



# Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary Department of Maryland FROM CHIEF of STAFF CATHY GISTEDT

Be *A Force For Veterans* in December

## Check It Off....Getting Things Done



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

- ✓ Attend the Department's Christmas Conference on December 6<sup>th</sup> hosted by Auxiliary 8185 in Port Deposit.
- ✓ Auxiliary Membership Committees should contact all annual members with unpaid dues before December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- ✓ Consider a Suicide Prevention promotion on Facebook with our 988 number for veterans. The holidays can be very difficult for many veterans. Let them know we care.

## Needed: Strong District Leadership

from *Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation*

"Your leadership role as a District President is to inspire, educate, and motivate others. ... As a leader you are best able to help the members of your team connect what they do in their community with the impact of our mission of service to veterans, service members, and their families. You are the liaison between the VFW Auxiliaries in the District and the Department Auxiliary. Any issues or concerns should be brought to the attention of the Department President or Chief of Staff."



## THE CHALLENGE

This season of holiday giving can be a lonely time for many of our veterans. Cold, stormy weather can make the days even more difficult. Consider contacting a local soup kitchen and giving the gift of your time to our veterans. People are always needed to help prepare and serve meals to those in your community facing hard times. Bring our veterans some friendly holiday cheer.

## Conducting Good Meetings:

### Don't Get Caught in These Common Mistakes

Whether a newer member that just isn't sure or a legacy member who has done it the same way for years, common mistakes can be made during your auxiliary meeting. Test your knowledge with these *True* or *False* statements.

**Presidents** should call program chairmen alphabetically to present their reports at meetings.

FALSE – Veterans & Family Support should always be called first. Our veterans' needs should be our first concern.

The Auxiliary Relief Fund is used by **Treasurers** only to fund the National Home and Poppy Program.

FALSE – Treasurers are required to use the Relief Fund for all obligations to our National VFW for any of our National Programs and projects fostering patriotism and helping veterans.

Bills from auxiliary spending in Standing Rules still need the approval of the **Trustees**.

TRUE – Trustees must require bills from *all* spending to be reviewed by at least 2 Trustees. This includes motions made at meetings and items accepted in the Standing Rules. Only expenses for membership dues can be paid by the Treasurer without the approval of Trustees.

The **Secretary** is given bills to read at meetings that members would like reimbursement for.

TRUE – Bills are not given to the Treasurer, but must first be approved by the Trustees after being read to members at a meeting. Trustees then are called at the "Report of the Trustees" to approve or reject the payment of the bills presented. Members then vote on the Trustees' suggestion to pay, or not pay, the bills.

Keep up to date on our Bylaws and the "Booklet of Instructions" to conduct a good meeting.

**GOOD MEETINGS = BETTER ATTENDANCE**



From Cathy Gistedt, Chief of Staff  
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### Care Enough to Adopt

The holiday season brings on extra financial needs that can make it difficult for some members to get their annual dues paid before the December 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. Consider *adopting* members.

Give your members over 80 a special holiday gift by paying their annual dues. If you know of members hospitalized or ill at home, bring them holiday cheer with a card that their dues have been paid....and the Auxiliary hopes they feel better.

Adopting members is a way to show we care.



### National Chief of Staff Karlene Beams:

*"We must ensure that the legacy of the VFW Auxiliary continues through strong and healthy auxiliaries comprising members who are prepared to take on leadership roles."*

### Challenges Facing Auxiliaries: Taking Time to Celebrate!



Offering variety from what was done in the past may be the spark that will develop renewed participation in your meetings....or even more! For a change, lighten the mood of meetings by adding some time to **celebrate**.

- **Celebrate Birthdays!** At each meeting have a birthday cake and coffee or tea to recognize members with birthdays that month. Invite members with a birthday by giving them a call, not just those who already attend meetings. Have a birthday card for everyone and consider mailing the cards to those who don't make your meeting if finances allow. Add a little note in the card that they were missed at the meeting and when your next meeting is.
- **Celebrate With Breakfast!** During these upcoming days when it gets dark early in the evening and many of our older members will not drive to meetings, consider changing your meeting for one month to a Saturday Morning Breakfast. It could be a covered dish or, if finances allow, at a restaurant.

### Understanding Robert's Rules of Order – Amending a Motion

Frequently members like the general idea of a motion made at a meeting, but after discussion they would like to change the motion slightly. To change the wording of an original motion is to *amend* the motion. Changes can be as simple as members wanting to donate more or less money to a cause or changing the date of an event. But it can also be as detailed as completely adjusting the agenda of a program.

To alter the wording of a motion that was made and seconded you must amend the motion by restating the motion to include the change you want to be made. If this new motion to amend is seconded, it must then be passed by a majority vote.

If passed, the President should state the motion as it is now worded to take a vote to accept. The motion, as amended, is recorded in the Minutes if it is passed with the changes.

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*Joy to the world*





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## New Tool to Assist Your Auxiliary: Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

Leaving 2025 for the new year ahead, I'm asking all auxiliaries to make this their New Year's Resolution:  
*Honestly discuss just how healthy your auxiliary is to start the new year.*

Are you doing your best but struggling in some areas?

- Not attracting new members?
- Not reporting for National Programs?
- Not conducting projects that assist veterans and their families?

And don't forget to consider:

- Are your officers remaining the same year after year?
- Are your audits being completed and sent to the Department Treasurer on time?
- Are personality conflicts and arguing among members causing problems for your auxiliary?

When facing challenges for your auxiliary to stay healthy, contact your District President or District Mentor to connect your auxiliary to the resources that would strengthen your work. But if more help would be beneficial, Department President Bill Siperek can send a Mentoring Team to assist your auxiliary using a new tool from National – a Performance Improvement Plan or PIP. Here's the basics of how a PIP works.

How does your auxiliary get help?

*A PIP Team meets with Auxiliary Officers or members to identify the specific issues you're facing.*

What is the first step when a focus area of concern is identified?

*The Team will determine possible solutions by holding open and honest dialogue with you're your Officers and members to clearly state future goals for your Auxiliary.*

What kind of help will the Team offer to reach these goals?

*A plan with specific goals for your auxiliary's needs that includes mentoring and team building for officers and members will be put in writing.*

How will the Team support the Auxiliary?

*Team members will attend your auxiliary meetings until you are again confident with the operation and progress being made by leadership and all members as they work together.*

What if the PIP is not enough to an Auxiliary in the green light of a Healthy Auxiliary?

*If the Performance Improvement Plan is not successful, President Bill may request that your Auxiliary be placed on suspension to provide more intense support and mentoring.*

Don't hesitate to request a PIP for your Auxiliary. A Performance Improvement Plan does not signal your auxiliary's failure. A PIP represents your auxiliary's commitment and willingness to change so you can continue serving our veterans and your community to fulfill our mission as a VFW Auxiliary.

