



Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary Department of Maryland

FROM CHIEF of STAFF CATHY GISTEDT

Be *A Force For Veterans* in September

Check It Off....Getting Things Done



Don't let time slip by without checking off the following:

- ✓ Create a Membership Committee to begin contacting your unpaid members.
- ✓ Send the Department Program Chairmen at least one report using each form found online at the Department's website.
- ✓ Pay your District dues by September 30th.
- ✓ Send your National Home Health & Happiness donation to Department Treasurer Jackie Kimball.

Interested in Starting a New Auxiliary?

Is there a *Bachelor* Post (one without an Auxiliary) near you? Forming an Auxiliary to support their work for veterans and the community is not as difficult as you may think.

First. Approach the VFW with your request to form an Auxiliary. They must vote by a 2/3 majority to have an auxiliary at their Post.

Second. If the Post agrees, contact Department President Bill Siperek at 410-274-1323.

Then, find at least 15 people eligible for the VFW Auxiliary to then apply for a charter. After contacting President Bill, he will appoint an auxiliary member to help you with this process.



THE CHALLENGE

Auxiliary Presidents, this challenge is for you! Contact each Department Program Chairman to be sure your chairmen are sending reports. Simply talking about the program at your meetings does not count as reporting. Your chairmen should also be giving the Auxiliary Secretary a copy of the report form they sent for your records.

We need your data for our Department Reports.

Conducting Good Meetings: More Ways to Save Time

One common criticism of Auxiliary meetings is time – taking too long. Even when Presidents are prepared, the time will fly. The ideas below can help you to shorten your meetings without losing quality time to be productive.

- Checking membership cards – Have the Guard check cards as members enter the meeting room instead of waiting for the Conductor to take time during the Opening Ceremonies.
- Membership applications – Require that membership applications be in the meeting room early for the Investigating Committee to review well before the meeting starts.
- Approving the Minutes – Instead of the Secretary reading the minutes of your last meeting, email the minutes a day or two before for members to read at home. But remember to have some copies at the meeting room door for members without email.
- Long discussions at meetings – Time should be limited for each speaker during discussions. If a discussion seems to go on and on, consider referring the topic or issue to a committee. A smaller group could meet before your next meeting to return with suggestions. But it's important to appoint people to the committee with varying points of view for a well-rounded discussion.

BETTER USE OF TIME = BETTER ATTENDANCE

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Membership Our Auxiliaries are already reaching 100%. Contact your unpaid members. You have the contact information for your members from last year. Don't let them slip away. **RETAIN!**

- Contact unpaid members with a **phone call**. Let them know the importance of their membership, especially to our veterans.
- Consider having a **Potluck Dinner** before your next meeting. Give members lagging behind in paying dues a personal invitation. Follow dessert with a *pep talk* on dues.
- **Raffle** a Life Membership to members who still haven't paid their dues. Set a deadline and draw a name from your retained members to pay for their Life Membership.
- Investigate your senior members who may need **adopting** to help pay their dues because of limited incomes or expenses.

Reaching 100% can be made easier when you work to **RETAIN** your current members.

We Are All Mentors

As members of your Auxiliary, you are also an *ambassador* to others, especially to new members. Ready or not, we are all mentors. So what can we do to be our best?

- Actions speak louder than words. When members look around, what are they seeing? Support or Friction? Kindness or Spite? Empathy or Coldness?
- When at meetings and someone says, "I don't understand" or "What should I be doing now?"...what happens? Are they ignored? Or, are they given help? Are they criticized or supported?

As members, the choices that we make are important.



Challenges Facing Auxiliaries: Volunteers for Program Reporting

Reporting is important and should be completed soon after an auxiliary project before the details may be forgotten. Reporting allows your Auxiliary to keep its nonprofit status with the IRS, saving you paying taxes and other financial responsibilities. It also helps our National Organization to compile the data they need each year.

Before asking for volunteers to report for your programs, explain at a meeting why reporting is so important. It's not just a way to win awards at our Convention. Here are some ideas that may help encourage volunteers for chairmanships.

- Clarify the responsibilities of each chairmanship so there is no confusion.
- Stress that other members can conduct the projects to share the program work with the chairman. The chairman would report any work done by auxiliary members that qualifies in each program.
- Give your chairmen support with good mentoring by previous program chairmen.
- Encourage your chairmen to request help, if needed, from your District Program Chairmen and Officers. They are your School of Instruction throughout the year. District Mentors may help guide you as well.
- Acknowledge your chairmen's work at meetings and even with an Appreciation Dinner before our Convention. Whether at a nearby restaurant or with tickets to a Post Dinner, gathering together to celebrate is a great way to end the program year....and to encourage continued support from volunteers.

The importance of reporting should make appointing program chairmen a priority for Auxiliary AND District Presidents.



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Robert's Rules of Order at Meetings

"Bylaws Section 916 – Rules of Order" makes *Robert's Rules of Order* the resource members should use to govern our conduct at meetings for any issues not covered in the VFWA Bylaws. The guidelines for making motions are covered in Robert's. Here are a few points that may be of interest to officers and members.

- To vote on motions, members should clearly understand what the motion is stating to determine if they support or disagree with what is being proposed. After a motion is seconded, the President should clearly state the wording of the motion by saying, "It has been moved and seconded that....." The President then asks if there is any discussion before calling on a vote.
- What does seconding a motion really mean? *Robert's Rules* explains that seconding a motion simply means that a member willing to second agrees that the motion should be discussed at the meeting. It does not mean that he or she is already in favor of the motion.

Following *Robert's Rules of Order* will keep our meeting operating smoothly.



Responsibilities of Trustees

The importance of Trustees is often not realized. They are the safeguards of our treasuries assuring that money received is documented and money spent has been approved by members. Follow these steps in our Bylaws to protect your treasury.

- Trustees must complete the quarterly audits themselves (not by copying a pre-completed audit by the Treasurer).
- The Secretary's Book must be at audits for a Trustee to confirm that checks written are approved in the minutes or are written in a Standing Rule.
- The audits must be read at meetings by the Senior Trustee. The money in your treasury belongs to all members and they should be able to ask questions before they approve the audit.
- At least 2 Trustees must examine all bills at meetings of members asking for reimbursement.
- After funds are voted to be spent on a project, Trustees must still be brought the receipts from spending to verify the money was properly used.

We work hard to raise money for projects and donations. Trustees play a critical part in securing our auxiliary funds.

The VFW Store....Make Members Feel Special

Everyone likes being appreciated and being recognized for their efforts. Don't miss the opportunity at meetings to call up members for special presentations. Here's an example of a few purchases from the VFW Store that could be presented.



Get a list of **Members-at-Large** in your area to recruit for your Auxiliary. Contact them by phone to invite them to join you in your Auxiliary. This could bring new members in for your meetings and more volunteers for your projects and fundraisers. Some could be your auxiliary's future leaders.



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Standing Rules – An Aide to Staying Healthy

Standing Rules can be set up by Auxiliaries, Districts, and Departments to conduct activities and events or to provide for paying expenses between meetings. (Bylaws Sec. 211) With most of our auxiliaries meeting monthly and Districts even less frequently, occasions may easily arise between meetings making motions and voting impossible to properly conduct time-sensitive business. Standing Rules will help your auxiliary focus on responsibilities throughout the year and keep your auxiliary healthy.

If your auxiliary or district does not already have Standing Rules, they are not difficult to write. Examine your Secretary's Minutes for the last several years to identify recurring events such as paying your bond or presenting love gifts. Also check the Treasurer's book for repeated expenses, noting the purpose and amount of each check. Combining these two lists creates an outline of the regular operation of your Auxiliary. This list can then be made into your Standing Rules.

After they are written, your Standing Rules must then be presented at a meeting for approval. Each year the Rules should be reviewed for changes, additions, or deletions before being approved. Your Standing Rules will serve as a *road map* through the year to guide your auxiliary projects and spending.

Need some examples of what could be included in Standing Rules?

Since Auxiliaries and Districts are not permitted to create budgets, Standing Rules are a useful tool to guide your auxiliary's activity through the year by including:

- General operating procedures
- Activities
- Events
- Expenses and donations

Here are some examples of what could be included in Standing Rules to benefit your Auxiliary.

1. General operating procedures of your Auxiliary

- ✿ Assigning officers specific responsibilities like "the Guard will run a 50-50 at meetings benefiting the President's Special Project."
- ✿ Placing a one-page ad in the Convention Book.
- ✿ Paying annual dues for members in need.
- ✿ Presenting love gifts during the year.
- ✿ Remembering members who are hospitalized or home ill will be with a card from the Chaplain.
- ✿ Purchasing lunch for members attending the School of Instruction.

2. Activities your Auxiliary participates in each year

- ✿ Collecting school supplies in July and August.
- ✿ Sponsoring a youth sports team for your local Recreation Council.
- ✿ Holding a Chicken Dinner to donate profits to training service dogs.
- ✿ Organizing a community *Trunk'* or *Treat* on the Post's parking lot.
- ✿ Running an annual Flea Market benefiting the National Home Health & Happiness fund.

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3. Events the Auxiliary conducts or participates in during the year

- ✿ Conducting a POW-MIA Ceremony in September with refreshments following.
- ✿ Fundraising dances held in the Fall and Spring.
- ✿ Honoring the Post veterans on Veterans Day.
- ✿ Partnering with a soup kitchen to serve a holiday dinner in December.
- ✿ Organizing a Chili Cook-Off to assist in updating equipment in the Post Home.

4. Expenses and donations normally paid by the Auxiliary

- ✿ Purchasing buddy poppies in August.
- ✿ Annual donation to the National Veteran Service.
- ✿ Donating monthly to one of Maryland's VA hospitals or to an Outreach Center helping our veterans.
- ✿ Two tickets for the President to attend the Department Commander and President's Testimonial and the National President's Dinner when he/she visits Maryland.
- ✿ Prize money to be awarded to contest winners.
- ✿ Establishing the amount of Memorial donations for deceased members.
- ✿ Honoring Auxiliary Past Presidents who have maintained membership in our Auxiliary each year in the Spring with dinner at a local restaurant.
- ✿ Donating a basket/gift for the Department's Basket Raffle at the May Convention.

Take time this year to *update* or *create* Standing Rules for your Auxiliary.



**Supporting New Officers –
Keeping the Force Strong**

When members are elected to lead their auxiliary or district, much of the success of your organization depends on their skill and knowledge. Strengthening your leadership will strengthen your auxiliary and your district. If any of your officers are new to their position, they may need some guidance to do their best. Consider this:

- The duties and responsibilities of officers are in our VFW Auxiliary *Bylaws & Rituals* and explained in *Building the VFW Auxiliary Foundation: Guidelines for Officers, Chairmen, and Members*. Refer them to both resources available online.
- Our department website offers important information on the responsibilities of Secretaries and Treasurers under the *Resources* tab.
- Explain that mentoring can be requested from past officers of your auxiliary that have served in that position. They are available at meetings to share their experience.
- Let new officers know that department officers are always available for support. Officers should not hesitate contacting state officers with questions.

Supporting your new officers will strengthen your auxiliary, your district, and our department. With confident leaders, our auxiliaries will remain healthy, and more members may see the support available and be willing to accept positions of leadership in the future.