Executive Committee (ExCom) Meeting Minutes

Date: 14 July 2026 (Tuesday)

Opening Ceremony: 7:02 pm (1902)
Standard opening ceremony held per Officer's Guide.
(Flag salute, Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation by Post Chaplain.)

Sergeant-at-Arms reported a quorum was present.

7:06 pm (1906) Commander suspended Executive Committee (ExCom) meeting for Post Adjutant installation.

7:10 pm (1910) Commander resumed Executive Committee (ExCom) meeting.

Guests and Prospective Members Present: None

Reports:

Administrative: Report provided by the Adjutant

Service Officer (SO) requested (via e-mail) to be excused due to allergies. Absence approved by the Commander.

Service Officer (SO) indicated (via e-mail) he is not accepting new claims for adjudication until further notice.

Adjutant indicated: Notice of upcoming claims clinics through September with Department of Veterans Services (DVS) posted to website. Clinics are being held at Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) 9808 in Mechanicsville.

Previous month's minutes posted to website on 14 July at 2:39 pm (14:39): www.Post175.org/Meeting-Minutes

Motion to approve meeting minutes properly made, seconded, and approved by voice vote.

Two motions presented by Adjutant for ExCom consideration:

Motion 1: That an exploratory committee be established, with the Post Finance Officer as Chair, to determine the best way to increase income (meaning monetary donations) for the Post. Chair would select membership. (Commentary period followed).

Q: What are the guidelines for solicitations? A: Finance Officer and committee members to decide how (explore methods/mechanisms) to be used for soliciting donations. Solicitations may include requests for donations to the Post via the new Department of Virginia Charities, Inc., a 501(c) 3 entity now available to the Post for pass-through donations.

The motion was properly made, seconded, and unanimously approved by a voice vote.

Motion 2: That a committee be established, with Post Judge Advocate as Chair, to review and determine if any changes are necessary to the Post Constitution and Bylaws. Chair would select committee members. This is to meet statutory Department of Virginia requirement of Post Constitution and Bylaws yearly review. (Commentary period followed.)

Commander indicated a desire to include in the Bylaw review the possibility of allowing electronic attendance (Example: Zoom) for members to attend meetings, especially those that may be home-bound, or unable to otherwise attend.

Q1: How do we track electronic attendance? Q2: Does electronic attendance count towards a quorum? A1: system allows us to identify and 'track' (print a list) of electronic attendees. A2: Yes, electronic attendance would be included for quorum purposes.

The motion was properly made, seconded, and approved by a voice vote.

Finance / Fiscal: Report provided by the Finance Officer

Hard copy report with Post financial standing, for the month of June as well as Fiscal Year, presented. New reporting line on report: Mortgage Reduction Donations (Status as of 14 July 2026.) Post finances continue to show an overall net loss for the year. (Commentary period followed.)

Comment made that donation jar 'seed' money has disappeared. Suspect: member quarters were left open while there were non-members in the building and believe that may have caused the loss. Amount lost: five dollars. Solution: Room will be verified secure at all times non-members are in the building.

Motion to accept Financial Report was properly made, seconded, and approved by voice vote. (Full report available from Finance Officer upon request.)

Membership: Report provided by the 1st Vice Commander

Membership status: sixty-eight (68) members already affiliated for 2027 membership year.

First vote for prospective member: Greg S., Marine Corps (Field Artillery) Veteran. DD-214 and Honorable Discharge verified. Unanimous vote to approve membership. Second, and final vote, to be held at next general membership meeting. (No discussion or questions followed.)

A motion for membership acceptance was properly made, seconded, and approved by a voice vote

Rentals: Report provided by the 2nd Vice Commander

Prior to making his report, requested to depart early. Early departure approved by the Commander.

Rental situation is as serious as our financial report. Provided figures on rental income for the first six months of 2024, 2025, and 2026. Figures show a decline in rental income.

Reason 1: Economy. Everyone is looking for ‘a deal’. (Low prices.) Our pricing structure is rigid, with set prices for rentals.

Reason 2: Nearby club houses are undercutting our prices, sometimes by as little as $100 or $200 dollars. We have recently lost two rentals to these club houses.

Interest in renting our facility has not waned. After speaking with Post Commander and Post Finance Officer, with their oversight, I will be exercising a ‘price flexibility’ strategy to retain rentals. Older renters, with large groups, not as price sensitive as younger renters with smaller groups. Also, renters are using kitchen facilities less and less, opting for catering-in their food.

I like this Post, its membership, what we stand for and what we do, and what we represent. Entire membership must pull together, and we must do something different to address our financial posture.

Contrasting this year with previous two years, we are running behind on rental contracts.

Comment (Judge Advocate): For clarification purposes, the letter sent for the mortgage reduction effort to membership has no connection with the Department 501(c)3 public charity.

Q: Do we know what the two Club Houses (undercutting the Post) are charging? A: Second Vice is investigating their pricing structure.

Example given: If we charge $1,200, and the Club House charges $1,100, maybe we lower our price to $1,000. Reason: $1,000 in hand is better than no contract. Continue this strategy until new/repeat business increases.

Second Vice will report back to ExCom on his findings. If our pricing needs to be adjusted, decision can then be made using hard numbers. However, we will not be “giving things away” regarding rentals.

Attending Post member recognized for comments: I was Second Vice for three years: “You can come down from a price, but you cannot exceed set limit.”

Recommendations: Have Post obtain a liquor license. It was noted that doing so means the Post being the provider of alcoholic beverages to renters, and several negative aspects (insurance, etc.) of such an approach were discussed. Renters will continue to obtain their own license if they wish to serve alcohol.

Also recommended: One set price for Post rental, which would include all Post rooms, not just main hall. (Kitchen rental would be separate.)

Also recommended: Advertise in Mechanicsville Local, not regional media. Mechanicsville Local no longer has home delivery, so audience is smaller.

Also recommended: an advertising banner indicating we have rentals.

Noted: Rental availabilities are on Post website (with multiple key-word Meta tags), Department website, Yelp!, and Next Door Neighborhood. We are in search of other appropriate venues for advertising that are of no-cost to the Post.

Americanism: Report provided by the Committee Chair

JROTC medals have been on back order for the last six months from Emblem Sales.

Buildings and Grounds: Report provided by Committee Chair

Nothing significant to report (NSTR).

Commander praised that the mold has been remediated and new tile installed behind the bar in the Member’s Quarters.

Color/Honor Guard: No Report. Committee Chair absent.

Noted: Honor Guard Services were provided for a funeral at Gethsemane Church on Friday (10 July).

Legal: Report provided by the Judge Advocate

At the Department Convention, members of our Post received Department-Level appointments:

Post Judge Advocate is dual-hatted. Was sworn-in as 13th District Commander and member of the Department Executive Committee (DEC).

Other Department-level assignments include:

Membership Committee: Warren Rice; Robert (Bob) White; and Kelly Schips, Members.
Prison Post Sub-Committee: Robert (Bob) White, Chair
American Legion College: George Navas, Assistant Director
National Security Committee: Warren Rice, Member
American Legion Riders Sub-Committee: Jack Barbour, Member
New Posts and Direct Member Solicitation (DMS): George Navas, Member
Junior Shooting Sports Program (JSSP): James (Jim) Legg, Member

You have heard information on the Department 501(c)3… it makes donations pass-through to the Post easier. Donations may start immediately. Finance Officer to coordinate donations.

Full official name: The American Legion, Department of Virginia Charities, Inc. Donors may use: Virginia Charities, Inc. on their checks. In the “For” or “Memo” line at the bottom of their check, they should indicate: Post 175, Mechanicsville. Department has promised a quick turnaround of donations, with no fees or charges.

I will begin work on the Bylaws review for this year. More to follow.

Historical Documentation: Report provided by Historian

Q: Who is the Department Historian? Lauretta Lockhart, who is also Adjutant for the 14th District.

Comment (Commander): I will have our Post appointment letters ready by our next membership meeting.

Riders (ALR): Report provided by Chapter Director

We are still collecting donations for the Virginia Legacy Run through August 21st. Received a donation this morning, can't read the check, but I believe it is still a "go".

Comment (Adjutant): Mark Grapin is now Department Director of the ALR.

Comment (ALR Director): He is the husband of former Department Commander 'Sonny' Dickerson.

Sons of the American Legion (SAL): Report provided by Commander, SAL

SAL Membership: We are at 84% of our 2026 goal. Fish Fry is this Friday night. We use the smoking shed to cook the fish. Q: Can this material be removed to make cooking safer? A (Buildings and Grounds): Yes, it will be done.

Sick (Binnacle) List (Buddy Checks): Report provided by the Chaplain

Nothing to add to what I reported at coffee and doughnuts this morning. Took Bob M. home today from the hospital. He is still weak and having problems with his Afib. Had ablation done.

Veteran Assistance: Service Officer - Excused absence.

Discipline / Protocol: Report provided by the Sergeant-at-Arms
Nothing significant to report (NSTR).

Communications and Media: Report provided by Committee Chair

Website is up-to-date. Notifications for Fish Fry, DVS claims clinic at VFW 9808, National Convention information is there, Memorial Bricks order form link (new logo) is there. The Post calendar updates are performed as events are received, sometimes daily. Website has had over 40,000 'hits' to date.

Q: Do we have a Service Officer? A: Yes, he just is not taking on new claims due to his schedule. He is processing those he already has as he cannot rush through claims. He has three others in training to become Service Officers as well. Trainees may attend an upcoming claims clinic for On-The-Job (OJT) training being held in Saluda.

Special Events: No Report. Committee Chair absent.

The American Legion Auxiliary: Report provided by Unit President

Have delivered and installed the Honorable Veteran signs and flags to two (2) of our Post Korean War veterans. Both are Navy veterans.

We will provide the dessert cake for the Fish Fry.

Elizabeth Navas will be coordinating our upcoming (2027) Girls State. We expect to host the candidates that attended this year, possibly in September.

Unfinished Business:

Finance Officer: We have researched two electronic (credit card) payment platforms.

Stripe payment solutions provides touch screen, reports, etc. for a $5 per month fee.

Zeffe: We provide a link to Zeffe and individuals can donate directly to the Post. Completely free to the Post, but revenue is forwarded to us only once a month.

Motion: Post accept using both Stripe payment solutions and Zeffe for electronic payments and donations.

Comment (Art A.): Speaking with staff at VFW 9808, they indicated they do not pay for their electronic payment platform. Recommend Post members meet with VFW folks to discover which platforms they use and are cost-free.

Consensus is: speak with VFW 9808 before implementing electronic payment solution, so we ensure there is no cost to our Post.

Motion was amended to remove Stripe payment solutions, but proceed with implementing Zeffe as an electronic payment solution for the Post.

Comment: When link to Zeffe is placed on our Post website, make it clear (post disclaimer) that cost of donation rests with donor, not Post.

Q1: This is a free service? A: Yes.
Q2: Do they capture personal information when donating, such as address, e-mail, etc.? A: Yes, but they do not sell your information.
Q3: How do they make money? A: Donation processing fee from donor. Example: Donor provides $100 to Post. Donor provides $110 to Zeppe. Zeppe keeps the $10 donation fee.

Amended motion was properly made, seconded, and approved by a voice vote.

First Vice Commander / Membership Chair: Post is in receipt of 8-9 contacts that wish more information on our Post and membership from the Hanover Tomato Festival.

Also: National Night Out is August 1st from 10 am to 2 pm. We will have the same spot as last year in the Green Top parking lot. I will set-up the night before. Riders: stage the motorcycles early as once event opens, we will not be able to stage them.

Women's Veterans Day event was a success. Expect to host again next year.

New Business and Correspondence: None.

For the good of The American Legion / Post:

I wish to preface my statement by stating I am not taking any questions and don't want any interruptions. I am going to read this, that's it. If you want to talk to me at a later date, get in touch with me.

Mr. Arthur (Art) Aumock read the following statement, and provided a hard copy for verbatim entry into the record:

I AM ADDRESSING THE BOARD FOR SEVERAL REASONS.

I HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF POST 175 FOR OVER 10 YEARS, 6 YEARS AS A CHAPLAIN. I HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LEGION FOR 30 PLUS YEARS, 13 AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD IN A POST ON LONG ISLAND.

I HAVE SEEN THIS POST BREAK NATIONAL BY-LAWS, AND ELECTTIONS IMPROPERLY RUN. I CAN NOT IGNORE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS;

FIRST OF ALL, THE RIDERS CHAPTER HAS HAD A TARGET ON OUR BACK SINCE WE STARTED. AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE BEEN MADE TO FEEL LIKE A RED-HEADED STEP CHILD.

MORE RECENTLY WE HAVE BEEN Told OUR ELECTIONS WERE RUN WRONG. We followed National and Department by – laws. As anyone will tell you, finding people to step up is hard.

Therefore, I would like to bring attention to how the post runs their elections. A selection committee was appointed to one person, who was running for an office. This is not a committee. The pollsters also had one

person running for an office. Both these committees should be free of anyone for an elected position.

While being a member of this post I have noticed some commanders ignoring national by- laws and doing what they want. Keep in mind you cannot super- cede national by-laws.

I am one of the founding members of our riders chapter. Now because of a power play, members have been defamed. This was because one person jumped the chain of command and accusations were not properly investigated. Instead, letters were written. This caused members to lose tempers and step down from their positions. There were no apologies made even after they admitted it should have been handled differently.

I feel we are no longer wanted here. If that is what the post wants, I for one, feel that my usefulness is no longer needed. Please let me know where I stand. I would like to say this is my opinion and mine alone.

ALR Director: Those flags outside were beautiful. They were lit up. Q: Whom do the lights and cords belong to? As I have the lights and cords. A: Tom Esker. It was noted that the first set had been stolen.

No further items.

Closing Ceremony:
Standard closing ceremony held per Officer's Guide.
(Flag salute. Benediction by Post Chaplain. Adjournment statement by Post Commander.)

Meeting Adjourned: 8:15 pm (2015)

Respectfully submitted: ***George Navas***, Adjutant
Approved for Distribution/Posting: ***Robert (Bob) White***, Commander