



**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
PRE-CONVENTION MEETING PROCEEDINGS**

**CHARLOTTE CONVENTION CENTER**

**EAST 220 A-F**

**CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA**

**August 26, 2023  
8:00 am EST**

## ATTENDANCE

### National Officers

National President .....	Vickie Koutz
National Vice President .....	Lisa Williamson
Central Division National Vice President .....	Ann Rehbein
Eastern Division National Vice President .....	Veronica Gurney
Northwestern Division National Vice President .....	Marlene Boyer
Southern Division National Vice President .....	Linda Smiley
Western Division National Vice President .....	Eva Wallace
National Chaplain .....	Karen Peel
National Historian.....	Laura "Susie" Clyde
National Secretary.....	Coral May Grout
National Treasurer .....	Marybeth Revoir

### Past National Presidents

Carlene Ashworth  
Linda Boone  
Nancy Brown-Park  
Nicole Clapp  
Sharon Conatser  
Kathy Daudistel  
Mary Davis  
Diane Duscheck  
Virginia Hobbs  
Janet Jefford  
Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan  
Desiree Stoy  
Peggy Thomas  
Kristine West

### National Executive Committee members

Alabama.....	<i>Kathy Phillips (absent)</i>
Alaska .....	Penelope Mazonna
Arizona .....	Jennie Molina
Arkansas .....	<i>Ada Heath (absent)</i>
California.....	Joan Cannon
Colorado .....	Laurie Kuntz
Connecticut.....	Debra Knickerbocker
Delaware .....	Deborah Guenther
District of Columbia .....	Lauren Lloyd
Florida .....	Wanda Brandt
Georgia .....	Susan Hall
Hawaii .....	Brister Thomas
Idaho .....	Carol Dalton
Illinois .....	Patti Williamson
Indiana .....	Charlotte Connors
Iowa .....	Kelly Elliott
Kansas .....	Paula Sellens
Kentucky .....	Bonita Robey
Louisiana .....	Marie Monroe
Maine .....	Joan Caron
Maryland .....	Alta Glotfelty
Massachusetts .....	Donna Blattenberger

Michigan .....	Mary Dubay
Minnesota .....	Jean Walker
Mississippi .....	Elizabeth Belue
Missouri .....	Victoria Ornelas
Montana .....	Christine Nelson
Nebraska .....	Beverly Neel
Nevada .....	Glynis Seeley-Morris
New Hampshire .....	Donna Bryant
New Jersey .....	Margaret McMahon
New Mexico .....	Dorothy Hazen
New York .....	Marie Mock
North Carolina .....	Julie Smith
North Dakota .....	Tammy Ryberg
Ohio .....	Colleen Phillips
Oklahoma .....	Tracey Smith
Oregon .....	Krisann Owens
Pennsylvania .....	Patricia Carnes
Puerto Rico.....	Amanda Torres
Rhode Island .....	Cathleen Camire
South Carolina .....	Pearl Sanders-Mills
South Dakota .....	Mary Jo Stier
Tennessee .....	Charlotte Connors
Texas .....	Shay Kuehner
Utah .....	Judy Daybell
Vermont.....	Corinna Colson
Virginia .....	Lisa Chaplin
Washington .....	Laura Bondurant
West Virginia.....	Paulette Anderson
Wisconsin .....	Bonnie Jakubczyk
Wyoming .....	Vicki Paddock

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## Proceedings

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: If everyone could please take their seats. If everyone could please take their seats. The National Executive Committee meeting will now come to order. Please place all electronic devices in the silent mode and stand for the opening ceremonies.

(Ringling of the bell.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Our National Chaplain, Karen Peel, will lead us in our invocation and moment of silence for our fallen heroes and those currently serving our nation. Following the prayer, Americanism Chairman Michele Degennaro will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem, followed by Constitution and Bylaws Chairman, Diana Sirovina, leading us in the Preamble to the Constitution.

Karen?

CHAPLAIN PEEL: If you will please bow your heads and pray with me.

Our dear Heavenly Father, we are so grateful for this beautiful day that You have given us, and we thank You for bringing us all safely to Charlotte to celebrate the year that we have been given to serve the American Legion Auxiliary. We come to You in prayer before this meeting. We seek Your guidance as we conduct the matters at hand. As we go through this meeting, may we remember to keep the best interest of our organization and our members foremost in our minds. Bless President Vickie as she conducts the business of this meeting.

We thank You for her leadership and for her service this year.  
We thank You for the preparation that has gone into this  
convention, and we pray for these things in Your most holy name.  
Amen.

ALL: Amen.

MS. DEGENNARO: Please join me in the Pledge.

ALL: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United  
States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one  
nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for  
all.

ALL: (Singing.) 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.  
Oh, say does that Star Spangled Banner yet wave, o'er the land  
of the free and the home of the brave?

ALL: 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 one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the  
memories and incidents of our association 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 accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion; to consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: We are compelled to never forget that while we enjoy our daily pleasures, there are others who have endured and may still be enduring the agonies of pain, deprivation, and imprisonment. Before we begin our activities this morning, we pause to remember our POWs and MIAs.

(Ringing of the bell.)

(Moment of silence.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Okay. We're just trying to find the beeping noise. We're going to -- okay. Thank you. It's like oh, I wonder where it's coming from. There you go. We're all good.

This meeting of the National Executive Committee has convened. Welcome, everyone. It is so great to be together in person to celebrate our 102nd National Convention in beautiful North Carolina. As you all know, serving on the National Board is a great responsibility and you have served us well. I appreciate and thank you for your commitment to the national organization.

Today as we conduct our business, it is my hope that you will ask questions and make informed decisions about each

issue presented. Your input is valuable. Please remember to make your way to a microphone, which they are going to be setting up a microphone in the middle there, each time you wish to speak, as this is the only way your remarks can be heard from the court reporter's transcripts of the meeting.

When you entered the room today, your attendance was recorded electronically by our hardworking national headquarters team. If you have questions regarding your attendance, please see someone from headquarters at the end of the meeting, and there are staff, like, scattered all around the room, so.

It is my pleasure to introduce the National Officers and special guests.

Lisa Williamson, National Vice President, please stand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Ann Rehbein, Central Division  
National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Veronica Gurnay, Eastern Division  
National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Marlene Boyer, Northwestern Division  
Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Linda Smiley, Southern Division  
National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Eve Wallace, Western Division  
National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Laura Susie Clyde, National  
Historian.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Karen Peel, National Chaplain.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Coral Mae Grout, National Secretary.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Marybeth Revoir, National Treasurer.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Sara Riegel, Executive Director.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Chris Dickey, Convention  
Parliamentarian.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: And of course, my National  
President's Pages, Lisa Liford, Chairman.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Jane Ann Hamby.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Susi Greathouse.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: And Tanna Sheperd.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: And at this time, I would like for all the past National Presidents to please stand and be recognized.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Information about the consent agenda and how it works was circulated in advance along with the following items listed on the consent agenda: the Unit Charter cancellation since March of 2023, ALA Foundation policies with the internal board policy statements, disbursement of funds policy, audit and tax funding policy, and the investment policy.

Does anyone wish to remove anything from the consent agenda? Hearing none, the Chair will now entertain a motion to adopt the consent agenda. All those in favor of adopting the consent -- well, oh, I'm sorry. Gosh, isn't it good she's here right beside me? Okay. Okay. So -- okay. Yes.

MS. MORRIS: Good morning. Glynis Morris, Department of Nevada. I'd like to make a motion that we approve the consent agenda as previously distributed.

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Do I have a second?

VOICE: Second.

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

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Those opposed, please say no. The ayes have it and the consent agenda is adopted. Thank you.

The Chair is pleased to report that the Minutes Approval Committee met and approved the minutes of the NEC meeting from February 2023. This committee is comprised of the NEC members from the departments of Wisconsin, Alaska, and Nevada. Thank you, ladies, for doing a wonderful job this year.

The Executive Committee to the NEC includes the National President, National Vice President, National Secretary, National Treasurer, the five National Division Vice Presidents, and the two NEC members of the President's choosing. This year, the NECs from the Department of Oregon and the Department of Connecticut were chosen to serve. This Committee was called to action one time since the February midyear NEC meeting. We convened in August to review the responses to the Executive Director's annual review.

At this time, the Chair calls on the Executive Director, Sara Riegel, to give her report.

MS. RIEGEL: She's going to miss me. No. Thank you, Madam President, and good morning, everyone. It is really good to see you all. Lots of hugs. Okay. But I'll try and keep this short. Since I became Executive Director in January, I reported that we had some challenges to work through and -- regarding the headquarters staff, and some divisions' mission has been accomplished. We were able to backfill some positions, and in others we are now recalculating.

So please be patient with us. We are still making some changes, much needed changes, in evaluating the structure

of the organization. We're also looking at how to better manage and marry the business operations of the national organization to support the mission and the purpose and the governance structure. This will not be a snap of the fingers. The national headquarters staff is willing to take a more collaborative approach in supporting these efforts. And financially, you have seen in our financial reporting that we are doing well in managing the organization's money. We will continue to do so to the best of our ability, as we have been entrusted in our responsibilities to manage those funds.

The national staff is just a phone call or an email away, not all at once though. Okay? Please know that we will get back to you as soon as we are able. On a personal note, I am thankful to work with and alongside -- they're all standing in the hallway I think -- some really talented and dedicated staff members as well as our leaders, who have been so supportive, and the volunteers. I am truly grateful to be standing in front of you today as a representative of this national organization.

Madam President, that concludes my report. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. RIEGEL: A private joke. When she calls me, I always say, "You're going to miss me when I'm gone."

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Next on the agenda, we have a report from our National Secretary, Coral Grout.

MS. GROUT: Good morning, members of the NEC, guests,

and everyone else who's joining us this morning. My remarks, the majority of them, will be given during the executive session this morning following the regular meeting. I have truly enjoyed the last two years as your National Secretary. We've accomplished a couple of great things. Hopefully, the application process for the emblem approval has been made easier for each and every one of you and we hope that we've done a good deal of work preparing you for knowing what you need to do when you use the emblem. It represents our organization, and we don't want to harm that representation.

We also have a written job description for my replacement next year, and we've worked very, very hard to incorporate all of the things that the National Secretary does, but also does not do, because we have an awesome Executive Director. And we've separated those roles to make it easier to meet the needs of our members throughout the nation.

I have a person I've worked with for the past six months in my office, and her name is Summer (phonetic). Is Summer here today? Thank you so much, Summer. You're in the back. Show everybody who they talk to.

(Applause.)

MS. GROUT: Summer's awesome and I know you're going to enjoy working with her in the future. And two other people I just could not have done anything without this year: Tamara, I owe you big time, and Sara. So best wishes to the National Secretary who will be replacing me next year. I'm just a phone

call away.

And I'd like to thank President Vickie for offering me this position, and we'll remember this. Quick story: when I was department president in Massachusetts umpteen million years ago -- Donna Blattenberg is going to remember this one -- I was -- we were doing my final dinner at our department convention and my theme that year was Taking a Cruise for Members. So we had this humongous cruise ship behind us on a wall. And in the middle of my remarks, the cruise ship came down. And guess who it came down onto? Jake Comer.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Thank you, Coral.

Next up, Marybeth Revoir, our National Treasurer.

Would you like to report please?

(Applause.)

MS. REVOIR: Good morning, everyone. Madam President and the members of the NEC, in the information distributed for this meeting by email, you were given the third quarter of this administration's financial report. This information was also emailed previously early in August. I'm hopeful that throughout the past year, you have taken the time to review this very vital financial information. It has given you an overview of our financial position as this fiscal year has progressed.

For the third quarter, our expenditures have trended well below this same period last year. Some of the items could be paid in the fourth quarter as we fall victim to invoicing

when they arrive. They may have been budgeted during the third quarter, but the invoice doesn't arrive 'til the fourth. The best measure of our overall financial success can only be fully measured when year-end hits. Then we will really know, but our progress has been extremely positive.

Even though I just want to mention the footnotes on the actual budget report say fiscal year '23 second quarter, I'd like to assure you that those notes really refer to the third quarter and it was just a typographical error, so please excuse us for that.

The investment market has been somewhat kind to us and we have been able to recoup somewhat of our losses from last year. This highlights why investments in the market should always be considered long-term. It can be like a roller coaster ride with great highs and disappointing lows.

It's been a very congenial year working with the Finance Chairman, Sharon, and the hardworking members of her Finance Committee, most of which are Past National Presidents. They are ever vigilant in their planning and oversight, with an overreaching goal of continuing our mission delivery on all fronts. It is also wonderful -- I'm going to go off script just a little bit -- to work with Executive Director Sara. Sara's original heart is in finance. She's a Past National Treasurer. She's been in the Finance Division for years, along with her compliance hat. So the wealth of our organization and the structure of it financially mean a lot to her and she's been

wonderful in keeping an eye, along with all of her other duties, on what's going on, on this end, and I thoroughly, thoroughly -- she taught me a lot -- enjoy working with her.

Throughout the ever-evolving nonprofit world, an organization's financial stability is a benchmark upon which we are judged. The American Legion Auxiliary continues to provide service to veterans, their families, and our communities. We are mission driven and we continue to excel in our delivery to those who need us.

Madam President, thank you for allowing me to serve this organization under your leadership. It's been a great pleasure. Thank you.

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: You're welcome.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: The Chair now calls on Sharon Conatser, Chairman of the National Finance Committee.

MS. CONATSER: Madam President Vickie, NEC, guests, your National Finance Committee Vice Chairman Virginia Hobbs, Committee Members Paula Rainy, Nancy Brown Park, and Nicole Clapp, and myself want to thank you for your service this year. Your Finance Committee met yesterday to go over end of the year expenses for 2023 and do a final proof of the 2024 narrative and 2024 budget.

The continuation of investing in ourselves by supporting mission trainings, Junior National Meetings, ALA Academy courses, and webinars will continue to be an important

part of moving forward to continue to grow and move our organization forward. We hope that you are all taking advantage of these training opportunities as members of our organization.

As your Finance Committee, we also believe in the value of knowledge gained through the members attending mission training. The numbers continue to trend upward and we are confident that the numbers will continue to grow as we continue mission trainings and National Junior Meetings.

So on behalf of the Finance Committee, thank you, each of you, for your dedication, your commitment, and generous, generous support for the ALA's efforts to fulfill our mission. You all received the financial reports early. Are there any questions?

Yes! Okay. Hearing none, in conclusion, I wish to thank the NEC for your financial due diligence this year and your support of our Committee. Please let it be known that our continued goal is to make decisions in the best interest of our organization and its mission as we appreciate the efforts to maintain our organization's financial viability.

Would members of the Finance Committee, at the close of the NEC, please meet right up here for a picture, because I forgot to take it yesterday.

Madam President, this concludes the finance report for 2023 pre-NEC.

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Thank you, Sharon.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: The Chair now calls on National Risk and Compliance Chairman Carol Westergreen to the podium for her report.

MS. WESTERGREEN: Good morning, President Vickie, National Officers, Chairmen, guests, and members. The Risk and Compliance Committee has been busy this year, working to ensure the American Legion Auxiliary and the Foundation is in compliance with IRS regulations and our own policies.

The audit has been completed and the tax documents were filed in a timely manner. During the IT audit, 14 items were identified as moderate risk, and that's really good, guys. And a timeline to clear these items up is at the end of this administrative year. And I am very happy to report, we hit it.

(Applause.)

MS. WESTERGREEN: It's been an honor to work with the National President, Sara Riegel. Thank you. She is just a phone call away, an email away, a text message away, smoke signals, however you need to get to her, and all of our National Headquarters staff. For me coming in in the middle of the year and replacing our wonderful Jeri Greenwell was very difficult, and all of you made it very possible to complete the task that Jeri had started.

Thank you for all your hard work to keep the American Legion Auxiliary and the Foundation in compliance, because while we stay in compliance, you all are able to do the mission of taking care of our veterans, our active duty, their families,

and of course our communities. Thank you, President Vickie, for the honor of serving as the Chair of Risk and Compliance and have a wonderful convention.

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Thank you, Carol.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT KOUTZ: Is there any new business?

Okay. Moving right along. Hearing none, we will move to the executive session. Thank you, everyone, for your participation today, even though it's been pretty quiet. That's been really good. At this time, we will move into the executive session. Following the executive session, the meeting will adjourn.

The executive session includes only voting members of the NEC and invited guests. For this executive session, the Chair has invited the Past National Presidents, Professional Parliamentarian Chris Dickey, Executive Director Sara Riegel, Deputy Executive Director Tamara Shumate, and the necessary National Headquarters staff required to run the meeting technology. There are to be no other attendees in this meeting. I'll ask anyone not part of the executive session to please exit now. Thank you all.

*(Whereupon the National Executive Committee went into executive session at 8:27 a.m.)*

22-23 Minutes Approval Committee

Date Approved

Glynis Seeley NEC (NV)

10/10/2023

Bonnie Jakubczyk NEC (WI)

10/9/2023

Penny Mazonna NEC (AK)