

AMVETS LADIES' AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
MINUTES-FEBRUARY SEC 2025

Friday February 21st, First Business Session

Call to Order by Madam President Patty Piening at 8:15 p.m.

Invocation by Chaplain Faye Caldwell

Presentation of Colors by Sgt. at Arms Claudia Thompson

Pledge of Allegiance by Sgt. at Arms Claudia Thompson

Preamble by 1st Vice President Chrissy Albright

Aims & Purposes by 2nd Vice President Sharon Sheldon

Code of Ethics by 3rd Vice President Karen Schooley

Definition of Americanism by Americanism Officer Toni Plemmons

Madam President, Patty Piening welcomed all to the February SEC 2025, thanked those who attended the Joint Opening Ceremony and coming over here joining and participating in the 1st Session of February SEC.

Roll Call of Officers by Recording Secretary Robin Trudeau

Approval of Agenda by 1st Vice Chrissy Albright moved to approve the agenda, second by Dawn Stewart, no discussion **MOTION CARRIED.**

Benediction by Chaplin Faye Caldwell

Respect the Colors by Sgt. at Arms Claudia Thompson

Recessed until 8:30 a.m. Saturday February 22nd, 2025.

Saturday February 22nd, 2025, Second Business Session

Call to Order President Patty Piening at 8:33 a.m.

Invocation by Chaplin Fay Caldwell

Pledge of Allegiance by Sgt. at Arms Claudia Thompson

Roll Call of Officers by Recording Secretary Robin Trudeau

Minutes of October 2024 SEC read by Recording Secretary Robin Trudeau. **1st Vice President Chrissy Albright** move to accept the minutes of the October 2024 SEC read and published, seconded by **NEC PDP Debbie Beck**, no discussion **Motion Carried.**

Eboard Recommendations read by Recording Secretary Robin Trudeau

PDP Sherry Marecek move to increase budget for Officers each year for the COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) to match Federal Government rates, not to exceed 3%. Budget will be rounded up to the nearest whole dollar amount, second by **1st Vice President Chrissy Albright**, no discussion **MOTION CARRIED.**

1ST Vice President Chrissy Albright move to use Madam President's budget to purchase Ashley House red shirts for Department Officers to wear on Friday at the June 2025 Convention to support Madam Presidents project, second by **PDP Donnajeanne Merritt.**

Communication read by Recording Secretary Robin Trudeau. Letter sent to AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary Dept of FL Officers and members from PDC A.J. John, AMVETS Trustee Committee for our donation of \$2,000.00. That our contribution came at a critical time, and they are incredibly grateful for the compassion and commitment we have shown to our fellow AMVETS.

Finance Report by Treasurer PDP Sherry Marecek's report is on pages 30-36 please read it. Remember this is your money! She thanked her Finance Committee, **1st Vice President Chrissy Albright**, **2nd Vice President Sharon Sheldon**, **3rd Vice President Karen Schooley** and **NEC PDP Debbie Beck**. They met on Thursday February 20th, 2025, and have a good start on next year's budget. This will be brought to the floor for approval in the June 2025 Convention. She promised to make this painless. Officers, as a reminder if you have any reimbursements due to you, please have vouchers for her by the lunch break today. Wished Madam President a successful SEC!

Audit Report by **1st Vice President Chrissy Albright**, the Audit committee met on Thursday February 20th, 2025. They validated the Executive Secretary and Treasures books to the bank accounts. All accounts are balanced and expenses accounted for. Thanked her committee members **2nd Vice President Sharon Sheldon**, **3rd Vice President Karen Schooley** and **NEC PDP Debbie Beck**.

Madam President Patty Piening announced and welcomed our Special Guest AMVETS National Ladies Auxiliary Parliamentarian Heidi Dineen-Serpis. Parliamentarian PNP/PDP Charlene Kee Thanked Heidi for reviewing our Bylaws in a timely manner and always just being a phone call away. Thank you, Heidi, from the Dept. of Florida Ladies Auxiliary for all you do.

Introduction of 1st Timers by NEC PDP Debbie Beck. **Aux. #32** Joy Bell, **Aux. #44** Jennifer Abel, **Aux. #50** Linda Kennedy, **Aux. #60** Deborah Hughes, **Aux. #78** Lydia Burger, **Aux. #88** Victoria Spearin, **Aux. #422** Cassandra Roe and Amber Zwinge, **Aux. #2000** Candy Kenney and Kitty Lydon. PDP Sherry Marecek did announce if you were a 1st Timer in October 2024 SEC and did not get a Medallion, she will be passing them out today.

Department of Officers Reports:

President: Patty Piening's report is on page 8 please read it. For her program, Tara Dean Aux. #26 will be selling raffle tickets for a Kate Spade purse with the value of \$289.00. All proceeds will go to her project The Ashly House, it is a transition home for homeless female Veterans with no Alcohol or Drug addiction. The Ashley House is designed to give women a safe place while they put their life on a path to successfully transition into civilian life without the fear of being homeless. This house is still being built, walls are up, and they are working on the inside, grand opening should be in the summer of 2025. She also thanked all the auxiliaries for supporting your local auxiliary, supporting each other, and working together. If we all work together, we will stay together, help your auxiliary grow, do not be afraid to take an office, call any Dept. officer they will help you and assist you with any questions you may have.

1st Vice President: Chrissy Albright's report is on pages 9-14 please read it as it has the score card in there for your auxiliary. Annual Membership deadlines was December 31st, 2024. Only 1 Auxiliary had 100% renewals! That auxiliary will know at awards. Please reach out to members who have not renewed. Retention of existing members is as important as recruiting new members, the personal touch of reaching out may make all the difference to someone. Life membership is now \$450.00 for the department, the cost will keep going up, so if your ladies are interested, get them now, do not wait multiple years. Please read and share the Convention Forecast and please note the Forecast includes the form so that if you desire, you may send a token of love for Department Madam President, and she will make sure she receives it and is aware from whom the gift was sent from. The deadline to file your local auxiliary 990s with the IRS was September 15, 2024. If your auxiliary did not file and send a copy to her, your auxiliary IS NOT in good standing. She has attempted to validate 990s with the IRS for those local auxiliaries who did not send theirs in, but this has limitations. It is her responsibility to validate the 990s, not her responsibility to retrieve all of them.

Special Guest Speakers, Dept. of FI AMVETS Commander Doug Fergeson, AMVETS National to Commander PDC Horace Johnson, PDC Eddie Bullock, PDC A.J John and Fred Baits. Commander PDC Horace Johnson discussed supporting his project with Cleveland Urban Minority Alcoholism Drug Abuse Outreach Project. PDC Eddie Bullock discussed for everyone to support each other, support the AMVET family, to reach out to each other, trying to get the award program back up and to recognize if someone is doing great. Commander Doug Ferguson advised whatever you learn here this weekend to bring back to you post, help each other out. PDC A.J John, thanked us again for our support and AMVETS Post #30 should be open soon just waiting on the health department to do their inspection.

2nd Vice President: Sharon Sheldon's report is on pages 15-17 please read it. She thanked everyone for a great job in reporting. So far this year Child Welfare has done \$183,071.00 with over half of the auxiliaries reporting so far. For any auxiliary that has not handed in a service report it only takes one report to be in good standing. If you need help with child welfare, please reach out to her. The forecast comes out this weekend and this is the time of year to start thinking about awards, one of the awards is Child Welfare. April is the month for John Tracy Clinic. All service reports are due in her hand by May 5th, she also thanked Aux. #81 and #447 for their reports always being correct. Wished Madam President a productive SEC.

3rd Vice President: Karen Schooley's report is on page 18 please read it. Please continue to number your reports by doing so it is easier to refer to whether any questions should arise or if a report comes up missing, it will aid as a follow-up. File your reports at least monthly, this will help you to remember all aspects of the project and will ensure correct dates. Enter the total number of projects on the report. The deadline for reports is May 5th. March is Paws with a Cause month, please support and donate to the worthy cause. There is a Patrons page going around the room today, please fill it out accordingly and when completed please give the information with the envelope to the Executive Secretary. There is also a copy of it in your SEC packet to bring to your local to fill out and return it to the Executive Secretary no later than May 15th. Reach out to her if you have any questions regarding Community Service. Wished Madam President a successful SEC.

NEC: PDP Debbie Beck's report is on pages 40-42 please read it when you get a chance. You will see Mid-Year totals following her report. Everyone is doing a great job reporting. As of the current total submitted by the Service Officers, we have increased reporting from Mid-year by almost double! The current total is \$1,254,385.00. Please keep up the great work. The Forecast will be distributed this weekend. Please be sure to share it with your auxiliaries, so you can apply for the Awards which you work so hard to achieve. Remember, all service reports are due in the Department Service Officers' hands on or before May 5th to be included for year end.

As you know we all have a deadline so please do not try to overwhelm the officers at the last minute. They do not accept email reports or ones that are late. She will be attending the spring NEC and will have more information to share at the June Convention. If you wish to be a member of the committee for AMVETS National Convention in August, please let her know. Wished Madam President a successful and productive SEC.

Chaplin: Faye Caldwell's report is on page 44, please read it at your leisure. Deceased member forms are located on the Department website amvetsauxfl.org. Final Date for June Convention Roll Call is May 5th and must be in my hands so we can have the names printed in the book. Wished Madam President a successful SEC.

Americanism: Toni Plemmon's report is on page 21, please read it at your leisure. Our ladies are doing great with reporting, we have 30 out of 57 auxiliaries that are reporting. At this time, she read a letter of thanks from Jr. ROTC Timothy Swanson who attended Spirit of America Youth Seminar at Founding Forward in Philadelphia, which was supported by AMVETS and AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary. He stated he was able to meet new people, learn new things and utilize skills in public speaking and leadership. He traveled alone for the first time and learned more about our country. He enjoyed every moment he spent at the Founding Forward camp, and it will continue to make a positive impact with the information and knowledge he gathered from this wonderful experience. On a personal note, she wanted to thank all auxiliary sisters for their calls, texts, cards, and prayers on the loss of her son in January.

Hospital: Jan Northcutt's report is on page 24-26 read it at your leisure. She is happy to report 24 auxiliaries have reported for the total evaluation of \$168,752.00. Still waiting on the other 33 auxiliaries to report. You do not have to have a Hospital Chairman to report just report to your SEC if you have anything for hospital. Do not forget to put in for awards, after all you worked hard for this. Please continue to help at our VA hospitals by volunteering.

VAVS report by Jan Northcutt, VA Hospital in Bay Pines is in need for toiletries and volunteers. She is now working, volunteering at the Bay Pines VA to visit her.

Scholarship: Kim Clarke's report is on pages 27-29. Please read it at your leisure. In the report it does include the various deadlines for scholarship opportunities which include National and Department of Florida AMVETS, National and Department of Florida Auxiliary, also National Riders. We have 13 auxiliaries that have reported with a total evaluation at this time of \$75,675.00. Remember the reports are due in her hands by May 5th for the June Convention. Wished Madam President a successful SEC and to everyone a safe trip home.

Parliamentarian: PNP/PDP Charlene Kee reported that the Bylaws Committee met on Friday, February 21st and had 8 guests. They reviewed the Bylaws and at this time there are no changes or recommendations to report. They are working on procedures for an auxiliary that is in the process of going under Trusteeship. They discussed Constitution Article XII Discipline-Trusteeship pages 23-24. They are preparing steps on what constitutes an auxiliary being under Trusteeship and what assistance could be given to avoid trusteeship. Every auxiliary will receive a copy. She thanked her committee for their expertise. PNP/PDP Evelyn McElvin, PDP Sherry Marecek, NEC/PDP Debbie Beck, Karen Schooley and Wendy Luzader. Her report is on page 37. Please note her new mailing address is 206 Dogwood Drive, Sanford FL 32771. Don't forget to review all the resources available on our AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary Department of FL website (www.amvetsauxfl.org) under Parliamentarian and Bylaws before mailing your bylaws to me. Locals do not forget Standing rule #5: "In order for an Auxiliary to remain in good standing, all revalidated Auxiliaries shall submit a minimum of one (1) service report to the Department per year." The District and Auxiliaries listed below bylaws are due before the 2025 Department Convention. Waiting on bylaws by: District#6, Aux. #4, #12, #17, #19, #23, #29, #33, #44, #47, #67, #86, #98, #113, #447, #2000, and # 2006. If you plan on being in an Elected or Appointed position, it is mandatory, our Standing Rule #6, unless excused by the Madam President, you go to The Department Officers Training, which will be July 11-13, 2025 at TownePlace Suites by Marriot, 5530 Butler National Dr, Orlando FL 32812. This afternoon I will be training at 1:00 p.m. Please attend. You do not have to wear your uniform. There will be a box to place your questions you may have if you do not want to ask on the floor. Please bring your Forecast with you.

Special Guests, Junior AMVETS President Parkinson announced his project is for the Ronald McDonald House and the Juniors will be selling 50/50 tickets and to join them at the Horse Races tonight by the AMVETS sons and Junior AMVETS He announced his officers: Sr. Vice President Joseph Comar, Jr. Vice President Jeremiah Rosado, Chaplin Zakhai Master, Treasure Janoah Master, Secretary Makenzie Baca, Sgt.at Arms Jaden Parkinson, Parliamentarian Dekina Harvey, PRO Alaya Anderson.

District & Local Presidents reports were given on the floor of their local's activities and achievements. Auxiliaries that donated, Aux. #60 donated \$300.00, Aux.# 312 donated \$1,000.00. to Madam Presidents project Ashley House. Aux. #292 Donated \$4,500.00 to St Jude's, and Aux. # 312 donated \$1,000.00 to Paws for the Cause.

Grievance Chair: PDP Sherry Marecek reported that there are NO reports to report.

P.R.O. Tara Dean's report is on page 56 read at your leisure. If anyone has any Madam Presidents photos of her at their post to please forward to her.

Sgt. at Arms: Claudia Thompson's report is on page 45 please read at your leisure. Thanked Deena Lonneville Aux. # 2415 and April Higgins Aux. #60 for help with the flags, and her pagers Tajuana McKenzie and Peg Morgan. Patty the Panda raised \$83.75.

Bushnell Cemetery: Claudia Thompson report is on page 54 please read it at your leisure and when you get a chance to visit a Veteran at the Cemetery, leave a penny because some Veterans do not get any visitors.

Recording Secretary: Robin Trudeau's report is on page 39, please read at your leisure. All motions must be written out on Motion Slip by the one making the motion, at that time, that same person needs to put who seconded that motions name on the Motion Slip, then have Madam President and Parliamentarian sign it and return to the Recording Secretary ASAP, this is very important to be recorded in the minutes. Wished Madam President a successful SEC.

Honors and Award: PNP/PDP Evelyn McElvin asked the SEC woman please pickup and sign out your forecast for awards, please bring this back with you to school of instructions.

Benediction: by Chaplin Faye Caldwell

Respect to the Colors: by Sgt-at-Arms Claudia Thompson

Recessed Until Sunday February 23rd at 8:30 a.m.

Sunday February 23rd, 2025, Last Business Session

Raffle Drawings –Friday 50/50 Patrick Holbrooke \$161.00, Saturday Frank Beans \$184.00, Sunday Tim Walters \$186.00.

Purse Raffle raised \$625.00 toward Ashley House; Robin Trudeau Aux.#81 won the purse.

Special Guest. Sons Commander Tim Brook donated \$500.00 toward Madam Presidents project the Ashley House.

Call to Order by Madam President at 8:31 a.m.

Invocation by Chaplin Fay Caldwell

Pledge of Allegiance by Sgt-at-Arms Claudia Thompson

Roll Call by Recording Secretary Robin Trudeau

Continued Department Officers Reports

Credentials April Higgins report is on page 55 please read at your leisure. If you have questions please call, text, or email April and she will help any way she can. When filling out the registration please only list a name once, the highest position. If your SEC is coming to the SEC or Convention then the Alt SEC will be listed as a Delegate, you may list them as Alt SEC if your SEC IS NOT coming. Please only make a check in the box for First Timers, do NOT mark the box if they are not First Timers. We had 143 pre-registered, 18 First Timers, 23 No shows and 22 On-site registered. \$115.00 in checks and \$370.00 in cash, a total of \$485.00 was given to the Executive Secretary.

Gaveliers: PDP Sherry Marecek reported that the Gaveliers met last evening and they had a small but mighty attendance. This coming Convention, they are honored to be hosting Madam President's reception, so come back in June, bring more members to show our appreciation of a job well done to Madam President. There were 10 first Timers yesterday, once again Thank you for coming and we truly hope you can come back. She thanked everyone for purchasing the scratch tickets, the money they collect is for things to aid the Department of Florida Ladies Auxiliary. This weekend they raised \$336.00 and Congratulation to Ramona Mourhess Aux. #8 for being the big winner this SEC.

Executive Secretary PDP Donnajeanne Merritt report is on page 38, please read it asap as it has information on it. The time for renewal of membership has now passed. If a former member now wants to "renew" they must rejoin and provide all paperwork to prove their eligibility. If a member waits until after May 23rd to join, they must join as a new member and again provide any paperwork/documents necessary to prove eligibility. In the packets are the most current membership rosters that she has. There is a list of LIFE members, a list of renewed members and a list of members that have NOT renewed, she encourages you to call the member that have not renewed. You also have Revalidation, Dues remittance are forms in there also all this is on our website www.amvetladiesauxfl.org. She thanked everyone for all their hard work. Wished Madam President a successful SEC.

Convention Chair: Nikki Anderson's report is on page 49 please read it as it has information regarding the banquet "Mash Bash" at the June Convention. 50/50 raised \$531.00 and \$341.00 in raffles. Thanked everyone for the baskets and their help.

Jr. AMVETS Sarah Baca's report is on page 46. She reported the Jr.'s had a very productive meeting yesterday. They had 11 attendances with 2 first timers. AJ and Lailynn. For Ronald's President Project they received a \$500.00 donation form the AMVET Dept. of Sons and \$100.00 donation from Post 26 Juniors and with the 50/50 they raised \$1,150.00 for Ronald McDonald House and Michele Wells Aux. #50 \$450.00 and donated \$100.00 back to the Jr.'s. Mid-year

evaluations totaled \$10,821.00 in all reporting categories. The President and all the Jr AMVETS had a great SEC and represented our AMVETS family with pride, respect, and a great Attitude.

President Council: Nikki Anderson reported 25 presidents were in attendance and lots of great idea for fundraising was mentioned, great meeting.

SEC Council: Leslie Long reported 25 SEC women, 2 Alt SEC and 5 guests. Discussed reporting, verbiage used when reporting, of projects. Discussion on clothing, very useful conversation meeting.

Quartermaster: Toni Fox's report is on page 51 please read it at your leisure. It was a busy weekend as usual and thanked Midy Stepp for volunteering to help her this weekend. Friday sales brought in \$2,466, Saturday Sales \$1,660.00 for a total of \$4,126.00 given to the Executive Secretary.

Unfinished Business: NONE

New Business: NONE

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENTIONS

Chrissy Albright for Madam President

Sharon Sheldon for 1st Vice President

Karen Schooley for 2nd Vice President

Wendy Luzader for 2nd Vice President

Robin Trudeau for 3rd Vice President

PDP Debbie Beck for NEC

PNP Patty Piening for Alt NEC

Dawn Stewart for Chaplin

Kim Clarke for Americanism

Faye Caldwell for Americanism

Jan Northcutt for Hospital

Leslie Long for Scholarship

Tajuana McKenzie for Sgt.-at-Arms

Benedictions by Faye Caldwell

Retirement of Colors by Sgt.-at-Arms by Claudia Thompson

Adjournment at 9:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted.

Robin Trudeau

Recording Secretary