

# **Charter & ByLaws**

of the

## **DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN**

### *Veterans of Foreign Wars*

### *of the United States*



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DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN  
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# CHARTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

## SECTION I—NAME, AUTHORITY, JURISDICTION

- (1) The name of this organization shall be the DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES.
- (2) This organization exists by virtue of a charter authorized by the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States dated June 6, 1921.
- (3) This organization shall be governed at all times by the provisions of the Congressional Charter and By-Laws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- (4) The territorial jurisdiction of this Department shall conform with the territorial limits of the State of Wisconsin.

## SECTION II—OBJECTIVES

The object of this Department shall be to promote the principles and policies set forth in the PREAMBLE and Section 230102 of the Congressional Charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. These objects are fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the government of the United State of America and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United State from all her enemies.

## SECTION III—ORGANIZATION

- (1) This Department shall be an organic member and a constituted body of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- (2) This Department shall have Districts, County Councils and Posts organized within its territorial jurisdiction. All such Districts, County Councils and Posts within the jurisdiction of this organized Department shall be subject to the supervision and control of this Department.

## SECTION IV—AUTHORITY

- (1) The supreme power of this Department and its constituted bodies shall be vested in the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and shall at all times be governed by the Congressional Charter and By-Laws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States adopted by said National Convention, mandates of the National Council of Administration and lawful orders of the Commander-in-Chief.

Subject to the provisions of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure, the government of this Department shall be vested in a Department Convention, Department Council of Administration and lawful orders of the Department Commander.

- (2) Any amendments to this Charter adopted at a State Convention shall take effect immediately upon the approval of the Commander-in-Chief and shall supersede all prior Charters and amendments thereto.

**BY-LAWS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES**

**ARTICLE I—BY-LAWS**

**Section 101. GOVERNANCE**

This Department shall be governed at all times by the National Congressional Charter and By-Laws.

**ARTICLE II—(Intentionally left blank)**

**Section 201. (Intentionally left blank)**

**ARTICLE III—POSTS**

**Section 301. GOVERNANCE**

The Posts shall be governed at all times by Article II of the National By-Laws and Article II of the Manual of Procedure.

**Section 302. OFFICERS.**

Each Post Commander shall appoint officers as outlined in Section 216, National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

**Section 303. POST DELEGATES.**

Each Post shall elect delegates as outlined in Section 222 of the National Bylaws. Each delegate and alternate elected must be in good standing in his/her respective Post. To fill a vacancy which may occur, alternates are to advance in the order of their election.

**Section 304. READING OF DEPARTMENT ORDERS.**

Department orders and circulars sent to Posts shall be read at the first meeting following receipt thereof.

**Section 305. CONSOLIDATION OF POSTS.**

Two or more Posts in this Department may consolidate as provided for in Section 209 of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

**Section 306. MEN'S AUXILIARY.**

A Post in the Department may form a Men's Auxiliary in accordance with Article XIII of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

**ARTICLE IV—COUNTY COUNCILS**

**Section 401. FORMATION.**

Under the provisions of Article III, Section 301 of the National By-Laws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, County Councils shall be authorized by the Department of Wisconsin upon written request of one-half of the posts located within the geographical boundary of a county, and the approval of the Department Commander.

**Section 402. COMPOSITION.**

All Posts within a county, in which a County Council exists, and all Post subsequently organized and chartered within that county, shall be members of such County Council.

**Section 403. SUBORDINATION.**

County Councils shall be subordinate to the Department Convention, Department Council of Administration and the Department Commander, but shall not be a part of the Department Convention or Department Council of Administration.

**Section 404. OFFICERS.**

The rank, number, terms, nomination, election and duties of County Council Officers shall be in like manner as that prescribed for District Officers in the VFW National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure under Article IV, Sections 415 through 421 inclusive, substituting "County Council" for the word "District" wherever it appears.

**Section 405. DISSOLUTION.**

Surrender of Charter or Suspension and Revocation of a County Council Charter shall be in the same manner as prescribed for Districts in the VFW National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure under Article IV Sections 410 and 411, substituting "County Council" for the word "District" wherever it appears.

**ARTICLE V—DISTRICTS**

**Section 501. GOVERNANCE.**

The Districts of this Department shall be governed at all times Article IV of the National By-Laws and Article IV of the Manual of Procedure.

**Section 502. NUMBER.**

The Districts in this Department shall be ten (10) in number.

**Section 503. BOUNDARIES.**

(Except as provided in Section 504,) the District boundaries shall be:

1. FIRST DISTRICT. Green, Kenosha, Racine, Rock and Walworth Counties.
2. SECOND DISTRICT. Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Jefferson, and Waukesha.
3. THIRD DISTRICT. Crawford, Grant, Iowa, Lafayette and Richland Counties.
4. FOURTH DISTRICT. Milwaukee County.  
FIFTH DISTRICT. Deleted.
5. SIXTH DISTRICT. Calumet, Fond du Lac, Ozaukee, Sheboygan, Washington and Winnebago Counties.
6. SEVENTH DISTRICT. Adams, Green Lake, Langlade, Marathon, Marquette, Menominee, Portage, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara and Wood Counties.
7. EIGHTH DISTRICT. Brown, Door, Florence, Forest, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Oconto and Outagamie Counties.

8. NINTH DISTRICT. Barron, Buffalo, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Pepin, Pierce, St, Croix and Trempealeau Counties.
9. TENTH DISTRICT. Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Lincoln, Oneida, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas and Washburn Counties.
10. ELEVENTH DISTRICT. Lacrosse, Monroe, Juneau, Vernon and Sauk Counties.

**Section 504. EXCEPTIONS.** The following exceptions to the above boundaries shall be in effect:

- (1) Knaack-Thompson Post No. 865, Abbotsford, WI shall be in the Seventh District instead of the Ninth District.
- (2) Wells-Krause Post No. 2925, Berlin, WI shall be in the Sixth District instead of the Seventh District.
- (3) Schmitt-Manecke-Donner Post No. 1638, Merrill, WI shall be in the Seventh District instead of the Tenth District.
- (4) Learman-Schaller Post No. 2732, New London, WI shall be in the Eighth District instead of the Seventh District.
- (5) Kulchar-Fohr Post No. 8343, Wind Lake, WI shall be in Fourth District instead of the First District.
- (6) Badger Tri-County Post No. 6707, Kiel, WI shall be in the Sixth District instead of the Eighth District.

**Section 505. PURPOSES.**

It is the purpose of the District to establish and maintain cooperation and coordination of effort between all Posts and County Councils within its jurisdiction; and to carry out National and Department orders, programs and policies.

**Section 506. LOYALTY DAY OBSERVANCE.**

The Loyalty Day Observance in the Department of Wisconsin shall be held on the last Saturday of the month of April of each year, except when May 1<sup>st</sup> falls on a Saturday, the observance shall be held on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

In addition to abiding to the rules set out in the National By-Laws outlining the conducting of District Meetings, no District in the Department of Wisconsin shall conduct a District Meeting, District Convention or other District sponsored functions on the day of the Loyalty Day Observance.

## ARTICLE VI—DEPARTMENT

**Section 601. GOVERNANCE.**

This Department shall be governed at all times by Article V of the National Bylaws and Article V of the Manual of Procedure.

**Section 602. HEADQUARTERS LOCATION.**

The Department Headquarters of this Department shall be at the place which has been designated by the Council of Administration.

**ARTICLE VII—DEPARTMENT CONVENTION. MID-WINTER CONFERENCE. COUNCIL OF  
ADMINISTRATION AND BIG TEN CONFERENCE**

**Section 701. STATE CONVENTION, MID-WINTER CONFERENCE, COUNCIL OF  
ADMINISTRATION AND BIG TEN CONFERENCE TIME and PLACE**

- (1) The Department shall hold one State Convention each year commencing on a date which shall be consistent with the requirements of VFW National Bylaws, Article V, Section 503. The Department Convention shall be so scheduled as to conclude no less than 30 days before the conclusion of the forthcoming National Convention. Convention dates are subject to the approval of the Department Council of Administration.
- (2) The Council of Administration shall hold a Mid-Winter Conference at a time and a place determined in accordance with Section 802(2).
- (3) A Council of Administration Meeting shall be held within Sixty (60) days following the Department Convention
- (4) Bids for the DEPARTMENT CONVENTION shall be submitted to the Council of Administration at the Mid-Winter Conference up to five (5) years prior to the scheduled convention at which time it will be considered.
- (5) Bids for scheduled COUNCIL of ADMINISTRATION meetings shall be submitted to the Council of Administration meeting in July up to two (2) years prior to the scheduled meeting, at which time it will be considered.
- (6) Bids for the MID-WINTER CONFERENCE shall be submitted to the Council of Administration at the Mid-Winter Conference up to three (3) years prior to the scheduled Mid-Winter, at which time it will be considered.
- (7) Bids for the BIG TEN CONFERENCE (scheduled to be held the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) weekend in October shall be submitted to the Council of Administration at the Mid-Winter Conference up to three (3) years prior to the Conference at which time it will be considered.

**Section 702. CONVENTION COMMITTEE.**

- (1) Purpose. This Convention Committee shall, in concert with the Department VFW Auxiliary *Convention Committee*, choose suitable sites for Department of Wisconsin Conventions, Mid-Winter Conferences, Councils of Administration and the Big Ten Conferences; be responsible for the management, operation and arrangement of all things necessary to the success of these events.
- (2) Duties. This Committee is responsible for searching out and recommending to the Council of Administration suitable locations for the foregoing events. The Committee shall conduct on-site examination and due diligence in the selection process, including consideration of handicap access, adequate amenities, food service, pricing and geographic location in order to maximize member participation at minimum travel and expense. The Committee has no independent authority to disburse funds or sign contracts except as may be specifically authorized by the Council of Administration.
- (3) Structure. Of a total of *five (5)* Committee members, four (4) shall be appointees of the VFW Department and *one ex officio voting member of the Committee shall be the VFW State Adjutant. The State Commander and State Quartermaster shall serve as non-voting Advisers to the Committee.*
- (4) Appointments. No later than 10 Days following the Installation of State Officers, the State Commander shall appoint, upon the recommendation of the Junior Vice Commander, one (1)



new member whose term of appointment shall be four (4) years. The State Commander shall make any other necessary appointments to fill any vacated VFW Department-appointed term on the Committee. If the vacated term is that of the Chairperson, the Committee Vice Chairperson will automatically succeed to that position and the Committee will elect a new Vice Chairperson from among its ranks. Likewise, if the Secretary position is vacated, the Committee will elect a new Secretary once the vacated term has been properly filled by appointment.

(5) Meetings. This Committee shall, each year, hold its first business session at the direction of the State Commander. This session shall be held prior to the first regular Council of Administration meeting after the Convention weekend. The first order of business shall be the election of a Committee Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson and a Secretary. It may then conduct any business it has on its agenda and prepare a report of the current status of its efforts for presentation to the Council of Administration at its next regular meeting. The Committee shall hold additional meetings as necessary to conduct its proper business.

(6) Deleted.

(7) Expenses - The Convention Committee Chairperson will meet each year with the Finance Committee and present an "Income and Expense" estimate for the fiscal year for the Department Finance Committee's budgeting consideration, as is required of other Department Committees. The Committee members shall be entitled to expense reimbursement in the same manner as any other Department Appointee.

#### **Section 703. STATE CONVENTION, MID-WINTER CONFERENCE, COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION AND BIG TEN CONFERENCE SUPERVISION.**

These meetings shall be under the guidance and supervision of the Council of Administration.

#### **Section 704. CONVENTION PERFORMANCE BOND.**

The Post awarded the State Convention shall deposit an appropriate performance bond or certified check with the Department Quartermaster in the amount of twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2500.00). This shall be done no later than ten (10) days following notification. This performance bond will be refundable to the Post after completing a successful Convention as determined by the Convention and Mid-Winter Conference Committee. No performance bond is required to submit a bid for a Mid-Winter Conference.

#### **Section 705. FIELD COMPETITION.**

The Department of Wisconsin, Veterans of Foreign Wars, shall not financially sponsor any field competition. If any local unit wishes to conduct a field competition, it shall be their responsibility for all costs involved and be under the direct supervision of the Convention and Mid-Winter Conference Committee.

#### **Section 706. RESOLUTIONS.**

(1) Resolutions for Convention consideration may be proposed by a member in good standing, by a Post, by a County Council, by a District or by the Council of Administration.

(2) All Resolutions approved by the Convention shall be considered mandates of action or statements of policy by all Department Offices; provided, however, that the Resolution shall terminate at the convening of the following Department Convention. Resolutions which are to be considered permanent should be enacted as amendments to the By-Laws.

### **Section 707. COMMITTEES.**

The Department Commander shall appoint the Chairperson and members of the: Credentials, General Resolutions, By-Laws and other such Committees as the Commander may deem necessary.

### **Section 708. DELEGATES.**

- (1) The delegates and alternates to the Convention shall be elected in accordance with the provision of Section 222 of the VFW National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.
- (2) Each Post shall submit to the State Quartermaster, within 10 days after the Post Election, a report listing the Post Commander and Post Delegates and Alternates elected, accompanied by payment of a mandatory Advance *base* Post Delegate Fee of no less than Twenty-Five Dollars (\$25), plus an additional Delegate Fee of no less than One Dollar (\$1) for each delegate *to which the Post is entitled*.
- (3) A Convention Fund, in which both the advance and registration fees collected at time of the Convention, shall be maintained by the Department Quartermaster. Posts failing to pay the Delegate fees for all authorized delegates to the State Convention, will be considered delinquent and stand to lose their rights and privileges as a Post.
- (4) The delegate or delegates of a Post present at a meeting of the Convention shall be entitled to vote the full delegate strength to which the Post is entitled. The Post Commander, or the Senior or Junior Vice Commander functioning in their place as a member of the Convention, may, at their option, choose to vote as a delegate rather than as a Post Commander.
- (5) Posts that have not paid their proper Post Delegate Fees and submitted a completed Delegate Election Form *may* be considered delinquent and stand to lose their rights and privileges as a Post.
- (6) Convention Registration for the Post Commander and all Delegates and other members *attending* the Convention is required and will be *in addition to* the Advance Delegate Fee. Members not properly registered for attendance are not allowed on the Convention floor.
- (7) The amounts of these fees and attendance charges may be changed as needed by a majority vote at any regular, or special meeting called for that purpose, of the Council of Administration.
- (8) A Convention Fund to which both Delegate Fees and Convention Registration Fees collected shall be maintained by the Department Quartermaster.

### **Section 709. CREDENTIALS.**

- (1) Only those officers, delegates and alternates of the Convention who are entitled to credentials and who have registered same with the Credentials Committee shall be entitled to a voice or vote.

- (2) White credential cards shall be issued to Past Department Commanders and State Commander, members of the Council of Administration. All delegate cards shall be printed on white stock and be undated as to the year of the convention. The year of the convention for which the delegate card is issued shall be affixed printed or stamped prominently at the time of issuance. The voting rank of the delegate shall be stamped prominently in blue to designate 'Commander', 'Council' or 'Past State Commander'.
- (3) Post Commanders, Post Delegates and Alternate Delegates shall receive delegate cards stamped prominently with a red stamp designating their status as 'Post Commander', 'Post Delegate', or 'Alternate Delegate' and the year of the convention for which the delegate card is issued shall be affixed, printed or stamped prominently at the time of issuance.
- (4) Deleted as per By-Law Change at 82<sup>nd</sup> State Convention in June 2003.

#### **Section 710. VOTING.**

- (1) The Department shall be governed at all times by Section 521 of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure. The Procedure for Roll Call Vote in regard to Elected Officers and Convention Site shall be called by order of determined on numerical listings of Posts made up prior to elections, and selected by random drawing before each individual election begins.
- (2) Numerical Listings of all Posts in Department of Wisconsin in ascending order by Post number would be split in four equal sections (quarters) labeled A, B, C and D, and the Council of Administration Roll Call list always following the roll call of the Posts. The first list would be made up by listing sections in A, B, C, D order; second list would be made up by listing sections in B, C, D, A order; third list would be made up by listing sections in C, D, A, B, order; and the fourth list would be made up by listing sections in D, A, B, C order thereby generating four lists prior to the convening of the Department Convention.
- (3) These four lists would then be used in random selection drawing prior to the first election. The first list drawn would be the order of roll call used for the first elections; the second list drawn would be the order of roll call used for the second election, and so forth. If more than four roll call lists are required, the procedure of random selection drawing would be repeated.
- (4) Should there be only one candidate nominated for an elective office or only one Post or Convention and Mid-Winter Conference Committee providing a Convention bid, the presiding officer shall declare that the roll call procedure is not required for this elective office or Convention bidder and be empowered to instruct a member to cast one unanimous vote for nominee or city who or which shall then be declared elected.
- (5) The Convention site shall be selected by a roll call vote of the delegates at the Convention no less than (2) and no more than (5) years preceding the event, if the Convention Committee has submitted multiple bids prior to that Convention date.

#### **Section 711. MINUTES.**

- (1) The minutes of the Convention shall be taken pursuant to Section 518 (Duties of the Department Adjutant) of the National-By-Laws and Manual of Procedure. Such minutes shall be transcribed and printed copy be placed on file.
- (2) The words "printed Copy" does not prevent the possible use of a computer and computer disk. Any person wishing a copy of the minutes shall be allowed to receive a copy of the minutes after making a written request to the Department Headquarters along with an amount to be determined by the Finance Committee.

**Section 712. CONVENTION/CONFERENCE PROGRAM BOOKS.**

The Department Convention Committee shall publish an an advertising supported Program Book for the Annual Department Convention and the Annual Mid-Winter Conference. Income and expenses incurred from these publications shall accrue to the Convention Fund of the Department of Wisconsin. If an advertising sales agent is to be engaged for these publications, the Convention Committee shall annually solicit and recommend a qualified vendor and terms to the Council of Administration for their approval no later than the first regular Council meeting following the annual Department Convention.

**ARTICLE VIII—COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION**

**Section 801. COMPOSITION: Power and duties.**

This Department shall be governed at all times by Section 522 of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

**Section 802. MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION.**

The Council shall meet at least three (3) times each year as follows:

1. Within sixty (60) days following the Convention at a place designated by the Commander.
2. A Mid-Winter Conference at the time and place set by the Council of Administration at the preceding Mid-Winter Conference.
3. A final meeting shall be held in the current Convention City on the eve prior to the annual Convention.

**Section 803. CONVENTION RULES.**

The Council shall recommend Convention rules at its meeting immediately preceding the Convention. Adoption of these rules shall be the Convention's first item of business by a majority vote of the Convention, but may be suspended, rescinded, or amended after adoption by a two-thirds vote of the delegates.

**Section 804. CONVENTIONS BIDS.**

The Department Convention Committee shall receive, announce and refer all bids for a Department Convention or Mid-Winter site to the Council of Administration at the Mid-Winter Conference. If there are no bids received or if the Council votes that any or all bids received are not acceptable, or if the Council of Administration by a majority vote, recommends the selected sites are unsuitable, the Department Commander shall call a special meeting of the Council for the purpose of selecting an alternate site. Such meeting shall be held following a 30-day notice given to all Posts in the Department. During this 30-day period, all Posts in the Department, as well as the Department Convention and Mid-Winter Conference Committee, have the right to submit a bid for an alternate site for the Convention.

**Section 805. ATTENDANCE OF NON-COUNCIL MEMBERS AT COUNCIL MEETINGS.**

Any member of this organization in good standing may attend a meeting of the Council of Administration and as such non-member of the Council may appear on the floor of the Council following a request of his District Commander or any member of the Council, and such permission may be denied by the State Commander with the approval of the Council.

**Section 806. MAIL VOTING BY COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION.**

The State Commander may conduct a mail vote of the members of the Council and shall also conduct a mail vote following the written request of any seven (7) members of the Council. Any such action shall be incorporated into the minutes of the next regular meeting of the Council.

**Section 807. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION.**

The minutes and any action taken by the Council shall be transcribed and a printed copy be placed on permanent file. Any person wishing a copy of the minutes shall be allowed to receive a copy of the minutes after making a written request to Department Headquarters along with an amount to be determined by the Finance Committee.

**ARTICLE IX—DEPARTMENT OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

**Section 901. APPOINTED AND ELECTED OFFICERS.**

This Department shall be governed at all times by Article V, Section 518 of the National By-Laws and Article V, Section 518, of the Manual of Procedure. The offices of the Department Quartermaster and the Department Adjutant may be combined so that the two offices are held by one individual. The appointment of the State Adjutant (if a salaried officer) shall be subject to the approval of the Council of Administration.

**Section 902. COMMITTEES.**

The Commander shall appoint within twenty {20} days of assuming the duties of the office, the following committees; in addition to any other committees which he may deem desirable or which may be established by the Convention or Council of Administration: Veterans Service Committee, Finance Committee, Wisconsin VFW News Committee, Building Committee, Ways and Means Committee and Commander's Advisory Committee.

**Section 903. VETERANS SERVICE COMMITTEE.**

(1) The Veterans Service Committee shall consist of the State Commander, the State Senior Vice Commander, the State Junior Vice Commander, the immediate Past State Commander and four members who have been appointed by the State Commander from the general membership with concurrence of the Council of Administration.

a) Appointees to this committee are to have demonstrable experience in and knowledge of Veterans Service issues.

b) In the first year following adoption of this Bylaw, the Commander shall appoint four members to terms of one (1), two (2), three (3) and four (4) years and thereafter one member will be appointed annually to a term of four (4) years.

c) If the Past State Commander is unable to serve, the most junior Past State Commander who is ready and willing to serve shall be appointed in his place.

d) If any other member is unable to serve, the State Commander shall appoint a qualified member to serve the remainder of a vacated term.

e) The Committee shall annually elect its own chairperson from among those members not currently serving as line officers of the Department.

(2) Under the supervision of the Department Council of Administration and subject to provision of the Department By-Laws and/or orders of the Department, the Veterans Service Committee shall control veterans service work of the organization.

- (3) The Department Veterans Service Committee shall conduct its work chiefly through the Department Veterans Service office. The Committee shall annually submit a detailed estimate of expenses which, when approved by the Council of Administration, shall be the expenditure budget of the Department Veterans Service for the fiscal year. The Committee shall recommend the appointment of, and prescribe the duties of the Department Service Officer and employees of the Department Service Office, and the State Commander presents the recommendations to the Council of Administration for approval. The salaries of such employees and all other expenditures of the Veterans Service Office shall be subject to review by the Council of Administration.
- (4) The Department Veterans Service Committee shall designate and prescribe the duties of all representatives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States accredited to the Veterans Administration (or other government agencies).
- (5) District may provide in their By-Laws this means of organization and control of their Veterans service work.

#### **Section 904. FINANCE COMMITTEE**

- (1) The Finance Committee shall consist of the State Commander, the State Senior Vice Commander, the State Junior Vice Commander, the immediate Past State Commander and four members who have been appointed by the State Commander from the general membership with concurrence of the Council of Administration.
  - a) Appointees to this committee are to have demonstrable experience in, and knowledge of, financial matters.
  - b) In the first year following adoption of this Bylaw, the Commander shall appoint four members to terms of one (1), two (2), three (3) and four (4) years and thereafter one member will be appointed annually to a term of four (4) years.
  - c) If the Past State Commander is unable to serve, the most junior Past State Commander who is ready and willing to serve shall be appointed in his place.
  - d) If any other member is unable to serve, the State Commander shall appoint a qualified member to serve the remainder of any vacated term.
  - e) The Committee shall annually elect its own chairperson from among those members not currently serving as line officers of the Department.
- (2) It shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee, in conjunction with the Department Quartermaster, to prepare the Department budgets and develop general policies on all fiscal matters, and to report their recommendations to the Council of Administration for its consideration and action. Such fiscal matters to include but not be limited to salaries, expense allowances, operating expenditures and investments.
- (3) It shall be the responsibility of the Vice Chairperson, together with the State Senior Vice Commander and one other person selected by the State Senior Vice Commander, in conjunction with the State Quartermaster to prepare financial estimates for the succeeding year. Such information to be prepared prior to the Convention for the use of the Finance Committee at that time.

**Section 905. WISCONSIN VFW NEWS COMMITTEE.**

- (1) The Committee shall consist of five (5) members, they being the State Junior Vice Commander and four (4) appointed members. In the first year following the adoption of this section, the Commander shall appoint a member to serve a term of one (1) year, a member to serve for two (2) years, a member to serve for three (3) years and a member to serve a term of four (4) years. The State Commander shall designate the Committee Chairperson.
- (2) The Committee shall oversee the editorial and advertising policies as mandated by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.
- (3) The State Commander shall appoint the editor of the Wisconsin VFW News upon receiving the advice of the Committee. The editor is a non-voting, ex officio member of the Committee.
- (4) The Committee shall be responsible for coordinating and supervision of the publication of the Wisconsin VFW News, and the annual Convention Yearbook.
- (5) In the event of a vacancy within a committee, the State Commander shall appoint a member to fill out the vacancy.
- (6) The Department shall publish a minimum of six (6) issues yearly of the Wisconsin VFW News. It shall be the official publication of the Department. Orders and official notices shall be deemed to be sufficient and lawful notice to all members of all purposes whatever.

**Section 906. COMPETITIONS COMMITTEE {Deleted in its entirety July 2007}.**

**Section 907. BUILDING COMMITTEE.**

- (1) The Building Committee shall consist of five (5) members, they being the State Quartermaster and four (4) appointed members. In the first year following the adoption of this section the Commander shall appoint a member to serve a term of one (1) year, a member to serve a term of two (2) years, a member to serve a term of three (3) years, and a member to serve a term of four (4) years. The State Commander shall designate the Committee Chairman.
- (2) Members appointed to the Building Committee shall have proven experience in at least one of these areas: real estate, commercial finance, property management or structural maintenance. Care shall be taken in selecting members so as to maintain a reasonable balance and variety of experience and knowledge.
- (3) The Building Committee shall exercise due diligence in overseeing the maintenance and management of the Department's Headquarters Facility and report at least annually to the Council of Administration on the status of the condition and funding of the Department's real property.
- (4) It shall be the responsibility of this committee to advise and recommend to the Council of Administration any actions pertaining to sale, purchase, expansion, improvements or lease of any real property then designated as Department Headquarters.

**Section 908. WI VFW FOUNDATION**

- (1) The following VFW Department of Wisconsin officers shall by virtue of their office, serve as members of the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin VFW Foundation, Inc., concurrent with their term as a Department Officer: State Commander, State Sr Vice Commander, State Jr Vice Commander, State Quartermaster and State Judge Advocate.

(2) The State Commander shall appoint one member in good standing, who does not hold one of the foregoing State Offices, to the Board of Directors of The Wisconsin VFW Foundation, Inc., to serve a term of three (3) years. Any member so appointed but elected to one of the offices in paragraph (1) above during the term of his/her appointment must yield the balance of his/her appointed term.

(3) In the event of the inability of an appointee to serve the entirety of his/her term as appointed, the State Commander shall appoint another member in good standing to complete the remainder of the term to which that member was appointed.

#### **Section 909. DELEGATES.**

The State Commander shall appoint the prescribed number of delegates to the Big Ten Conference and the Wisconsin Veterans Council. The delegates shall represent the Department at all meetings of the respective organizations to which they are delegates.

#### **Section 910. WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE.**

The Ways & Means Committee shall be responsible for oversight of expenditures, but shall not be empowered to authorize expenditures, from the Ways & Means Fund until approval is first granted by the Council of Administration or the Convention.

(1) The Ways & Means Committee shall consist of seven (7) members, they being the State Sr Vice Commander, State Jr Vice Commander, State Quartermaster, the 2<sup>nd</sup> most Jr Past State Commander, and three (3) members appointed by the State Commander upon the recommendation of the sitting State Sr Vice Commander. The State Sr Vice Commander shall chair the Committee and may assign sub committees as necessary. The State Adjutant shall be a non-voting member of the Committee and shall be responsible for keeping minutes and maintaining communications.

(2) Members appointed to this committee shall have demonstrable experience in fund-raising, promotion or related activities that will contribute to the mission of this committee.

(3) Additional consulting (non-voting) members may be added as deemed necessary by the committee to provide additional expertise on projects contemplated or in progress.

(4) It shall be the responsibility of this committee to plan and oversee the successful execution of ongoing fund-raising activities to provide a significant income stream to allow the Department to operate on a secure financial footing.

(5) The Ways & Means Committee shall provide input to the Finance Committee as requested in order that the Finance Committee shall at all times have access to revenue projections for their planning purposes and to adequately set aside funds designated as "Ways & Means" in the annual budget of the Department.

(6) The Ways & Means Committee shall report regularly to the Department Convention and Council of Administration as to projects proposed or in progress, and to present Ways & Means projects for consideration and adoption by the Convention or Council before execution. The Ways & Means Committee has no direct authority to expend funds or enter into licensing or other contracts except by direct authority of the Department Convention or Council of Administration.

#### **Section 911. COMMANDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

(1) This committee shall consist of three (3) Past State Commanders, they being the second, third and fourth most junior Past State Commanders then willing and able to serve.



- (2) This committee shall serve as a formal resource of leadership experience and counsel and be available at all times to the current Commander for specific assignments as deemed necessary.
- (3) This committee shall bear primary responsibility for assisting the Commander in achievement of membership goals through active recruitment and retention efforts.
- (4) This committee shall meet formally with the Commander at the first Council of Administration and the Mid-Winter Conference, or at other times and places as may be directed by the Commander.

## **ARTICLE X—NATIONAL CONVENTION**

### **Section 1001. ATTENDANCE.**

The State Commander or, in his absence, the next officer in rank able to attend, shall represent this Department at the National Convention. He shall be assisted by the Department Adjutant or, in his absence, the Assistant Adjutant.

### **Section 1002. DUTIES OF THE STATE COMMANDER.**

The State Commander shall take appropriate measures to secure favorable action with respect to resolutions passed by the Department Convention. He shall hold caucuses to obtain from the delegates their opinion on all matters before the National Convention before casting the Department vote.

### **Section 1003. DUTIES OF THE DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT**

The Department Adjutant shall establish temporary headquarters for the purpose of coordinating the activities of the Department delegation.

### **Section 1004. EXPENSES.**

Sufficient funds shall be provided by the Department to cover the necessary expenses of attendance at the Convention by the Commander and Adjutant.

## **ARTICLE XI—FINANCE**

### **Section 1101. ASSESSMENT**

- (1) The Department dues shall be assessed each year by the Convention. In the absence of the adoption of any resolution to adjust the dues at a Convention, it shall be construed as acceptance of the prior Conventions assessment.
- (2) Deleted.
- (3) Deleted.
- (4) Of the dues assessment, the sum of sixty cents (60 cents) shall be placed in a special fund designated the Wisconsin VFW News to pay for publication of the same.
- (5) Any previously mentioned assessments shall be recognized as a SPECIAL FUND and any balance at the end of the fiscal year shall remain in that SPECIAL FUND to offset fluctuating costs in subsequent years.
- (6) Notwithstanding that VFW National Bylaws, Section 506, authorize Departments to collect an Admission Fee for new members, it shall be the policy of this Department to *not* require submission of Admission Fees unless and until such collection be *mandated* by National Bylaws. Nothing in this Department policy shall be construed as depriving any Post in the Department of

its right to impose and collect such fees for its own purposes, provided it is properly addressed in the Post's Bylaws.

**Section 1102. REMITTANCE.**

All remittances to Department Headquarters by check, money order, or any other method of transmitting funds shall be made payable only to the Department of Wisconsin, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

**Section 1103. GENERAL FUND.**

All money received by the Department, from whatever source, which is not to be set aside for a designated fund or purpose, shall constitute the General Fund.

**Section 1104. SPECIAL FUNDS.**

The Convention or Council of Administration may establish special funds. A special fund may be either permanent or temporary to be devoted to the purpose indicated, together with any amounts that may be transferred by appropriation to such special funds from the General Fund.

**Section 1105. COMPETITION FUND.**

Deleted, per By-Law Change at 8th State Convention in June 2008.

**Section 1106. DESIGNATED FUNDS.**

- (1) The Designated Funds shall receive and consist of the monies allocated for such purpose.
- (2) These funds shall be retained by the Department, and no transfer of these funds to any other accounts shall be authorized without approval by the Department Convention, following the recommendation of the Department Finance Committee.
- (3) A Building Maintenance Reserve Fund shall be maintained for the purpose of providing funds for repair, major maintenance and upgrading of the Department's Headquarters building and integral operating systems. This fund shall receive an amount of \$1,000.00 annually until the fund balance reaches a maximum balance of \$20,000.00. Expenditures drawn from this fund shall be replaced at the established rate of \$1,000 annually until the prescribed maximum is restored.

**Section 1107. CUSTODY OF FUNDS.**

Separate accounts shall be maintained by the Quartermaster of the General Fund, Special Funds and such funds as provided for in the National By-Laws.

**Section 1108. DISBURSEMENTS.**

Unless otherwise directed, the disbursement of all funds of the Department shall be made with the consent of the Council of Administration in accordance with the provisions of the National By-Laws.

**Section 1109. A STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

The Council of Administration shall establish a statement of policy governing reimbursement for expenses which shall include, but not be limited to travel within the state, lodging, meals, telephone usage, supplies, equipment, awards and out of state travel.

**Section 1110. AUDIT.**

- (1) The books and records of the Department shall be audited by a certified public accountant using acceptable and recognized accounting procedures at least once each year.

(2) The Council of Administration may direct such additional audits or inspections as it deems necessary. The State Commander shall appoint a committee for this purpose. This committee shall have full access to all records under the control of the State Quartermaster.

(3) In addition to the foregoing, the Quartermaster shall, quarterly, prepare and forward to each member of the Finance Committee a statement of the financial condition of the Department, the expenditures from, and the balances of each operating and special account.

## **ARTICLE XII—GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Section 1201. OFFICERS' BONDS.**

(1) Each accountable officer of this organization shall be bonded with an indemnity company as surety in the sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which, so far as can be anticipated, he may be accountable. The Sum of such bond shall be rounded-up to the next \$1,000. The bond premium shall be paid from the funds of the District, Country Council or Post as the case may be, to which each officer is accountable. The bonds of such accountable officers in the amount as to surety shall be approved by their respective units and held by their respective Commanding Officers. All such bonds shall have a coverage period of September 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>, and acceptable proof of such bonds shall be filed with the Department Headquarters. The Commander of each unit shall be responsible for the proper and adequate bonding of all accountable offices.

(2) It shall be the responsibility of the Department Quartermaster to make bonds available to all subordinate units.

### **Section 1202. OFFICIAL PUBLICATION.**

The Department shall publish the Wisconsin VFW News. It shall be the official publication of the Department. Orders and official notices published in the official publication shall be deemed to be sufficient and lawful notice to all members for all purposes whatsoever.

### **Section 1203. ASSUMPTION OF DUTIES.**

In any case, where by proper succession, a member assumes the position and duties of another, he shall be entitled to receive the rank, privileges and funds of such position for such time as he acts in the capacity so assumed.

### **Section 1204. COMMITTEE AND PROGRAM EXPENSES.**

Each committee chairperson and program director shall file requests for appropriation of funds for inclusion in the budget of the Department with the Finance Chairperson prior to June 1 •1 of each year. Such requests shall include the name of the committee or program, the amount of appropriation requested, and a general statement of purpose for the request.

### **Section 1205. REPORTS.**

The State Commander may designate such reports to be filed with Department Headquarters as he deems necessary and appropriate. It shall be the responsibility of each Post, District and County Council Commander to insure that such reports be filed promptly and accurately as required.

## ARTICLE XIII—AMENDMENTS

### Section 1301. AMENDMENTS.

- (1) Amendments to the By-Laws of this Department may be proposed by a Post, District or County Council or have been recommended by a Department officer.
- (2) These By-Laws may be amended at any Department Convention by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote. No resolution, to amend these By-Laws, shall be considered unless the resolution is received by the Department Adjutant in Department Headquarters by May first (1<sup>st</sup>) of the year in which it is to be considered. The resolution must be in proper form, signed by the Commander or Department officer and attested to by the Adjutant.
- (3) The Department Adjutant shall promptly forward a copy of the resolution to the Editor of the Wisconsin VFW News. The Editor shall publish the resolution in the next issue of the Wisconsin VFW News. This shall constitute proper notification as the Wisconsin VFW News is the official publication as detailed in ARTICLE XII—GENERAL PROVISIONS, Section 1202.
- (4) No amendment shall become effective until the same has been reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief.
- (5) Unless any amendment contains a date upon which it shall become effective, it shall become effective immediately upon review of the Commander-in-Chief.
- (6) Wherever these By-Laws or subsequent amendments may be found to be in conflict with the present or any future National By-Laws, the latter shall prevail and be binding upon this Department as though written herein.

REVISED JUNE 2016



REVIEWED AVS 11 2016  
FOR THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

\_\_\_\_\_  
KEVIN C. JONES  
ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL  
BY DAVID E. PROHASKA, DIRECTOR  
ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS

**VFW Department of Wisconsin  
Charter & By-Laws  
Chronology of Amendments**

**THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS**

**"The V.F.W. is not really an organization. It is a concept .. an idea ... an endless devotion.. a rallying point.. a center of patriotic concern and love of fellow man such as the world has never seen."**

*Kenneth D. Wells, President  
Freedoms Foundation Valley Forge, PA.*

**Adopted-- July 10, 1975**

**Amended- June 1976**

Article V, Section 502, 503 {3} {11 } , 504 {7}

**Amended- June 1977**

Article XI, Section 1101 {3}

**Amended- June 1979**

Article XI, Section 1101 (4)

**Amended- June 1987**

Article VII, Section 709, 711  
Article VIII, Section 804, 807  
Article IX. Section 901, 903 (2) (3), 905, 907  
Article XI, Section 1106, 1110 (2)  
Article XII, Section 1204

**Amended --June 1988**

Article V, Section 506  
Article VII, Section 708

**Amended - - June 1989**

Article VII, Section 705, 712  
Article IX. Section 905 (6)  
Article XIII, Section 1301 (3)

**Amended - - June 1990**

Article VIII, Section 802 {1}

**Amended- June 1991**

Article V, Section 504 (8)  
Article VII, Section 705, 710  
Article IX, Section 906 (1)

**Amended- June 1992**

Article V, Section 503, 506  
Article VII, Section 701 {6}  
Article IX, Section 903 { 1 } , 904 { 1 }  
Article XI, Section 1101 {3}

**Amended- June 1993**

Article IX, Section 903 (1)

**Amended -June 1994**

Article VII, Section 701 (5), 704  
Article VIII, Section 804 {5}  
Article IX, Section 903 ( 1 )  
Article XI, Section 1101 (2) {3}

**Amended- June 1996**

Article V, Section 504 (9)

**Amended- June 1999**

Article III, Section 305

**Amended - -June 2000**

*Constitution of the Department of Wisconsin changed to  
Charter of the Department of Wisconsin*  
Article VII - Retitled  
Article VII, Section 701 (1 ), (2), (3) Section 702 (1 ), (2), (3),  
(4), (5), (6) and (7)  
Section 703, Section 704, Section 707 Section 708, Section  
710 Para (4) and Para (5), Section 712  
Article VIII, Section 804  
Article XII, Section 1201 {1}

**Amended - -June 2002**

Article 111, Section 306

**Amended - -June 2003**

Section 702 (2) Para (3) Section 709

**Amended - -June 2004**

Article VII, Section 701 (3), Section 702 (6), Section 710  
Para (5)

**Amended- -June 2005**

Article XIII, Section 1301 (2) (3)

**Amended - - June 2007**

Section 705 Line 4 last 2 words  
Section 905 Para (6)

**Amended - -June 2008**

Article VII, Retitled, Section 701, Retitled, Section 701 (2),  
Section 701 (3), Section 701 (4)(5)(6) and 701 (7) added,  
Section 702, Retitled, Section 702(1 )(2)(5), Section 702(7),  
Line 1 Chairman changed to Chairperson, Section  
703, Retitled, Section 703 Para (1) Changed, Section 709(2)  
Changed line 3 Chairman to Chairperson,  
Article IX, Section 903(1) Changed line 4 Chairman to  
Chairperson, Section 904{1} Changed on line 3 and 4  
Chairman to Chairperson, Section 904{3} Changed on line1  
Chairman to Chairperson, Section 905(1) Changed  
on last line Chairman to Chairperson,  
Article XI, Section 1105 Competition Fund  
Deleted  
Article XII, Section 1204 Changed on line1 and line 3  
Chairman to Chairperson

**Amended - -June 2009**

Article V - Districts - Section 504 Exception Paragraph (7)  
Deleted

**VFW Department of Wisconsin  
Charter & By-Laws  
Chronology of Amendments**

Paragraph (8) Deleted, Post is Defunct

**Amended-- June 2010**

Article IV - County Councils Section 401 and 402 Amended  
Section 403, 404 and 405 Added

Article V- Districts, Section 502 and 503 Amended, Section  
504 (6) Deleted

Article VII - Department Convention, Mid-Winter Conference,  
Council of Administration and Big Ten Conference

Section 701 (1) Amended, Section 709 (2) {3) Amended

Article VIII- Council of Administration Section 802 (1)  
Amended

Article IX- Department Officers and Committees, Section  
902, Section 907 renumbered to 909, Section 907 and 908  
Added

Article XI - Finance Section 1106 Designated Funds Added  
Para (3)

**Amended - ..June 2011**

Article VII- Council of Administration

Article VIII, Section 802 ( 1 )

**Amended - - June 2013**

ARTICLE V - DISTRICTS, Exception (6) Deleted (Post 6707  
returns to 6th District)

ARTICLE IX - DEPARTMENT OFFICERS AND  
COMMITTEES, Section 902 - Updates list of standing  
committees,

Section 903-Veterans Service Committee Reorganized  
replacing (1), Section 904-Finance Committee(1), Section  
910- Establishes Ways and Means Committee, Section 911 -  
Establishes Commanders Advisory Committee

**Amended - - June 2014**

ARTICLE VII - Section 702 - DEPARTMENT CONVENTION,  
MID-WINTER CONFERENCE, COUNCIL OF  
ADMINISTRATION & BIG TEN COMMITTEE, Title  
Shortened to "CONVENTION COMMITTEE" throughout;  
Section

702, Sub (5) edited; Sub(6) deleted; Section 708, second,  
third & fourth paragraphs edited; Section 710, fourth  
paragraph edited; Section 712 edited;

ARTICLE VIII - Section 804, Committee name  
changed to "Convention Committee"

**Amended - - June 2015**

ARTICLE VII-Section 701 (1)Amends the scheduling of  
the annual State Convention.

**Amended – June 2016**

Article VII, Section 702 subsections (1) through (5)  
amended

Article VII Section 708, rewritten and enumerated  
Article IX, Section 910 amended/rewritten enumerated  
subsection (6) appended

Article XI, Section 1101 – Assessment, revised to  
eliminate New Member Admission Fee