

**AMVETS LADIES' AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
MINUTES-OCTOBER SEC 2024**

Friday October 25, 2024-First Business Session

Call to Order by 1st Vice President Chrissy Albright

Invocation by Chaplin Faye Caldwell

Presentation of Colors by Sgt. at Arms Claudia Thompson

Pledge of Allegiance by Sgt. at Arms Claudia Thompson

Preamble by 1st Vice Chrissy Albright

Aims & Purposes by 2nd Vice President Sharon Sheldon

Code of Ethics by 3rd Vice President Karen Schooley

Madam President, Patty Piening welcomed all to the Fall SEC, nice to see all the smiling faces with all the disaster from hurricanes thank you for making it to this conference.

Roll Call of Officers, by Recording Secretary Robin Trudeau

Approval of Agenda seconded by PNP/PDP Evelyn McElvin, no discussion, **MOTION CARRIED.**

Benediction by Chaplain Faye Caldwell

Respect the Colors by Sgt. at Arms Claudia

Recessed until 8:30 a.m. Saturday October 26, 2024

Saturday October 26th, 2024, Second Business Session

President PNP Patty Piening called the Second Business Session for the 2024 Fall SEC to Order at 8:33 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

Invocation by Chaplin Faye Caldwell

Pledge of Allegiance by Sgt at Arms Claudia Thompson

Roll Call of Officers by Recording Secretary Robin Trudeau

Minutes of the July 2024 Officers Training Eboard Recommendation read by Recording Secretary Robin Trudeau, Margaret Sousa Auxiliary #312 moved for the approval for minutes as read and published, seconded by PNP/PDP Evelyn McElvin, no discussion, MOTION CARRIED.

Minutes of the June 2024 Convention read by Recording Secretary Robin Trudeau, Madam President PNP Patty Piening moved for the approval of the minutes as read and published, seconded by Latisha Spencer Shepard Aux. #30, NO discussion MOTION CARRIED.

Communication By Recording Secretary Robin Trudeau. A thank you letter from State of Florida Alwyn C Cashe State Veterans Nursing Home for the Donation of \$1,200.00. A thank you letter from State of Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, Ardie R Copas State Veterans Nursing Home for the Donation of \$1,685.00. A thank you card from Edie Dopking/Quantum Leap Farm for our donation.

Recording Secretary: Robin Trudeau's report is on page 43. Read on the floor that 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 the Madam President and Parliamentarian sign it and return to me ASAP, this is VERY important to be recording in the minutes.

Finance Report: Treasure PDP Sherry Marecek. Her report is on pages 21-26. Please read it. Remember a returned check is quite costly therefore before you write the check-CHECK. She thanked the Committee members 1st Vice Chrissy Albright, 2nd Vice Sharon Sheldon, 3rd Vice Karen Schooley and NEC PDP Debbie Beck. The Finance committee met on Thursday, and they have one recommendation to bring to the body for a vote. At the National Convention in August 2024, it was voted on and passed that effective January 1st, 2025, that National's portion of a Life Membership will be \$300.00.

PDP Sherry Marecek move to increase Life Membership dues to \$450.00. National will receive \$300.00 and Department of Florida will retain \$150.00. To be effective January 1st, 2025, second by Jan Northcutt, discussion from Margaret Souza Aux. #312 believes that \$450.00 is a lot to ask for Life membership, answering PDP Sherry Marecek that National is wanting to get rid of Life Membership, only money we really get from annual to keep us going. It is a 1-time deal with Life membership and no more for the rest of their lives.

PNP/PDP Charlene Kee explaining that National will be sent \$300.00 and Department of Florida is asking for additional \$25.00 to bring it up to \$450.00. PDP Marylou Maslo explained within your auxiliary you can raise it at your auxiliary also, as you will only get 1 time fee from your Life Membership, Parliamentarian PNP/PDP Charlene Kee asked if you should change your Local Life Membership fees to send in your revised Bylaw's, no further discussion MOTION CARRIED.

Audit Committee Report: by Committee Chair 1st Vice President Chrissy Albright. The Audit Committee met Thursday Afternoon, happy to report that there were no errors and all the accounts balanced. Thanked her committee members, 2nd Vice President Sharon Sheldon, 3rd Vice President Karen Schooley and NEC PDP Debbie Beck.

Introduction of 1st Timers by PDP Sherry Mareck. **Aux. #2** Pat Taylor and LuAnn Bible, **Aux. #4** Debra Randolph, **Aux. #15** Dasha Cates and Bonnie Bearor, **Aux. #21** Susan White and Judy Virts, **Aux. #26** Dianne Zahron and Susan Frye, **Aux. #32** Amy LaSeur, **Aux. #34** Sandra Richards and Susan Veronegi, **Aux. #50** Michelle Mullins and Judy Elias, **Aux. #312** JaoqueThomas, Mickey Foster and Sharon Smith, **Aux. #420** Melissa Mason, Debbie Grafron, Cindy Coffey and Dawn Johnson, **Aux. #422** Laura Lane, **Aux. #444** Michelle Eque and Shelly Young, **Aux. #550** Dianna Kane, **Aux. #911** Nancy Lee, **Aux. #1992** Rhonda Steinbrook and Reba Weiss, **Aux. #2001** Sheila Walden and Christina Evans, **Aux. #2006** Karen Hamlin.

Department Officer Reports:

President: PNP Patty Piening's report is on page 8, please read it. Her theme for this year is "Make a Difference by Volunteering" that you should never underestimate the difference you have with the lives you have touched from Volunteering. The difference you make in others just from listening, helping and to see the smile it brings to someone's face is extremely rewarding. Her Project is the "Ashley House" named after 1st LT. Ashley White who was killed in Afghanistan while serving our country. The Ashley House will serve as a transition home for homeless female veterans. This home will provide a safe haven for these women to begin their healing journey in a safe and loving environment. While housed in this facility these veterans will receive financial guidance, AV Benefits, school, and career counseling. A new Ashley House is being built in Eustis, Florida. Madam President PNP Patty Piening will be raffling off a Kate Spade Tote bag, \$5.00 a ticket and a winner will be drawn on Sunday morning to help raise funds for this project. Asked for local auxiliary to schedule a fund raiser to help support her project.

1st Vice President: Chrissy Albright's report is on page 9, please read it. Advised in SEC packet contains information from National 1st Vice President, Mary Lanphere. National has raised the price on the Lifetime Membership as we just heard from PDP Sherry Marecek. Early bird renewals are to be sent to DonnaJeanne Merrit by November 4th, 2024. Annual membership is due by December 31st. The deadline to file your local auxiliary 990 with the IRS was September 15th, 2024. You must file and send a copy to Chrissy Albright for your auxiliary to remain in good standing. It is not Department 1st Vice responsibility to validate or retrieve local 990's. It is the responsibility of the local Auxiliaries. Also to send Department 1st Vice a copy also. The AMVETS national Ladies Auxiliary website houses the National Lines under the publications tab: www.amvetsaux.org. The AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary Department of Florida website has membership forms under the forms tab: www.amvetsauxfl.org. She encourages all to access these resources.

2nd Vice President: Sharon Sheldon thanked everyone for electing her as 2nd Vice Child Welfare. Everyone is doing an excellent job with sending in reports. So far this year, 22 auxiliaries have reported with a total of evaluations of \$85,929.00. She also apologized to Auxiliary #8 for missing putting in the book, the total will be added in February book. She asked that we all turn to page 16 and write in for auxiliary #8 total evaluation of \$2,069.00. Midyear service report in her hand by November 5th. In the packets you will find a letter from National 2nd Vice President Laura Rose Bugaj please read it. When filling out your service reports please do not round up or down on the Mileage, do not do your reports in pencil. Lastly if you need help, please do not hesitate to call her. To keep in mind, you need at least one service report to stay in good standing. Wished Madam President a successful SEC.

3rd Vice President: Karen Schooley report is on page 18 please read it. She thanked all auxiliaries for the excellent job in reporting community service hours and projects. Even though March is Paws month, it is never too early to start planning a fundraiser for the amazing project. The donations received will help a multitude of areas withing the Paws with a Cause facility. Which are listed in a letter you will find in your packet from National 3rd Vice President Debra Gass. Aside from "Paws," it is also important that we reach out within our communities to help other programs by volunteering, especially with the recent hurricanes, so many families and businesses were affected and are in dire straits and need your help. Your kindness and generosity will go a long way! Please reach out to Karen Schooley any time for help with completing your service reports. Thanked Madam President for the opportunity to serve as your 3rd Vice Community Service Officer and wished her a successful SEC.

Guest Speaker: Department of Florida Sons Commander Tim Brooks, his project 2024-2025 is to raise funds to support the Gramatica Family Foundation it is a 501c, to build and repair homes for our Veterans.

Madam President PNP Patty Piening announced all the Florida local auxiliaries that received National awards and or certificates that was received at AMVETS National Convention in August 2024. **Also congratulated National Auxiliary of the year to State of Florida AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary #44.**

NEC: PDP Debbie Beck's report is on pages 37-39, please read it at your leisure. It was her honor and privilege of attending the AMVETS National Convention and her report is on page 59-60, please read it, as it includes new information and the newly elected National Officers. A few things to remember, please use the updated forms and manual as some things have changed ex, mileage is now sixty-five cents and hours are now \$30.00. When making a donation do not forget to do a service report. Please try to send in your reports monthly. This way our Service Officers have time to review and reach out if they have any questions or concerns. If you wait to the last minute, it could possibly not make it into the book as they might not have time to review. Midyear reports are due in the Service Officers hands by November 5th. Local officers, please check with the Department Officers to verify totals for awards. If you would like to be on a National Committee, please see her after the meeting.

Alt NEC: PDP Marylou Maslo's report is on page 40, please read it at your leisure. Thank you everyone for spending your money on raffles as they all go to worthy causes. As your Alternate NEC please pay attention to what NEC PDP Debbie Beck says to pay attention to deadlines.

Chaplain: Faye Caldwell's report is on page 36. Please note that May 5th, 2025, is the cutoff date for June Roll Call with no exceptions. Thanked Madam President, that it is a blessing to serve as the Department of Florida Chaplain. She read: May the strength of faith guide your journey, leading you with unwavering trust through the unseen paths ahead.

Hospital: Jan Northcutt's report is on page 30, please read it at your leisure. Thanked everyone for all the emails, cards, and phone calls of sympathy for the loss of her sister. It meant a lot to her and her family. Thank you to all the auxiliaries that have reported already, keep up the great work. She has put information in your SEC packets. Remember mid-year service reports need to be in hand by November 5th. February SEC reports are due in her hands by January 6th, 2025. Wished Madam President a successful SEC.

Madam President PNP Patty Piening announced if you know of a Veteran with little Social Security, low income, they can apply for Non-Benefit Pension through the VA or on their website. The veteran has had to have served at least 1 day, have an honorable discharge in a war era. This can help by subsidizing the cost of living. Please reach out to Madam President and she will get that website for you.

Scholarship: Kim Clarke's report is on page 33 please read it at your leisure. Her theme for the year is, "We've Got the Dollars for Your Scholars!" February is scholarship month. Available Scholarships are on the websites mentioned in my report from the National Department, locals, and the Service Foundation. She has received reports from 9 Auxiliaries with 33 projects reported. Please remember reports need to be in her hand by November 5th, 2024. Wished Madam President a successful SEC.

Parliamentarian: PNP/PDP Charlene Kee Bylaws Committee met on Friday, they had 5 committee Members present, 2 Excused and 9 guests. The business for the meeting was reviewing the procedures for an auxiliary being placed under Trusteeship and reasons why an auxiliary would be placed under Trusteeship which is in our Constitution pages 23-24. The Committee homework assignment is to produce a step-by-step procedure for an officer to use if asked to go into an auxiliary if an auxiliary is placed under Trusteeship. 1st Vice Chrissy Albright, PDP Marylou Maslo, PNP/PDP Evelyn McElvin and herself shared their personal experience of being on a Trusteeship Committee. We should always remember we should never discuss with others about an auxiliary under trusteeship, No one should know, only the Trustee Committee, Madam President, and the E-board. Thank all members for approving the recommendation from the Finance Committee. PNP/PDP asked to go to our **Department Bylaws** on page 1 and make the changes as follows.

Article III Membership and Dues:

(d) (2) minimum of \$450.00 of which \$300.00 is sent to National and \$150.00 retained by the Department of Florida.

At the next meeting, pages will be updated and passed out to the members to insert.

If Locals are going to have to change their Dues because of National and Department Motions were made, do not send in Bylaws if Dues are not changed, make sure you change it. Thanked her committee PNP/PDP Dee Baggett (excused) NEC/PDP Debbie Beck, PNP/PDP Evelyn McElvin, PDP Sherry Marecek and Karen Schooley. Parliamentarian report is on page 41. Asked how many local Parliamentarian were here today, she thanked them and their Local President for their appointment as this is a very distinguished position, also If any of you have questions, please do not hesitate to call her. Thank our new Web Master Kristen Mandel for the Parliamentarian information, Bylaws, Rules, and Cover sheet are all on the website, thank you Christine! The list of bylaws that are due, draw a line through #60 they are received. PNP/PDP Charlene Kee also thanked our Past Department Presidents for assisting with training the new Department Officers in July it was a success! If any members are planning to run for a Department Officers position or are considered for an appointed position the mandatory training will be held in Orlando the TownePlace Suites near the airport July 11-13, 2025. The details will be in the February SEC book. Thanked Madam President for the appointed position as Parliamentarian as it is honor and privilege.

Guest Speaker: PDC AJ John explained that AMVETS Post 30 is in trusteeship, closed since June 2024. PDC AJ John comes to us, not as an Auxiliary but as AMVET family for help. Opened in 1940, one of the oldest AMVETS Post in Florida, has the most Past Dept Commanders, Most Past National Commanders, has the most Past Department Presidents and 2 Past National Ladies Presidents. This hits hard because we have had bad leadership that has put us here in this position and that leadership has moved on to other posts and left us with the burden. With new leadership, as of now we are working with CPA for the back 990's to get our nonprofit status back, have not filed 990's since 2017, liquor license and with back taxes owed. Really need donations, if you could do anything we would really, really appreciate it! PDC AJ John has been a member for over 30 years, and it hits hard to see this happen because of bad leadership and trying all he can to help with opening of AMVETS Post 30 with the AMVETS family help. He really appreciates your time and anything you can do. His contact number is 407-766-7515 and his address is 2780 Cabernet Circle, Ocoee FL 34761.

PDP Sherry Marecek move to “pass the hat” this SEC to donate to AMVETS POST 30, second by 1st Vice President Chrissy Albright, no discussion MOTION CARRIED. At this time Auxiliary 2006 donated \$30.00 and challenged all the other Auxiliaries to do the same. Please write checks to AMVETS POST 30.

Executive Secretary: PDP DonnaJeanne Merrit's report is on page 42, please read it as it has valuable information in it. She is aware you have been working hard on membership and she wants to apologize for the delay in getting cards to you. The problem is at the National Level. National sends her pre-printed cards for the renewals and blank cards for new members which she has not received as of October 23, 2024. She has been told that the cards should be out this week. She will process them as quickly as she can once she receives them. She has been able to put into the database the renewal members that I have received that already had membership numbers in the hopes that when she does receive the cards will speed things up. For those renewing for the first time she has to wait as she does not have the membership number for them as they are on the preprinted cards and the National Rosters which she has not received. When it comes to New Members she cannot put them into database until she has the cards as when they are put in the cards must be printed on the same day before midnight or she will have to hunt for them individually and it is almost like putting them in a second time. In your packets you will find your rosters as best as she could do given the delay in being able to input membership One shows those that have renewed for 2025 and those that need to renew prior to December 31,2024. Also, there is a life member roster included. Please be sure that your address is correct on your revals, that the addressed are complete and that the emails address is complete. On another note, please provide me with an email address of someone in your auxiliary. I would dare say that 90% of you have emails or have the ability to have an email. If you have a mobile phone, you can obtain an email address. This is important to get information to you quickly. As an example, I was able to email the 1st Vice President that I had emails for information about the problems with the membership cards so that they had an explanation to give tier members when they started asking about the cards.

Lastly do not send service reports to me. They go to your department service officers which we will go over in the training this afternoon. She then wanted to leave you with this: if you are feeling low, do not despair, the sun has a sinking spell every night but comes back up every morning. Keep moving forward instead of looking back.

Benediction: by Chaplain Faye Caldwell

Respect to the Colors: by Sgt at Arms Claudia Thompson

Recessed until Sunday October 27th, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.

Sunday October 27th, 2024, Business Session

Raffle Drawing Friday 50/50, \$95.00 to Nikki Anderson which she has donated back. Saturday 50/50 \$110.00 to Leslie Long, Sunday 50/50 \$69.00 to Penny Pond Aux #7. All baskets were raffled off.

Gavaliers raised \$705.00 winner to Auxiliary #444

Madam Presidents Project to the Ashley House, Kate Spade purse raised \$830.00, Gift cards raised \$190.00, and Jewelry raised \$257.00.

Call to Order by Madam President PNP Patty Piening at 8:40 a.m.

Innovation: by Chaplain Faye Caldwell

Pledge of Allegiance by Sgt at Arms Claudia Thompson

Roll Call of Officers by Recording Secretary Robin Trudeau

Continued Department Officers Reports.

Credentials Chair: April Higgins report is on page 48 please read it at your leisure. She reported 169 Preregistered, 22 onsite, 31 First Timers and 40 no shows. A check for \$2,190 was given to the Executive Secretary. Your local president gets the hotline by email with a copy of the agenda with all the times on it. You can only register when the desk is open. If you are not sure on how to fill out a registration sheet, please call April Higgins and she will be happy to help you. Please make sure your pre-registration is in my hands by January 25th, 2025. I will email the pre-registration on January 26th, 2025, to Executive Secretary DonnaJeanne Merritt as we all have deadlines, and the books need to go to print on time.

Convention Chair: Nikki Anderson's report is on page 49 please read it at your leisure. This weekend 50/50's raised \$578.00, and raffles raised \$718.00. Nikki asked for February SEC and Convention in June to please bring basket to be raffled off. She also asked Auxiliaries to sign out 50/50's and sell at your locals. June Banquet will be M.A.S.H BASH, will be contests, horse races and Auctions too. AMVETS looking for \$2,500 towards banquet cost.

Honors and Awards: PNP/PDP Evelyn McElvin's report is on page 50 please read it at your leisure. She did advise to keep doing reports, keep turning in your reports, apply for Awards. Forecast will be out in February and your SEC woman can sign for it, please share the Forecast with your auxiliary for the Honors and Awards.

Gaveliers: Report by PDP Sherry Marecek reported they had 31 1st Timers, thanked them all for coming to SEC and hope they all come back in February SEC to receive the 1st Timers Medallion. Gaveliers meeting was Saturday at lunch time in Madam Presidents Suite and wanted to thank her for allowing them to use her suite and having lunch. We all heard the trials that Post 30 are facing and we passed the hat, ladies \$1,688.00 was collected!

PDP Sherry Marecek move to increase the check written by Auxiliary Department of Florida by \$312.00 to make total Donation of \$2,000.00 to AMVETS Post 30, second by Crissy Carr Aux. #88, discussion- PDP Marylou Maslo would like to know where the \$312.00 is coming out of, what fund? PDP Sherry Marecek has advised it will come out of the General Fund, no further discussion, MOTION CARRIED.

Hope you all enjoyed the School of Instruction and took home some new knowledge. If you have any questions please call your Department Officers, they will be happy to help you. Gaveliers raised \$705.00 for the Gaveliers scratch off tickets. Thank you all. PNP/PDP Charlene Kee spoke for AMVETS Post 30 thank you so much for your generous support.

Grievance: PDP Sherry Marecek's report is on page 45. At this time there are no grievances. PDP Sherry Marecek has had several phone calls and apparently all is well. Remember, filing a grievance is a serious matter. Do not file based on personality conflicts.

Appeals Chair: PDP Marylou Maslo's report is on page 46. Everyone is doing a great job and remembering deadlines are important. Safe trip home to all.

Presidents Council: By Nikki Anderson advised meeting went well, talked about raising money, mostly about trying to get Volunteers.

SEC Council: By Leslie Long had 24 SEC woman and 5 guests, voted PNP/PDP Evelyn McElvin to fill the vacancy of 1st Vice. They recapped reporting and answered questions. Reminders Mid-year due in hand by November 5th. Reports for February book must be in hand by January 6th, 2025. On behalf of Auxiliary 444 they donated \$500.00 to the Ashley House, Madam President project. Madam President thanked Auxiliary 444 for their generous gift.

VA Bay Pines: Jan Northcutt advised Bay Pines was flooded and in need of lots of things, including socks, T-shirts, boxers, anything you can provide will be much appreciated! Please contact her with any questions.

VA Bushnell: Claudia Thompson's report is on page 52, please stop by Bushnell or any Veterans Cemetery to pay your respects. Thanked Madam President for the appointed position.

Sgt- at- Arms: by Claudia Thompson's report is on page 44 please read at your leisure. She thanked her pagers Anna Elkins, Tajuana Claude Mckenzie, and Carole Ahmad for all their help this weekend. Candy Panda received \$78.80.

Quartermaster: by Toni Fox reported a very busy weekend, which she is grateful for and thankful to everyone who stopped by to say hello and to those that made a purchase and supporting us. It has been a pleasure being your quartermaster and helping those that have reached out to her inquiring about items they would like to have or have made special orders. Thank you! Friday sales \$2,007.00, Saturday Sales \$1,516.00 for a total of \$3,523.00. As always, a special thank you to those that volunteered to help her this weekend. An audit was done on Saturday afternoon, and all was in order. Thank you to the Volunteers, Kate Aux. #312, April Carroll Aux. #444, and Chriss Aux. #444

Unfinished Business: 1st Chrissy Albright announced that Auxiliary 86 did get their revalidation 990 to her and they are all set.

New Business: None at this time

Announcements: Wendy Luzader has announced that the last Hurricane Milton the Coastal Community had 20 ft surges and will be helping out this Saturday and Sunday, you can go to Facebook page Swine River AMVETS and find out how you can help out. Also, Auxiliary 420 dropped off 5 truckloads of supplies to Orchard Beach, which is a fishing Village that had about 300 homes. It now has about 100 homes left. Wendy Luzader explained with her health issues why she had to resign in July but with her health continuing to improve she will be running for 2 Vice in February. Thanked everyone for their support and kind words.

Benediction by Chaplin Faye Caldwell

Retirement of Colors by Sgt-at-Arms Claudia Thompson

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted.

Robin Trudeau

Recording Secretary

