

**MINUTES OF THE
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF ALASKA
DEC MEETING**

**February 7, 2026 – 1:00 p.m.
(Zoom)**

The meeting was called to order by President Annette Gwalthney-Jones at 1:02 p.m.

OPENING CEREMONIES

MOTION: by Nina Ketelsen (Unit 35) and seconded to dispense with opening ceremonies.

The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

ROLL CALL

The following members were present for this meeting:

National Officers – Penny Mazonna and April Sinclair

Department Officers – Annette Gwalthney-Jones (President), Nina Ketelsen (1st Vice President), Charlene Martin (2nd Vice-President), Barbara Nath (Secretary), Pam Cawley (Treasurer), Sabrinas Schmidt (Sgt-at-Arms), Robyn Downs (Executive Committee Member), and Brenda Fiddick (Executive Committee Member)

Standing Committees – Nina Ketelsen (Alaska Girls State), Charlene Martin (Auxiliary Emergency Fund), Mary Scaturchio (Children and Youth), Lisa Williamson (Constitution and Bylaws), Penny Mazonna (Distinguished Guests), Sabrina Schmidt (Finance), Colleen Newman (Leadership), Patty Mazonna-Jones (Legislative), Robyn Downs (Membership), Brenda Fiddick (National Security), Jena Arntzen (Poppy), Lisa Williamson (Public Relations), Pam Cawley (Risk and Compliance), and Charlene Martin (Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation)

Units – Jack Henry Unit 1, Joseph T. Craig Unit 3, Merlin Elmer Palmer Unit 6, Muldoon Unit 29, Susitna Valley Unit 35, and C. Russell Huber (Unit 57)

Past Department Presidents – Susan Caswell, Sharon Cherrette, Penny Mazonna, Barbara Nath, April Sinclair, and Lisa Williamson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

President Annette asked if anyone had any changes to the minutes of the October 26, 2025 meeting as presented. There were none.

MOTION: by Sabrina Schmidt (Unit 29) and seconded to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2025 DEC Meeting.

The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Resignation of Department Historian – President Annette reported that the Department Historian Chrysti Leigh has resigned for personal reasons and her resignation has been accepted.

Frances Bedel (Unit 57) or Kim Coleman (Unit 15) were suggested to replace the current historian. Frances Bedele has indicated that she would accept the appointment if Kim Coleman is unable to do so. Annette indicated she will be involved as this will not be a simple handoff of responsibility. She asked if anyone else was interested in filling this position. An answer from Kim would not be available for a few days.

MOTION: by April Sinclair (Unit 57) and seconded to ratify Frances Bedel with Kim Coleman (assistant) for the Historian position.

The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Finance Committee Report

Sabrina Schmidt (Unit 29) Finance Chair noted a written report was provided and disseminated to everyone before the meeting.

The Finance Committee is trying to determine some history regarding the Edward Jones investment account. She asked those who have been in the department for a while to see if they remember why things were filed. No one present had any information for her. She has not yet talked to Linda and will continue to get ahold of Linda and/or Jane for more information.

The Merrilyn Stock/Evelyn Oliver and the Girls State savings accounts are currently yielding at 0.14%. The Finance Committee looked into the possibility of moving a portion of the accounts into a revolving certificate of deposit to increase their earnings. For example, last year the Girls State account received \$23 in interest. If it had been in a CD, it would have yielded something like \$250.

The Finance Committee is asking about moving some funds from those accounts into CD accounts. They would probably be 6 month or 12 month accounts and would be renewed at the end of that time. The length would be determined to meet scholarship and Girls State needs. That would allow the fund to be used and then remaining funds would be put back into a new CD.

MOTION: by Sabrina Schmidt (Unit 29) and seconded for the Finance Committee to determine funding for CDs for the Merrilyn Stock/Evelyn Oliver Scholarship savings as well as for the Girls State savings.

Nina Ketelsen (Unit 35) asked about the possibility of attaching a percentage instead of a set amount. She was thinking about 10% or 15% of the accounts going into the CDs. It was suggested that \$10,000 be the amount for the Merrilyn Stock/Evelyn Oliver savings account. It is currently at \$16,000 and we only utilize about \$3,000 for scholarships.

AMENDED MOTION: by Sabrina Schmidt (Unit 29) and seconded to put the amount of \$10,000 from the Merrilyn Stock/Evelyn Oliver savings into a CD.

The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

MOTION: by Sharon Cherrette (Unit 29) and seconded to place \$15,000 from the Girls State account into a six month CD.

The remaining funds will be left in the checking account, as well as the savings account, until after this year's Girls State session has been held. It was also noted that with the Department Convention coming in April, we will receive donations from across the state.

The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Sabrina Schmidt (Unit 29) pointed out that our AEF funds are in the same account as our Rehab funds. It is a very old account and there is about \$32,000 in that account. National guidelines require that these funds be in separate accounts. The Finance Committee is seeking direction for making this happen. One possibility is to audit the rehab account. This will require digging into finding old deposit slips or checks to see if there is any indication as to the accounts in which the funds should have been deposited. There might be information in old Convention meeting minutes which could tell how much was received for either account. The suggestion was to take \$6,000 out of the current joint account and start a new AEF account.

MOTION: by Lisa Williamson (Unit 57) and seconded to move \$6,000 from the current account and place it in a specific account restricted for AEF.

The suggestion was made to take out \$10,000 instead of \$6,000 from the account. Other possibilities of determining an amount included \$500 for every year the account had been in place.

AMENDED MOTION: by Lisa Williamson and seconded to move \$15,000 from the current account and place it in a specific account restricted for AEF.

The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Sabrina Schmidt (Unit 29) stated that in anticipation of opening an AEF account, \$6,000 was moved out of the General account. Including that amount in the AEF account that would bring the fund up to \$21,000.

MOTION: by Sabrina Schmidt (Unit 29) and seconded to include the additional \$6,000 from the General account to open the new AEF account, bringing the total to \$21,000.

The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Funds for the VA&R account come from donations for poppies. April Sinclair (Unit 57) reminded units to send in their 15% for poppies each year.

Sharon Cherrette (Unit 29) suggested that the Finance Committee look at the VA&R account and the possibility of a CD for that account. Sabrina Schmidt (Unit 29) thought that was a great idea, but poppy funds cannot be put into any sort of investment account.

Annette asked for confirmation that money from rehab cannot go into a CD, but AEF monies can go into a CD. Sabrina Schmidt confirmed this but will double check.

Savings accounts will be set up.

Job Descriptions

The job descriptions for the Department Secretary and Department Treasurer were reviewed. The following changes were suggested:

- Secretary Under Qualifications and Competencies
- Correct – Perform other duties as requested or assigned.
 - Add -- Proficiency in Google Docs
 - Add – Versatile in meeting platforms such as zoom or google meets
- Under Work Environment and Terms
- Add – This position is a signer on the Department bank accounts and will have a debit card to process memberships as needed.

MOTION: by Nina Ketelsen (Unit 35) and seconded to approve the Secretary job description with the suggested changes.

The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

- Treasurer Under Qualifications and Competencies
- Add – Proficiency in QuickBooks
 - Add – Proficiency in Google Docs

MOTION: by Brenda Fiddick (Unit 57) and seconded to approve the Treasurer job description with suggested changes.

The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Microsoft 365 User Agreement

There is a need for a user agreement for Microsoft 365 for the secretary to access documents. Nina Ketelsen (Unit 35) suggested using the Google drive account which we already have instead of Microsoft (which would cost about \$200 per year. It was noted that this might limit people from being able to access what they need. For instance, our current secretary cannot access Microsoft documents on the Department Secretary computer.

Brenda Fiddick suggested tabling this discussion until the Department Convention. It was decided to do so.

ALAMIS

There were some potential changes to the ALAMIS policy that was adopted in October. Lisa Williamson (Unit 57) is sending out proposed amendments to all of the Department's governing documents. They have drafted the potential changes into the Policy and Procedures for the Department. Those documents will be sent out in the next week.

On March 14th at 10:40 a.m. there will be a zoom meeting to discuss the changes. Any other suggested changes can be done at that time which will cut down on discussions at the Department Convention.

While other changes were suggested during this meeting, it was recommended to wait for the revised documents to see what has already been included. Then people should attend the zoom meeting and let Lisa know if there are any other recommendations.

Storage at Department Headquarters in Anchorage

Annette will be meeting with Joe on Monday to discuss our stay at Department Headquarters. They wanted us to remove all of our documents and items (we are only paying \$200 per year). The room we are utilizing is quite large and could be an office location for the Auxiliary. We could utilize that mailing address instead of a PO Box. We would have to pay rent and discussion is underway as to how much we would have to pay. Renting the space would also include a key and access to the building when we need to have it instead of just when the office is open.

Lisa Williamson (Unit 57) asked about tabling this to allow the Finance Committee to acquire all the figures. Our rent has been paid for the current year. Annette will share information with the Finance Committee after her meeting with Joe.

Pam Cawley (Unit 1) stated that the PO Box is \$300 per year (less than \$30/month). She likes having a mailbox for our private mail. At this time, the intent to keep the PO Box.

She also likes having access to headquarters and the ability to store items there. With items/documents stored in many places, it is easy to lose them.

Sabrina Schmidt (Unit 29) had talked with Barb and they are going to get together this summer and figure out a document retention plan. Sabrina's profession is air force records manager (550 officers and 60 units). She is qualified to manage records and knows all the verbiage. She is offering her professional experience in this process to maintain historical information and purge items not needed. This retention plan will be developed and will be approved before implementing.

Lisa Williamson (Unit 57) felt we needed to identify who has the authority to make those decisions

People in records management will protect our obligations to protect our records and keep what is needed.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: by April Sinclair (Unit 57) and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

There being no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Barbara Nath

Barbara Nath
Department Secretary