerning verification of corporate officers. Please be aware that this convention both elected and confirmed 2025-2026 American Legion Auxiliary

national officers. While our Auxiliary governing documents do not require this resolution, some of our financial institutes require a resolution adopted by the board of directors, which is all of you, verifying our corporate officers.

I am so sorry, should we just unplug it, or do something? OK. Turning this off didn't do anything. I have a good mouth; I can just wing it. Yeah, you just -- whoa. Thank you, Michelle (phonetic). OK, now this one doesn't work, because it's hooked to that speaker, apparently. Hm? Oh, OK. OK. I can do that. I was a nurse. I yelled for help a lot. So, I did. While our Auxiliary governing documents do not require this resolution, some of our financial institutions require a resolution adopted by the board of directors to verify our corporate officers.

Is there any objection to adopting the resolution concerning verification of corporate officers which was previously provided in your packet? Hearing no objection, the resolution is

adopted. The chair asks that the four corporate officers see Gary Ward, Director of Finance, immediately following the close of the executive session, to sign some official paperwork. Thank you.

National Finance Chair Nicole Clapp will present the proposed FY '26 budget of the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Pause)

PRESIDENT RAY: We're giving the gentleman a moment. Are we good now? OK. Thank you.

MS. CLAPP: OK. Madam President. Good morning. Welcome. On behalf of your National Finance Committee, we have prepared a budget in conjunction with national headquarters, staff, and upcoming leadership. And so, we're going to start with the narrative. The narrative will be up here on the screen. So, if you want to follow along and just listen, that would be fine. You have it all in front of you, as well as you have an additional document in the packet,

after the Foundation budget, which we will go to, which was regarding AEF. So, this is going to be in two parts this morning.

All right, I see many familiar faces, and I see many new faces. So welcome, NEC. Main thing for the NEC, again, is your fiduciary responsibilities, and realizing that those responsibilities include a budget, which is this morning. You will also receive ongoing financial statements. And again, looking at our accounting practices. Your Finance Committee this year, as you can see on the appointments agenda, is vice chairman, Past National President Sharon Conatser. And Past National President Nancy Brown-Park, who is unable to be here due to health concerns. We have Past National President Lisa Williamson as our new member, and our resident expert who just came off of being Finance chairman, Janet Jefford, Past National President as well. So that is our committee this year.

So, for '26, FY '26, some people get

confused thinking, well, it's only '25. Well, the fiscal year ends in the middle of next year, so that's why it's FY '26. So, this will be the third straight year of a positive financial outlook, and that is something to be commended. It is something to be remembered. And it is also to be marked because of a dues increase that we had. So, you will see that when you look at the comparison of the financials of how without the dues increase, how would we be able to sustain what we hope to accomplish in our mission driven year, OK?

So, with that, if we scroll down, you will see the projected income. 11,800,000. Expenses, 11,800,000. And what we will talk about, about designated funds, is that we will release designated funds from what I consider -- those of you that know me; you have a savings account, and you have your checkbook. At home, we need to live out of the checkbook. Sometimes we have to dip into the savings account and the rainy day fund.

Well, for us to sustain many of our initiatives, we have to dip into our savings account. And you can see there's the asterisk, IT, building supplies, excuse me, scholarships, and pension. OK? So, the largest expense category you'll see, which does not surprise, is compensation and benefits, volunteer travel, and the *Auxiliary* magazine, which we will touch on in individual areas. And our largest income area, of course, is our membership dues, and then our interest in dividends. You heard in Janet's report from the platform about how well we did in investments to kind of get us over the hump, so to speak.

So, as we look at that, those are the two things that really will sustain us going forward. The budget, if you scroll down, you can see right there. Stop, please. Budgeted increases primarily reflect what we're trying to do. With the incoming national president, we sit down with her, she has her, what I consider wish list. And then we look at our national

treasurer, Marybeth Revoir, who is sitting on the platform, with whom I have worked through this together for years now. And she looks at the nitty-gritty. I look at the 30,000-foot level.

So, Marybeth, thank you for making sure that every one of Pam's thoughts, hopefully wishes, became a reality in this budget, because of being mission driven, family focused. How can we do that if we did not look at what the future had to entail, including strategic planning moving forward? So, opportunities for advancement.

This year, video capabilities. You may have seen a few things. We had JP with us forever for High Point, who did all of our video production in the last couple of years. With his health concerns, and impending retirement, we have switched to Diesel Jack, which is kind of an interesting combination phrase, Diesel Jack Media. Probably the most prominent message that you may have seen recently was the Poppy Day production. And they're at many of the Legion

and Auxiliary events and taping and getting all of the backstories.

It's kind of like when you go to watch the Olympics. I love the sports, because everybody knows I'm a sports fanatic, but it's those back stories that really tell the message. Those are heartstrings, and that's what you see produced. So, for us, we will continue to work with them.

And like all of you, social media. As some of you know, before I became national president, I did not do one ounce of social media. I didn't even turn it on. So, I sat with the marketing team, and media, to learn what to do and what not to do. But social media definitely is our personal internal mode of communication. Not only professionally from our staff, but from you, our members.

So, our magazine, as you can see, our periodic rate -- and you heard this, Janet also mentioned the platform, that we needed to look at what we could do for postage. We all know

postage. If we think when we were a child, how much did a postage stamp cost? And I'm looking at some of you young ones, it's even gone up since then, all right? So realizing that we potentially have about a \$45,000 savings, and that was strictly the staff digging in and figuring out what could we do to reduce our expense, so with the changing of our periodic rate, and that would have gone into effect here with the May issue. So, we're looking forward to having those savings.

Supporting young leaders.

You heard a lot from Pam yesterday about the importance of SOY, Spirit of Youth, scholarships, and the Foundation continues to give \$45,000 to support those scholarships that we want to continue to give and the area of greatest need. So, if you check the area of greatest need, if you are so inclined to make a donation, that area of greatest need will, this turn, go this year, towards SOY. And that is also our national president's project special area.

Strengthening departments. I see many of you, including my own department, the medallion winner. So, this year, the medallion will continue. The medal medallion, thank you Past National President Trish for that initiative, and where we're going to look for, what can we expand upon to make that gold standard for the upcoming years, of what do we want to see in our members, as well as our departments?

And moving on to the next page, you'll see elevating ALA profile through sponsorships. Sponsorships provide the ALA, as it says, an opportunity to build strategic partnerships and relationships that are mission aligned with other nonprofits. As well as, National President Pam, are you ready? All right. This is her show. Here we go.

PRESIDENT RAY: You all know my love for Honor Flight. I talked about it yesterday as part of the design of my pin. We have an amazing opportunity for the American Legion Auxiliary to

sponsor an all-female Honor Flight. And female veterans hold a very special place in my heart. And for, do you have the amount up there? Don't remember, 50?

MS. CLAPP: \$50,000.

PRESIDENT RAY: \$50,000. Not only do we get those folks there, but we take them to see the memorials that have been built in their honor. But we get some of the greatest public relations, and our information out there, because this talks about wrapping the bus with the American Legion Auxiliary. Shirts that will have the American Legion Auxiliary emblem, and the fact that we sponsored the flight. A banner, as you all know, they get their picture taken at the World War II memorial with the Washington Monument in the background. That banner will say, flight sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary. This is a huge, huge opportunity for us. And in the past, we've never had a sponsorship fund where we could take advantage of something like this.

So, this is why, with the help of many of the Past National Presidents, along with Finance Committee, we felt that it was important to be prepared for when something like this comes our way. Just like when we sponsored a table at inauguration in January. We had to find those funds, because we didn't have that sponsorship fund. So that is the purpose of bringing that sponsorship fund into our budget.

MS. CLAPP: So, we would hope that you would consider supporting National President Pam's special focus area this year. As a fellow nurse, I'm interested to see how they're going to banner, and they're going to wrap, those oxygen tanks, Madam President. But you know, we'll take it wherever we can see that beautiful emblem. OK. So, we'll talk about sponsorships when we get down to reserves. But that is a key area.

Now, we look at critical points for monitoring. As we all know, membership has declined, as have many, many, many other membership organizations. So, in the last ten years, you will see our membership has declined

about 160,000 members, which -- to the total of about \$2.7 million. With lost revenue, we have to figure out ways to recoup that, to be able to continue with the programs that we so value. Canceling more units than we charter. Now think about those words, cancel more units than we charter. So, 165 units were canceled. 49 new units were chartered.

Now, we had a discussion just the other night. It would be interesting, and we're going to challenge the membership department to help us figure out, of those units that closed, how -- what was the percentage of the members shifted, transferred to a new unit, or did we ultimately lose those members to -- how many of that 160,000 members were because of unit closures, turning in charters? So, we're just trying to figure out, diving into data helps us to really assess. As we learned years ago, in a survey about between years two and three, about 45 percent is our retention of lost members. If you're a new member who joins, between year two and three,

you're like, this isn't what I thought it was going to be.

So, we want to make sure that we're attacking, and transferring, and communicating, what needs to be the top of mind when we're working with those individuals. So that is something that we're going to work on this year.

AEF, this is where we're going to shift gears just a little bit. AEF, does anybody know, AEF, who started the program for us? Wisconsin. Absolutely.

And Wisconsin can't answer the next question. Who was the individual who gave a bequest of \$83,000? Helen Colby Small. And I'm going to date myself because, when I came on the Finance Committee back in 2009, I was sitting at my first Finance meeting, and all these PNPs were around me, and they were talking about Helen, and I'm like, I don't see Helen in the room. I didn't know who Helen was back then. So, you all have an advantage. Helen Colby Small. All right.

So, as we look to accommodate, we have

learned that natural disasters are on the uptake.  
Correct? We saw over 400 and some thousand  
dollars. We saw, I think it was \$568,000, is  
what we paid out this last year, if I'm not  
mistaken, on the big screen the other day. So,  
what we need to do is we need to have a program  
that's more sustainable. And so, in your  
packet, behind the budget, behind the Foundation  
budget, you will see a whole narrative about AEF.  
But what I really want you to do is, I really  
want you just to listen and take step by step  
with me to understand this. Fair enough?  
OK.

All right. So, the recommendation from  
the National Headquarters Development and Finance  
teams, along with the expertise of our external  
investors. So, Vallejo is a word you will  
probably start to hear. That is our external  
investment advisor; who have been with us my  
entire time that I have been on the Finance  
Committee, and this will be between this and  
national president and upcoming, 18 years. So we  
very much trust their value and their concern and

their considerations.

So, the key thing is that the current budget that we're approving today will not be impacted, number one, by this initiative. OK. It is a part of it, so we wanted it part of finance. But I want you to understand that this is a standalone motion for which I will be asking for support. So that's number one. Number two is, we feel that the Foundation, their support, our own members support, everyone -- we cannot support enough of the natural disasters on our own merits of donations. OK. That's number two.

This year, you heard Janet say we had to dip into our reserves, twice, to make sure you, the members, were able to receive the disaster and the -- help me, what's the other? Hardship, I was thinking -- I was thinking of another word.

Hardship funds were needed. All right. We had to supply an additional 250,000. We had an NEC meeting to do that. We had an NEC meeting to get another \$150,000. All right? We want to make sure that we are proactive enough that we are taking care of our members, members taking care

of members. But that does not mean we need donations to stop. We need people to continue to support our programming as well as our initiatives.

So, the grants that are awarded first will come through the Helen Colby Small Fund, known to us as AEF. Now, when -- what has happened, when we haven't had enough funds, going back to the well, so to speak, going into our savings account to get the funds. So, what we would like to do is move \$5 million. I know that's a lot of zeros. OK. That's a lot of money, \$5 million into a separate fund to support only AEF if it's needed. OK? And by not restricting those funds, we can move it back into the general fund where we need to at any point in time. So, we're going to designate it, but we're not going to restrict it. OK. Those are two different terms. Kind of like expulsion, and, removal, and everything we talked about this week. What word is the right word? OK. We're going to have control of it. All right.

So doing that, then what will happen is

every year we're going to look at it and see if we need to use any of that money. If we need to use that money, we're only going to transfer out about 5 percent of it, which will be about \$250,000, because \$250,000 is average, over the last four to five years of disasters or hardships that we have paid out. This year, mother nature, calmed down. OK. You -- we know you're there. We appreciate you being there. Tampa, calm the weather down. It's supposed to be the Sunshine State, right? OK. So \$250,000. All right. Does that start to make sense for people? OK. So, we're going to do that for the first five years. Then year 6 and into perpetuity, we're only going to transfer that five percent as needed. All right.

So, if there are no questions about that, I, on behalf of the Finance Committee, would ask for a motion of support. A second is not needed because it comes from the Finance Committee. So, I would ask National President Pam for the consideration to designate the \$5 million for the AEF.

PRESIDENT RAY: The question is on the transfer of \$5 million from the ALA general investment account to a separate investment account to generate income for the American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund. Is there any discussion? OK. All those in favor, please say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

PRESIDENT RAY: Those opposed? Motion carries.

MS. CLAPP: Thank you. Step one. Thank you very much. OK. Then we will continue on, past AEF. We've talked about SOY. SOY, we typically are now. Since we had the last dues increase, \$100,000 is what we anticipate paying out in scholarships on an annual basis. Ladies, I need help. Gentlemen, I need help. We don't have enough scholarship applicants. Isn't that sad? So for us to want to spend \$100,000 with the dues increase, that was one of our initiatives. We increased the amount. We don't have enough to spend it on.

That's embarrassing. So please help us get applicants, and we'll be more than glad to spend \$100,000. Fair enough? OK.

Now, event expense. You've heard me say for years, what's our biggest expense? National convention. So Janet. And when we do the financials, we always get to chuckle, because you only get to see the first nine months. You don't -- at convention, you don't see the end. All right. So we wanted to kind of give you an idea. \$902,000 is the cost of National Convention. Well, \$35 a person at our number of attendees doesn't quite cut it, but that's OK. We budget for the difference, all right? The gap.

Girls Nation, you will see that we are raising Girls Nation fees from 750 for two girls to 800 for two girls. OK. As I heard someone whisper, it's still a bargain. It is, for -- you heard the Girls Nation president. Someday, let's hope we all get to vote for her. Right?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Yeah.

MS. CLAPP: You know, \$478,000 is our

expense.

Department Leadership National Conference. That is growing our own, our mentorship and our teaching programs of our upcoming leaders; \$85 is registration. We considered raising it. We did not. So, \$257,000 is the total cost of that, what, three and a half days for our training? And national chairs, I hope you would feel that you're coming in, even if you're a seasoned chairman. You can always learn something every day and there is no expense because that is, again, growing our own leaders for tomorrow.

So, you'll see in there the cost of attendance versus the actual cost. So, in ranked order we know National Convention, Girls Nation, then the leadership conference and then chairman's meeting are our biggest expenses. Mission Training used to be a lot more, but it has -- we've been able to streamline that significantly through the years, because people would say, well, that one seems to be a lot, but

there is registration also with that one.

Questions on events? OK.

Then we'll move on to strategic focus and priorities. Legion Family, obviously with The American Legion, to say family, we cannot say it without American Legion in the title. We are here because of them, and we continue to work hand in hand with them on a regular basis. We meet with them twice a year formally as leadership, and the staff work with them on an ongoing basis. And in that process, we not only look at training this year, mission trainings. This will be the second year that we're having joint mission trainings with the American Legion.

Attending conferences, relooking at National Convention structures, looking at what we can do for understanding expenses and how we can streamline programing together. So those are some of the key points that we work on together that are behind the scenes. The impact report, impact reports are focusing on, only that 20 percent of our members fill out an income -- income, yeah, income statement, impact report,

can tell what I got on my mind this morning. Realizing that 20 percent of our members only fill out an income, kind of keep saying it, impact report, sorry, this morning. That's a lot of numbers left on the table. That is very sad. Yeah. Yeah.

MS. MORGAN: (Indiscernible).

MS. CLAPP: Go ahead. You're fine. I can hear you. OK.

MS. MORGAN: Maureen Morgan, Department of New York. My department requires every chairperson to fill out an impact report, as part of our --

MS. CLAPP: Wonderful.

MS. MORGAN: -- requirements. If they don't fill out their report, they don't get their stipend.

MS. CLAPP: So, if you heard the Department of New York requires that chairmen fill out the report to submit to department, that then in turn gets submitted to National. If we had 51 other departments doing that, we would be amazing. It would be amazing. Epic, amazing,

and incredible. Any other words this week. We do not; only 20 percent of our members actually are putting down what they're doing. So, we are challenging you. My second challenge for you is how can you get your numbers recorded and submitted? We all here at the end of the day, that report gets submitted with the Legion to Congress. It is important. We always have heard we're our best-kept secret. We need each other.

MS. MORGAN: I also have it on my checklist. As the department president that I'm going to start calling them at the end --

MS. CLAPP: Calling units. Yeah. To get your impact numbers.

MS. MORGAN: Yeah.

MS. CLAPP: All right. Thank you, New York.

All right. So moving on to returns on investment. You will see that where our programs are, trying to assess that value that we do have. And then growing leadership. You heard Pam say, in her acceptance speech yesterday, about her self-paced leadership program for course work. Staff have assured us that the secretary topics

of the top 10 are the first things to be looked at, and then they will work down from there. So I'm told more to come later this fall.

And the ops guide is in tandem with that course, the ops guide, those of you that remember the big Red Book?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Yeah.

MS. CLAPP: Well, the big Red Book, it is important, but it needs to be updated and let's do it so everyone can have access to it instead of printing, printing, and shipping, the things we've already talked about. So all of that will be forthcoming. All right? All right.

Benefits, benefits have changed in the last few years. We used to get a lot of greeting cards in the mail. We used to get a lot of information about different benefit programs. So, what we have done is the royalty income, do you remember the old poppy bags that we got? The black bag that kind of had a little smell to it. And those really thin socks, and those pens that didn't work?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

MS. CLAPP: We're done with that.

OK. We've been done with that now for a year. Royalty income had kind of dried up from that. We got to look at another avenue, because I still get all those same products from other organizations. OK. So, for us, looking at what we can do. So, our goal is to increase by \$10,000 every year. So right now, we're hoping for a little over \$209,000 that we will get back in royalties.

And using Amwins, and Liberty Mutual. The commercial kind of sticks in my head on that one. And emblem sales, if you see the pop-up sales, all of those types of things that help us. What's been interesting to us is, though, that access fees also go up. How many do online memberships? Credit card fees, all those things you think you're trying to make life easier for all of us. And then we kind of get it hit on the back end, but we're balancing it. And that's what checks and balances are. A budget is a guide. It is there. We'll use it. We'll adjust

as needed. But if there are changes, you will be informed. Trust me on that. OK.

The magazine. All right. I'm going to do a straw poll this morning. This morning is our last day of convention. I need a little audience participation. If we would reduce the paper printed magazine to three editions, and one edition would come out virtually, how many of you would be accepting of that? No clickers this morning. I think we have our answer. Thank you. That would be an annual savings of \$300,000. OK. Staff in the back? I think we heard it loud and clear. All right.

So, Deb?

MS. LEWIS: Deb Lewis, NEC from Illinois. Is there any possibility of opting out of the magazine in print?

MS. CLAPP: You know, I asked that very same question during finance. And here's the answer. When online registration, when you redo your membership, renew your membership. We're hoping that we can do that. Currently we cannot.

MS. LEWIS: I only ask because many of

us live in households with multiple Auxiliary members and get multiple copies to our house.

MS. CLAPP: Me too.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you.

MS. CLAPP: Yes. So what we are hoping --  
Yes. Glynis.

MS. MORRIS: I work for the Department of Nevada American Legion; the Legion has a way to opt out of the magazine.

MS. CLAPP: So, we are -- we are hoping to get there. But what we're anticipating is the November issue, if this is OK, that it would be Girls Nation and National Convention would be suitable, is what we're told from staff, for digital delivery. Oh, thank you. Oh, that was much easier than I thought. That was maybe my biggest worry this morning. All right. Thank you. We appreciate that very much.

OK then. Long-Range Strategic Planning. We've heard of that. The chairman will be Past National President Linda Boone. We've got representatives from all of the divisions, and on a staggered five-year term.

OK. Great. All right.

So, let's go to reserves. All right.

So, you see the table there of reserves. We've tried to simplify this into just three columns of information for you. Helen Colby Small is known as?

IN UNISON: AEF.

MS. CLAPP: Good answer. All right.

So we've got where we need to be, realizing that our undesignated, so that is our general fund, that is where we have the liberty to make changes. 42 million. People are like, why don't we spend it? Why don't we spend it? Well, thank you for those that are shaking versus all the nodding, we've got to have sustainability. Because as national president during COVID, if that wasn't a rainy-day time, I don't know when it was, that we had to dip in to figure out how we were going to be sustainable. OK.

So if you look at the second column, these are the items that we are going to dip into our savings for the building, 250,000. Technology and facilities, 70,000. Retirement,

25,000. And there's the sponsorship line. We are going to take out 100,000. 50,000 of it will go for the Honor Flight. All right. So 450, right about 450,000 will be taken out of our savings to make sure that we can be sustainable in our programing. Questions on reserves? OK.

Then the bottom line, if you flip towards the next page, you will see a lot of numbers. And I saw Mary Davis looking at hers right away, and she looked at the numbers, and look at the dues increase. Look at where the expenses were from dues, when we were six million. Then we dip down, we dip down. Then we had a dues increase, you can tell. And here we go. So if we look at royalties, look at royalties. The third column, you can see how that has just slowly dwindled down. OK. So we've had to backfill, different programing, grants. You can just look right down.

And then the direct mail, the 647,000, it popped up a little bit. And now we know that it has run dry. So for us, we are looking at an overall budget of revenue of 10.3 million.

Expense, you saw the 11 million there. And then the release of the funds so that, with our dues increase at the very bottom line, we are still able to have a positive budget.

And I will tell you, years and years ago, it was really hard for me to get up here and present a negative budget to you. In my business, I couldn't do it. In health care, I could not do it. So anytime we start, Gary and his team know, we're not following discussions. We're not having any more discussions. Mary and Beth are not going to do any more work until you give us a guide of what looks to be a positive bottom line, and we'll work from there.

Yes, Glynis.

MS. MORRIS: On the occupancy line --

MS. CLAPP: Um-hum?

MS. MORRIS: You can't hear.

(Indiscernible).

MS. CLAPP: Occupancy. Occupancy line.

Oh, and expenses?

MS. MORRIS: Could you please explain more? I see that it does explain some.

MS. CLAPP: Yep.

MS. MORRIS: That's a big jump.

MS. CLAPP: Yep. Do you want to go through that, Gary?

MR. WARD: Yes.

MS. CLAPP: There you go.

MR. WARD: Yeah. The largest jumps in that line are that we, I'm -- used to be on a file server, and we're moving that to the cloud. And it's, like, a two-year process. So that is a few hundred thousand dollars. And it's something that they don't support the file server anymore. So we have to do it. And the other big jump there is we were investing into the building. So we're putting about 250,000 a year into that. And Tamara has a program. She's kind of working to update some things in the building that were kind of an issue.

MS. MORRIS: OK.

MR. WARD: So that's a half a million right there.

MS. MORRIS: It's a big jump.

MR. WARD: So yeah. Thank you.

MS. CLAPP: Yeah. Both of those lines were a jump. I lost my mic.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think you did.

MS. CLAPP: There we go. I think when you purchase an older building, just like an older home, you have ongoing maintenance, and a lot of sustainability efforts have been made for the building. Now it's more routine maintenance.

Yes?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What you mentioned earlier, which I think is the most important point, is membership. And it's somewhat of an exposure there. I'm wondering if the strategic planning committee is going to work in tandem to try to come up with -- so if someone could speak to that.

MS. CLAPP: Yes, Madam President?

PRESIDENT RAY: Yes. The strategic plan this year is going to be in that planning process, looking at our organization as a whole and starting to put together what they believe will be sustainability, and not only for today, but for tomorrow for our organization. So yes,

they'll be looking at everything to get those goals together.

MS. CLAPP: Thank you, Teresa. OK. MS.

MORGAN: I'm a new member of The American Legion. For membership, the Legion has an option if you would like to pay your dues in a three-year or five-year program, where instead of paying a PUFL, maybe pay for three years or five years, instead of paying for a PUFL, or paying one year at a time. If that might help.

MS. CLAPP: We currently don't have that option available to us. But now with technology changes, we don't say never to anything.

MS. MORGAN: And I thought that might help if you wanted to put it in your planning process.

MS. CLAPP: I think it's a good consideration of thoughts. Yes. NEC member from North Dakota?

MS. TWETE: Oh, thank you. Judy Twete from North Dakota. This is going to sound kind of cheap or frugal.

PRESIDENT RAY: Frugal. Frugal.

MS. TWETE: Conservative.

PRESIDENT RAY: OK.

MS. TWETE: In the return on investment portion you talked about, is the table at the inaugural event something that was really worthwhile? I mean, did we get that much?

MS. CLAPP: So very good question. And I think the things that only happen once every four years. I think we have to stop and evaluate them once they come, because we have one-offs that come periodically. And so Past National President Trish, current National President Pam, were both in attendance. So I would like to defer to them if I could please.

PRESIDENT RAY: I think it was more than worth our return on investment for two reasons. Number one, we got to honor 24 Medal of Honor recipients that evening. We were able to have a larger American Legion Auxiliary presence because we sponsored that table. We had our name on the signage. We had opportunities for photos with the, you know, with the recipients. We had

the opportunity to talk to the recipients about the American Legion Auxiliary, and what we could do for them, not only the recipient, but their family. Feel it was really a strong return on investment for us because, in the past, we have been invited guests, but we have not had the opportunity to say we, the American Legion Auxiliary, are here for you. I think it was a huge step forward for us as an organization to be able to let people know who we are and what we have available. So I feel -- I don't know, Past National President Trish? Thank you.

MS. WARD: Well, I'm a little talked out actually, but as I -- as I was thinking about the question, so many times in this organization, I think about all of us saying how many times we've heard people say, gosh, I never even really knew about the American Legion Auxiliary. Oh, well, I know the Legion, but I never really knew about you. And you know, over, and over, and over. And if we don't do things like that, that that's going after that problem. So it aligns us with the Legion.

And that was really, when this came up, one of the primary things immediately. And we had to respond quickly, but it was aligning with our Legion. And they wanted -- they really wanted us there. I'm not sure my heart could have taken no, you know, we can't be there. So the finance team made it happen. But it's counteracting that that problem and that problem is driving the membership decline. So we have to be doing more high profile things like this. And so thank you, '24-'25 finance, I think it was extremely worthwhile.

MS. CLAPP: This is a pun, but it's -- this time we needed to be at the big kid table, not just at the little kid table. We know we're the -- we're the step -- we're the sister, the little stepsister. We get that. But there's times when we have to put our foot forward, and we have to spend our money to make awareness, to make money. At the end of the day, which is membership. OK.

Yes?

MS. MCLATCHIE: I have a question.

Shelley from Colorado, I had a question about direct mailing and elements and trash in --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Would you go to the microphone?

MS. MCLATCHIE: Shelley from Colorado. I have questions about direct mailings, and our trash-in/trash-out kind of ALAMIS database and letting more of our units put in their own information. And then the mailings go out and we have so many addresses, emails that are not working, and how can we address that to save national money when it seems like Colorado, at least, is doing our own mailings, over the top of national --

MS. CLAPP: The national mailings.

MS. MCLATCHIE: Um-hum.

MS. CLAPP: OK. Sharon, I think you were going to say something.

MS. CONATSER: Madam President. Sharon Conatser, Past National President. I'm addressing this from a secretary standpoint, I feel there needs to be procedures in place in

each department and policies as to how those changes come in and get made. And if you want the units to do their own, then there's that ALAMIS user information that you need to encourage in your departments. We were slow on the draw, I'm going to admit it, when it very first started, but boy, it's been great.

And so really, the changes can only be made at the -- at the hand of the department or the units, and it's up to the department secretaries and leadership to encourage that ALAMS change. And the mailings that go out for fundraising, I mean, whatever. Most of that doesn't overlap much what our department anyway sends out, so.

MS. CLAPP: Yes, I think -- so excuse me. Go ahead. NEC in the front row?

MS. HOBBS: Susan Hobbs, Department of Georgia. I can't stand up.

MS. CLAPP: OK. Department of Georgia.

MS. HOBBS: (Indiscernible). I know

when the first committee came out, they sent out a survey to members who had left the organization. How about doing that again to find out why we're losing so many members?

MS. CLAPP: So the question is strategic planning. And prior, they asked for members of why they left the organization and surveyed them. Is that a consideration? Is what I'm hearing you say?

PRESIDENT RAY: I think we're open to any considerations, but given that it was just passed two days ago, I don't think they've had the opportunity yet to meet as a group. So yes. But I think we're open to all things, and you have to do surveys and things, in order to know where we need to be, and where we need to go. So I do know that the chair, because I have talked with her about this, has plans. So we're going to do the best we can, to do the best for the organization. So yes.

MS. CLAPP: And realize it can't happen overnight. Communication takes time. Acceptance

takes time. Follow-through takes time, as we just heard on ALAMIS.

Someone in the back was going to stand up. Yes.

MS. SMITH: Tracey Smith, NEC Oklahoma, sorry, this is a little bit late, but I had to do my research to make sure I was correct. But in ALAMIS, if you go to your membership -- go to your membership roster, and you click on a person like, I have three daughters and a granddaughter. If I go to each of theirs and hit, communication, there's a spot there, that you can say, no mail, no magazine. There is that spot there.

MS. CLAPP: But each person has to do it individually, and that's what we're --

MS. SMITH: I can do from my ALAMIS -- well, I have ALAMIS, but your membership chair or your department chair, whoever is doing your ALAMIS, you can go in there -- they can go in there, you can call them and say hey, go in there and mark no, because for juniors that are, my granddaughter's 5 months old, she doesn't need

a magazine.

MS. CLAPP: Correct, yes. She likes a color on it. You know, her favorite color, right?

MS. SMITH: (Indiscernible) until we get everything going.

MS. CLAPP: We hope it would. It's just that you can't do it for -- you've got to have access to do it. And everybody has to mentally go in and do it and follow through. So again, we're asking for participation.

I'm going to do the front row and then I'll hit the back row.

MS. PONTE: No worries. Hi, I'm Temeka Ponte (phonetic), NEC Department of Hawaii. I just actually, ironically, just got a text message from a colleague of mine. If we're looking for a way to get out the ALA the name and brand, they're currently seeking volunteers to decorate the White House for Christmas. We could have a sea of red, go there and sponsor the honor tree that's there as well for Gold Star Families.

MS. CLAPP: Wonderful idea. Wonderful. All right. Pam's scribbling. That's good. All right. Back row. Yeah.

MS. HOOD: I'm talking for the Department of Vermont NEC. I served as the Eastern Division chair of the AEF this last year. And one thing that would help get more donations is, all my Eastern Division people said they were asked, how much did our state donate? How much did our units donate? And we could not get that information. There's got to be a way for a computer system to say, Vermont gave this much, they gave this much last year, they gave this much this year. I'd like to -- I'm the AEF chair again, I'd like to challenge them to do that.

MS. CLAPP: So the question is, or comment more so, is inability to get the current data per division of the organization. Michele DeGennaro, you are the chairman, right, of AEF?

MS. DEGENNARO: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. Michele DeGennaro, AEF chairman. I've already spoken with Carley at our chairman's

meeting we had in March, I believe. We were able to get a complete listing of all the donors, because we're going to be doing thank-you cards, phone calls, like the Foundation does. So it is available. So I'm not really sure what was happening last year, but I can promise you, this year we're going to make it happen. OK.

MS. CLAPP: Fair enough. And Carley's in the back of the room nodding. Sorry.

PRESIDENT RAY: And we really appreciate all of your questions. We truly do. But we need to stick to the subject at hand, which is the budget. OK? So if you have questions about the budget, if you could please stick to that. I would really appreciate it. We're always open for recommendations and suggestions. We're welcome to listen to them. But right now we need to focus on the budget. Thank you.

MS. CLAPP: And that's my ending comment, do you have any other questions about the budget? If not, on behalf of the Finance

Committee, Madam President, I move for the adoption of the FY '26 budget.

PRESIDENT RAY: OK. The question is on the approval of the proposed FY '26 budget as presented. Is there any discussion further? Hearing none. We'll vote. All those in favor, please say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye

PRESIDENT RAY: Those opposed? Please say no. The motion is adopted to pass the budget. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT RAY: Thank you.

MS. CLAPP: Thank you. OK. Please welcome ALA Foundation President Cathleen MacInnes to present the proposed FY '26 budget of the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

MS. MACINNES: Please don't leave. Boy, Nicole and I are really different heights. OK. You have a relatively short one-page proposal in front of you. A couple of things that I do want to note. The income difference

reflects the shift in the national president's fundraising focus, and the increase in budgeted expenses actually also reflects the national president's focus because, as Pam has had the application and acceptance of a grant under the Veteran Projects Fund as a requirement for the Merit Medallion, and there were 32 winners this year, or last year, and I expect we will have a larger number this year, we have some increased staff expense to process those applications for Veteran Projects Fund grants. So that's part of that. The budget was approved by the ALA Foundation Board, was approved for presentation to this NEC. And you will note that this year we have increased our contributions to the VCAF, National VCAF, and to Spirit of Youth and Girls Nation to make sure that those programs are able to continue.

Are there questions that anyone has about our budget? No. OK. OK. If not, Madam President, I would ask that you recognize Diane Duscheck.

PRESIDENT RAY: The chair recognizes Diane Duscheck.

MS. DUSCHECK: Diane Duscheck, Past National President and vice president of the Foundation. I'd like to move that we adopt the fiscal year '26 budget for the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

PRESIDENT RAY: This motion comes from a committee. Therefore, a second is not required. Is that -- am I correct there, Chris -- or because this is a Foundation. So I do need a second. Right? I do need a second.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Second.

PRESIDENT RAY: OK. All right. Questions on the approval of the proposed FY '26 Foundation budget as presented. Is there any discussion? Are you ready for the question? The question is on the approval of the proposed FY '26 ALA Foundation budget as presented. All those in favor, please say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

PRESIDENT RAY: Those opposed, please

say no. The motion is adopted, and the budget is passed.

MS. MACINNES: Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT RAY: Thank you. I hope you all found your gift on your chairs today.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Thank you.

PRESIDENT RAY: You're welcome. You're welcome very much. And you heard earlier on that we're looking for stories. I'm going -- I'm hoping to get some great stories as I visit each of your departments this coming year. And I know that the magazine always likes to hear good stories. So if you have a great story to share, please don't keep it to yourself. Is there any new business to come before this NEC?

MS. WARD: Madam President? I just have a quick question.

PRESIDENT RAY: Chair recognizes Trish Ward.

MS. WARD: Trish Ward, Past National President. I have a question because I'm getting

caught up in all the on the paper. You said that the Minutes Approval Committee is Idaho, Kansas, and Massachusetts.

PRESIDENT RAY: Correct.

MS. WARD: Is that correct? And then on the doc that, it has Illinois, it should be Idaho.

PRESIDENT RAY: It should be.

MS. WARD: OK. The doc also has Connecticut. And it should be --

PRESIDENT RAY: Oh, no, it should be --

MS. WARD: I think it should be Massachusetts.

PRESIDENT RAY: Massachusetts, Kansas and Idaho. Thank you for catching.

MS. WARD: I only bring it up so that the right people sign the doc and --

PRESIDENT RAY: Right.

MS. WARD: -- there's not some sort of --

PRESIDENT RAY: Right. Thank you, I appreciate that. I did not see that change.

Yes. We have -- our national vice president is from Massachusetts, but depends on who you talk to, what state she's really from. So they keep thinking, oh that Connecticut. No, that's not right. Maybe. Where else have you been from? You've been from somewhere else too. I don't -- yeah, Florida. She's been from Florida. She's been from everywhere. So but she is Massachusetts and that is the NEC from Massachusetts that will be on that committee, not Connecticut. So don't panic, Connecticut.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's fine with me.

PRESIDENT RAY: I figured as much.

Yes?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Did you ask the representative from Massachusetts what her nickname is?

PRESIDENT RAY: Oh. I am supposed to ask the NEC for Massachusetts, what your nickname is.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: For minutes.

PRESIDENT RAY: For minutes. OK.  
The Grammar Nazi. OK. That's OK. OK. I'll  
let the staff know, and you deal with it.

At this time, we will be moving to  
executive session. At this time, I ask those who  
are not voting members of the NEC or invited  
guests to please leave the room. Invited guests  
for this executive session will be Past National  
Presidents, staff necessary to run the meeting,  
and Professional Registered Parliamentarian Chris  
Dickey. And we will give you just a few minutes  
to please exit the room if you are not one of  
that group of people.

(Whereupon, the Post-Convention National  
Executive Committee Meeting was adjourned.)