

MINUTES  
Media, Marketing and Communications Commission  
MEETING OF  
Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
2:00 P.M. Department Headquarters – DEC Room

1. Call to Order 2:04 P.M.

Chair, Chris Emmons - District 3, opened the meeting of the Department Media, Marketing and Communications Commission in regular form at 2:04 P.M. The Salute to Colors was led by Chair Emmons. The invocation was given by guest, Shane Eaton – District 6. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Emmons and recited by all present. The meeting secretary appointment was substituted by all present agreeing to be video recorded for a transcribed copy of the meeting to produce minutes from.

2. Roll Call:       DISTRICT 1 – Frank (Joe) Navarre – *Excused; Dean Boyers substituted*  
                      DISTRICT 2 – Tim Shaw (new Commission member)  
                      DISTRICT 3 – Christopher (Chris) Emmons  
                      DISTRICT 4 – W. Frank Morrow  
                      DISTRICT 5 – Martin Moore  
                      DISTRICT 6 – Mel Cantrell  
                      DISTRICT 7 – Ersel (Ray) Howe – *Not Present*  
                      DISTRICT 8 – Donald (Don) Capps (new Commission member)  
                      DISTRICT 9 – Joyce Hannum (replacing David Ewing as Commission member)  
                      DISTRICT 10 – Holly Lewis  
                      DISTRICT 11 – Chuck Clark – *Not Present*  
                      DISTRICT 12 – Steve Ebersole – *Excused; Brad Beatty substituted*  
                      DISTRICT 13 – Robert (Bob) White – *Excused due to illness*  
                      DISTRICT 14 – Robert (Bob) Carson

Roll Call of Sub Commission Member(s):

DISTRICT 5 – Al & Dayna Beyer – *Dayna present*

**11 Members present:**

DISTRICT 1 – *Excused; Dean Boyers sub.*  
DISTRICT 2 – Tim Shaw  
DISTRICT 3 – Chris Emmons  
DISTRICT 4 – Frank Morrow  
DISTRICT 5 – Martin Moore  
DISTRICT 6 – Mel Cantrell  
DISTRICT 7 – Absent  
DISTRICT 8 – Don Capps  
DISTRICT 9 – Joyce Hannum  
DISTRICT 10 – Holly Lewis  
DISTRICT 11 – Absent  
DISTRICT 12 – *Excused; Brad Beatty sub.*  
DISTRICT 13 – *Excused; illness*  
DISTRICT 14 – Bob Carson

**1 Sub Com. Member(s) present:**

DISTRICT 5 – Dayna Beyer

**2 Guest(s) Present:**

Shane Eaton – District 6 1st Vice Commander;  
Jon Vulgamore, Department staff liaison

3. Reading of Previous Minutes

All present reviewed the previous meeting minutes from July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 (discussion notes). Holly Lewis - District 10, moved to entertain a motion to approve the minutes and so motioned. Frank Morrow - District 4, seconded the motion. No discussion was offered, and the Commission oral vote unanimously passed.

**MOTION CARRIED**

4. Unfinished/Old Business

a. Holly Lewis - District 10, continued discussion from the last two meetings regarding the Department Constitution and By-Laws wording change which contains the details pertaining to the OLN newspaper distribution. If the Commission plans to adjust for the continued increased cost of the newspaper (last considered in 2003) and/or plans to go to an all-digital distribution in the foreseeable future, a resolution to change this will have to be drafted, presented, DEC accepted, and then voted on at the next Department Convention. The previously suggested new verbiage was, ‘...shall be allocated to publish news to the entire active membership...’ Lewis then volunteered to share her resolution draft with the Commission. The resolution is as follows:

WHEREAS the current cost of Ohio Legion News is \$1.56 cents per year which is considerably over the Constitution and Bylaw budget of \$1.20 per entire membership annually and;

WHEREAS postage costs have increased from 67.4% (\$20,163.15) of total costs from Fall 2020 Edition to 79.6% (\$27,218.17) to Fall 2022 Edition and;

WHEREAS postage costs will continue to rise and;

WHEREAS 41.6% of the membership has an email on file with National; therefore let it be;

RESOLVED: At Department Convention in Dayton, Ohio on July 2nd that Article XI, Section 2 be amended to state “of which each year at least one dollar and twenty cents (\$1.20) shall be allocated to publish and distribute to the membership a Department newsletter;”

Chair Emmons explained that changing the C&BL verbiage to this will allow the Commission the flexibility to for example set the age limit cutoff distribution of the OLN and/or to stop mailing to the active 888 members. He added that the money saved from moving away from a printed newsletter can be put back toward the Ohio Legion mission. Lewis called for anyone in the Commission that has any ideas what to add or change in the resolution. Mel Cantrell – District 6 had a question regarding the specific budget allocation and one of the whereas clauses may conflict with putting finances toward other programs; Chair Emmons explained the money saved would stay in the general fund for other projects and that the OLN does not have its own account to add or take away

from, the OLN is financed through a portion of membership dues that go directly into the general fund and this is where the OLN invoices get paid from. Joyce Hannum – District 9 suggested that the current \$1.20 allocated be increased to match the current cost of need; Chair Emmons felt that would be counterintuitive to what the Commission is trying to move toward and that the low percentage of members that really want the newsletter printed and mailed that they could still request this or again utilize the age cut-off program to ensure member customer service is still met. Lewis reiterated that this resolution not only has to go through the DEC but also to the Constitution and By-Laws Committee at the next Department Convention. Lewis also mentioned the uniqueness of having a specific dollar amount be attached to OLN budget in the C&BL which no other program has and that perhaps it would be best to take that wording out of the C&BL completely and let the Finance Committee set the OLN budget. Donald Capps – District 8 asked for clarification that the resolution changes the wording, 'shall mail' to 'shall distribute to active membership'; Capps suggested to also take 'active' out of the wording as well and just keep the vagueness of just 'membership' to allow room for the digital newsletter to develop in stages, unfettered by wording interpretation. Lewis stated she feels the resolution has a better chance of getting passed if the dollar amount is taken out altogether. Dayna Beyer – ALA District 5 also informed the Commission that the Auxiliary has gone to an electronic newsletter due to high cost. Chair Emmons then moved to entertain a motion to accept the potential resolution to be presented to the next step with the DEC with the alterations that just had been discussed; Frank Morrow – District 4 motioned; Bob Carson – District 14 seconded the motion. No discussion was offered, and the Commission oral vote unanimously passed.

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

#### 5. New Business/Discussion/Motions

##### a. Review of Commission Objectives:

Chair, Chris Emmons, District 3 recognized MM&C Commission Staff Liaison, Jon Vulgamore, to present his Department OLN report. First announced was the review of recent edition(s) of OLN: Fall 2022 OLN: \$27,218.17 postage and distribution + \$6,950.00 design & printing = \$34,168.17 - \$2,000.00 (Ad) – \$955.39 (D.O. campaign savings) = \$31,212.78 / 79,911 papers printed = 39.1 cents per individual paper (9.05 cents per paper or \$7,239.48 total over C&BL budget of \$1.20 per active member annually / .30 cents per quarter) Winter 2023 OLN: \$23,511.33 postage and distribution - \$500.00 quarter-page Ad from Viona Ranney (WWII Tour Ad) – \$1,048.67 (D.O. campaign savings) – awaiting print invoice for further cost analysis of the Winter 2023 edition. Next Vulgamore reported on the OLN 'Digital Only' Distribution: 2,488 members are currently signed up for Digital Only OLN program which had an estimated budget savings of \$955.39 with the Fall edition – The Fall OLN email was sent by Constant Contact mass email client program on November 22nd to members signed up with the D.O. program, current DEC members, all Posts with a listed email, and all Post Commanders & Adjutants with a listed email. 130 participants of this program have been

removed from the contact list due to choosing to unsubscribe from receiving emails from Constant Contact. The current reporting metrics: 1,964 (62%) opens; 3,339 sends; 670 (21%) click thrus; 172 (5%) bounced (full inboxes, undeliverable, blocked, non-existent emails). The recurring OLN Digital Only social media campaign was posted last on July 29<sup>th</sup>. Between the Summer and Fall editions, 17 new signups were gained (3 lost through requests and death). Joyce Hannum – District 9 had a question as to why she personally received the Digital Only OLN email, Vulgamore explained that in addition to the members signed up for the program he also includes Post Commanders, Post Adjutants, and the DEC members in an effort to continue to get the word out to our leadership about the programs existence in hopes it continues to gain traction. Chair Emmons then encouraged the Commission to subscribe to the electronic OLN only program and to continue driving the program opportunity to their Districts and Posts; Hannum also voiced that she prefers the printed version. Brad Beatty – District 12 then suggested to have an aged-range automatic cutoff of receiving the printed OLN, Holly Lewis – District 10 reminded the Commission in order to make such a change the Constitution and By-Laws would have to be amended first. Martin Moore – District 5 offered up his viewpoint from the perspective of his Post newsletter that has recently gone to primarily emailed except for their members that are 80 years old and above due to increasing costs to print and mail their Post publication with little negative feedback. Chair Emmons finished this discussion with impressing the need of elderly members using email and computer browsing technology and the financial impact that would stay with Department for other uses the more we can save with cutting back the printed OLN. Vulgamore continued with the OLN ‘Annex’: All content that was unable to fit in the 20-page limit main, hardcopy OLN (fyi, 24-page same price, was offered Fall quarter) is designed and published solely by Department. This ‘extra’ content is only available in extended, online only version (both hard copy and Annex combined make up the Digital Only OLN). The Fall edition Annex had 12 extra pages, with the TAPS section included (Commission approved this three meetings prior). Next up Vulgamore gave an update on OLN Advertising: Larry Musser (LGN member) purchased an Ad that allocated the full-backpage limit for \$2,000 for the Fall edition. This Ad promoted his Survival Handbook he had published. For the Winter edition, a quarter-page Ad from Viona Ranney (WWII Tour Ad) was purchased for \$500. No other Ad opportunities were available by the print deadline. Continuing on Vulgamore stated some possible upcoming changes with the Department website. Current bids are being attained for a new Website for Finance Committee approval then to be presented to the August DEC, tentatively. Department leadership is resolute about updating the look and navigability of our website. Holly Lewis – District 10 inquired as to when/if the new website is created that it have the capability to take online donations, Vulgamore notified the Commission that there is in fact a donation page on the Department site currently that anyone can make a specific program donation towards and briefly explained how to navigate to find this page. Guest Shane Eaton – District 6 expressed his concern with our website being a ‘.com’ and not a ‘.org’ like many other Legion websites, and this may be why there is some caution to avoid

using our site – he also mentioned the use of his District’s Legion site that is cost effective. Vulgamore then explained our yearly contract with our domain name with GoDaddy webservice company and this would have to be cancelled and a new domain created, and that also the recognition of our current .com domain is printed and distributed on hundreds of documents and publications that would all have to be recreated. Vulgamore also mentioned that these smaller Post and District Legion sites typically have a cap limit on how many pages and how much media and files can be uploaded to meet that low cost, when our site’s needs far outweigh those parameters. There seemed to be some ambivalence to this discussion and no current action to look into a ‘.org’ site is to be pursued at this point in time. Joyce Hannum – District 9 proposed having the District newsletters accessible on the Department News webpage; Chair Emmons recognized the good suggestion and Vulgamore explained that he only receives a few electronic District newsletters and asked the Commission to forward those to his email, but plans to implement these onto the District page of the website with a link to this being on the News page. Bob Carson – District 14 informed the Commission that the weekly Sons of The American Legion Ohio newsletter has recently been canceled due to rising costs. Frank Morrow – District 4 confirmed that our website had a secure sockets layer (SSL) certificate for security purposes, Vulgamore confirmed this is the case with any site beginning with https:// and our website is as secure as possible. Continued Commission searches to assist with unnoticed & needed updates are always welcomed and appreciated. The Social Media Sub Commission continues to do a great job supplementing posts and keeping up with the ‘daily posts goal’ set two meetings prior, a healthy percentage of the time. Holly Lewis – District 10 requested that a monthly social media post on donating to programs be implemented tied with the Legion calendar on what is being featured at that time. Lewis added that a link to the donation page and supplemented with a QR code could make this more effective and smartphone friendly; Vulgamore plans to do so. Dayna Beyer – ALA District 5 mentioned that there is no donate button on the Department Facebook; Lewis said she had been in talks with the Department Adjutant on this matter and there is some administrative issues with being a non-profit that need to be investigated in order to achieve this. Hunter Woods, Sponsorship and Post Activities Coordinator, is now actively contributing to our social media channels – he plans to start a Department TikTok social channel per the Department Adjutant’s request. Bob Carson – District 14 expressed some concern with having a TikTok social media due to its discouragement from a national security standpoint and it ties with being Chinese in origin. Joyce Hannum – District 9 agreed and stated it is too juvenile in nature and wouldn’t add the application to her phone personally; Brad Beatty – District 12 played devils advocate with this discussion stating that targeting the younger crowd should be a priority and could be good for recruiting younger members. Holly Lewis – District 10 emphasized that our Instagram social channel needs far more activity and is where much of our demographic is. Moving onto the next meeting agenda line item Vulgamore explained the upcoming Department Gaming project. Department leadership has tasked our outsourced IT company, ComResource, with setting up ‘Call of Duty’

gaming server(s) for Legion members to promote online member fellowship (like a virtual Canteen) and recruitment of younger aged Ohio veterans. The budget for this program is to be brought to the Finance Committee for approval and may be ready for April DEC presentation or perhaps later. This program will technically be assigned under the Media Marketing and Communications Commission due to its nature, but multiple Department staff will have a role in this program's operations. Next Vulgamore announced that interest in the mobile phone Text Marketing project has regained some traction. Department leadership has re-introduced interest in gaining bids for texting marketing. This would be used for meeting/event announcements and forms reminders. After Finance Committee approval - this may also be ready for August DEC presentation or perhaps later. Mel Cantrell – District 6 asked what the benefit of text marketing would be vs. email marketing; Chair Emmons answered with it being an added tool of having success of Legion information dissemination, and that we roughly get a 20% click rate with email marketing and those more likely to use the convenience of their phone notifications vs. email may prove to be effective. Lastly, Vulgamore ended his staff report with the upcoming annual Spring mailing. In mid-March is a Post-wide mailing that will go out to all listed Post Adjutant's home addresses. Tentatively this will contain; membership card required forms, Annual Post Data Reports, Post Chair Certification form, applicable Post Activities and Department Convention flyers, Advanced Calendar, Post Service Officer School info, etc. This will be organized as a bulk mailing to save postal costs. Bob Carson – District 14 thought another way to save money would be to have major mailings be sent only to all District Adjutants to distribute to their Posts instead of sending the mailers to every Post individually; Vulgamore offered to bring this before Department leadership for consideration. Holly Lewis – District 10 suggested the Department scholarship application be added to the mailing due to the upcoming deadline on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Mel Cantrell – District 6 asked that the mailing documents be posted on the website in .pdf format for added accessibility and convenience; Vulgamore then showed Cantrell where to find the Post Mailing webpage on his laptop.

## 6. Announcements

Bob Carson – District 14 announced a veteran's outreach event that he is involved with on April 15<sup>th</sup> at Post 516 in Akron - this is open to all, bring someone that would benefit from this, meals are provided; Vulgamore asked that Carson send the event flyer to him so it could be advertised on the Post social media channel. Guest Shane Eaton – District 6 also announced an event at the NVMM, National Veterans Memorial Museum in Columbus after the DEC meeting in April – podcast in nature, the National Vice will be in attendance as well. Dayna Beyer – ALA District 5 mentioned if anyone would like to make a feature on the American Legion Friends Facebook page moderated by National that she can post on, to let her know, and that there will be a Commission picture taken directly after the meeting.

## 7. Chris Emmons, District 3 closed the meeting with the Salute to Colors. The meeting adjourned at 3:06 P.M.