

Finance Meeting-December 29, 2025

7 pm CST, 6 pm MT, via Zoom [Audio file-audio1250658908 \(1\).m4a](#)

Welcome: Finance Chairman Susie Clyde

Prayer: Chaplain AnnaMae Warnier

Pledge of Allegiance: 1st VP Patrice Sorensen

Preamble: President Susie Learning

Roll call: President Susie Learning, Finance Chair Susie Clyde, Finance Co-chair Dawn Barber, 1st VP Patrice Sorensen, 2nd VP Rose Kraft, Immediate PDP AnnaMae Warnier, Member at Large Nancy Andres, Member at Large Lisa Lee, Department Treasurer Christine Patnoe, Department Secretary Amy Howard and Invited Guest NEC MaryJo Stier

Checking Account Transfers:

Susie Clyde reported that she consulted with the parliamentarian regarding the bank accounts, including savings accounts and CDs. She explained that, in her assessment, the governing documents apply to financial assets managed daily, the general accounts and associated sub-accounts, which include seven specific accounts such as VAR, Children and Youth, Past President Parlay, and Girls State. According to the governing documents, these accounts must be held in one, two, or three statewide banks.

For savings accounts and CDs, however, these may be placed in banks that are conveniently located either near our primary banking institutions or accessible to individuals who need to cash them when required. It is important to consider what will yield the highest returns, since these banks are not used for daily operations. As checking accounts require flexibility due to the potential hiring of secretaries and treasurers throughout the state, we have chosen Bank West—a statewide bank—to accommodate our needs for versatility.

Amy got an email today stating Bankwest was almost ready for us to sign. He was hoping to have the Docusign sent out to Susie myself and Christine late this afternoon. Once we have signatures, then he can order the checks and deposit slips. Then he can do the safety deposit box. Amy stated that he would order 1 box of checks for each one of the seven accounts we are opening with Bankwest.

Minutes from Previous Meetings:

Patrice made a motion to dispense with the reading of all minutes as they have been distributed, review as needed in date order for discussion and approval in date order. President Susie 2nd the motion. Motion Passed

June 20th meeting notes discussions. There were corrections to the wording for the recommendation to the DEC regarding membership awards to the units. Also, a correction that the meeting was *turned over* to the Finance Chairman. Motion by Patrice and 2nd by Dawn to approve the June 20, 2025, Pre-Convention meeting minutes with the corrections. No further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

August 2nd, 2025, Finance meeting minutes were discussed. There were corrections to the roll call as the PDPs were listed, but they aren't part of the Finance Committee, so they are to be removed. Also, the spelling of a few names needs to be corrected. Patrice made a motion to accept the minutes with the discussed corrections. Dawn Barber 2nd the motion.

November 24th Finance minutes were discussed. The Title of NW Division Vice President, Shareen Johnson, needed to be corrected. Motion by Patrice, 2nd by Nancy to approve with the correction.

Outstanding CD Transfers:

Amy gave an update regarding the CDs. AnnaMae reinvested the one at Dakota Bank for seven months for 3.70%, and that was on December 2nd. Once we have these minutes approved, I can e-mail the bank and have Susie, Christine and I added, and then Anna may be removed from that. Thank you AnnaMae for helping us get those completed. Amy will continue to update the financial spreadsheet as CDs and accounts are added and transferred to the Dept Secretary, Dept Treasurer and Finance Chair per our governing documents. The Foster Scholarship Fund CD we had voted on October 15th to invest at BankWest, 24 months at 3.78% interest, is in progress. The check Amy has in the safe is for \$7715.53. That is what we are going to be opening a new CD with, once established at BankWest.

Regina cashed a CD at A&B Trust in Bruce. She had access to the General account, so that is where she deposited the \$14,639.82. It was decided to put it into First Interstate Bank for 7 months at 3.78%. Christine and I (Amy) signed a CD with maturity date of 6/14/2026 on November 14th. The deposit amount of the CD was \$14,639.82 for seven months.

We have a CD at First Premier -Rehab fund coming up on December 31st, 2025. Christine, Kayla and Kate are the signers on that one. Christine has been asked to complete this. She will reinvest this CD for 7 months at 3.6%. She will also add Amy and Susie C and verify the

mailing address to be the Headquarters address. We have a recommendation to roll it over, keep it at the same bank, and go for seven months at the 3.6%, which is our best interest rate. Changing the signers over and the mailing address to the office. Patrice made the motion for these specifics, and Susie L seconded the motion. Motion carried, no further discussion.

Amy is tasked with updating the financial spreadsheet by January 15th, 2026. Dawn and Nancy will assist as needed to ensure the spreadsheet is current and accurate. Following the completion of the update, the team will focus on streamlining and simplifying the associated financial documents. This process is scheduled to be completed prior to the Mid-Winter meeting, allowing for a more efficient review and discussion of the organization's financial status at that time.

Girls State Program Funding and Budgeting-Address at Mid-Winter:

It is recommended that the Girls State program be discussed during the upcoming Mid-Winter session due to persistent challenges that require attention. Tiffany's participation in these conversations is important, as the group will explore strategies to increase revenue or secure additional funding to address the current budget shortfall. Department President Susie L. has been asked to meet with Tiffany prior to Mid-Winter to gather her input regarding a potential rate increase for Girls State. While a rate increase of \$50 has been suggested, it is recognized that a \$100 increase may face strong opposition. The group acknowledges the need to adjust rates in response to changes since 2014, preparing for the realities of 2026.

Tiffany has expressed reluctance to raise program rates and continues to seek alternative fundraising opportunities, such as organizing event tables, which have helped offset some meal expenses. Although meal costs are not expected to decrease, the program benefits significantly from the university's generosity in providing complimentary accommodations. While delegates at a previous convention opposed a rate increase, the possibility remains to revisit this topic. Any proposed amendment regarding rates should originate from the Finance Committee if deemed necessary.

There is a general agreement that Tiffany should be actively involved in budgeting for Girls State to ensure she fully understands the financial challenges facing the program. The organization has implemented various budget cuts without increasing participant fees, a contrast to other departments that have relied more heavily on volunteers and involvement from American Legion Auxiliary members. It is recommended that Tiffany assume a greater role in fiscal responsibility by reviewing counselor fees and mileage reimbursements for potential cost savings.

Patrice will ask for a lunch meeting with Tiffany to review the current budget, to clarify fund allocation, and encourage Tiffany to participate in future meetings and bring forward proposals, as discussed previously. Should an increase to the Girls State rate be approved this year, it will go into effect starting in 2027.

The current ratio of 11 junior members for every 15 girls and one senior member for every 30 girls, though these ratios are not formally documented. Tiffany will be informed that she is expected to either identify further opportunities for reducing costs or propose an appropriate rate increase to ensure the program's financial sustainability.

Business Savings Account Transition:

At present, our savings accounts are earning minimal interest, typically around 0.01–0.02%. This low rate provides limited growth potential for our funds. Transitioning our savings accounts to business money market accounts would allow us to earn a significantly higher interest rate, approximately 1.3%. These accounts offer flexibility, permitting 6–8 transactions per month, such as checks or transfers. Importantly, the funds remain in the bank and are not invested in the stock market. However, the interest rate may fluctuate as banks periodically adjust rates based on market conditions. Each bank sets its own minimum balance requirements to open these accounts. We retain access to our funds and transaction flexibility, while earning higher returns compared to standard business savings accounts.

The FDIC insurance limit applies to each depositor at each insured bank, based on account ownership category, such as checking or savings accounts.

Rose proposed that we transfer our savings accounts to business money market savings accounts. She suggested considering investments at First Premier. AnnaMae seconded the motion.

We would combine these 2 general savings accounts (one at First Interstate and one at First Premier) into one Business Money Market Savings at First Premier, with the setups as they currently are for general, etc. Motion passed.

Auditor update:

Christine explained why we are unable to change the auditor right now. Brady Martz is completing the 990 information for the fiscal year that ended June 30th, 2025. We have an engagement letter that they are to do the 990. Concerns were raised about Brady Martz continually raising their rates. That is partially why we were going to change to Jennifer Young Bookkeeping. Christine will complete the W2s and 1090s.

In August, the Immediate past president completed research on the accounting firms of Brady Martz, ELO and Jennifer Young. She made a motion to hire Jennifer Young, Bookkeeping and Tax in Rapid City, to file our 990 and do an outside audit every other year starting in 2025-2026. It was seconded by Finance chair Susie Clyde. This motion passed, but has never come to the DEC. We'll bring it to the DEC at Mid-Winter.

Past President Parlay:

Regina Whipple bought backpacks and she sent in a request to get them printed to the tune of \$500, asking the PPP to pay for it. The PPP chairman was much against that, so we put it to vote. Many of the PPP's did not vote. I have 10 responses, 5 yes, five no and one with voice and no vote. Five and five, it's a tie. There were additional questions regarding the look of the bags, who was printing, logo used, etc. Beings it's a tie vote, it was suggested to have the PPP review it more during the Mid-Winter dinner.

During Convention last June, the Legionette fund was in the red, and President AnnaMae asked the PPP chairman, Joyce Smith, if they could take \$700.00 from the PPP fund and put it into the Legionette fund. This was done incorrectly. The money from the PPP is for postage, for mailing out the department mailings, and such. So the money should have gone into general postage, not directly into the Legionette. \$700.00 needs to come out of Legionette and go towards General Postage. There was a motion that we transferred this money from the PPP to Legionette and that was the error. But it was approved by the chairman of the PPP at the time.

The standing rule, the standing rule it's in is X1V number six, but there is no amount. It has since been shared that it used to be \$350.00 a year from the PPP that was to send the mailings to PDPs pay to send the convention proceedings books to them.

However, the motion has already been paid; it was also stated that it was for \$5 that was behind, and that money was supposed to go back to the PPPs once there was money in the Legionette account. If there isn't \$700 in the Legionette fund, you can't take \$700.00 from general and put it back into the PPP.

President Susie appointed Anna Mae chairman of the PPP for Mid-Winter, as the PPP Chairman is not able to attend. They will discuss the \$500.00 for the bags and the \$700 transfer at Mid-Winter.

Outstanding recommendations from Finance to DEC:

*Motion made by President AnnaMae was at the June 20th pre-convention meeting to recommend to the DEC. If a district president lives outside of her district, that they are only paid or paid mileage and expenses from her home unit. This motion passed but has not been brought to the DEC.

*2nd Vice President Patrice made a motion on the June 20th pre-convention meeting that the credit/refund balances for units be reviewed and create a fiscal policy to allow units to 1. hold, 2. refund or 3. put towards the unit's obligations. It was seconded. Motion passed. This has not been brought from Finance to DEC. This process is being worked on by the Fiscal Policy Committee.

Poppy Payment Process:

Much discussion was had on the poppy fund during the last audit and the process of how veterans get paid, etc. It was asked to write this down as a committee item to research. Have we set up a committee to research the poppy fund and how it is handled? A committee isn't needed. We need to talk to Jane. She writes a warrant. They send the check, and she puts it in the checking account. She writes the check for postage and to the veterans. We don't have a warrant for every veteran. All the money goes into the poppy account because it is all accounted for in the register and on the bank statements. Does anybody have the complete process from beginning to end documented somewhere on file? Susie C will type up a process and give it to Jane to approve, and then send it to HQ.

Mandatory Obligations:

Decisions about what appears on the mandatory obligations and the amounts involved require amendments for mandatory obligations. The Finance Committee can recommend to the DEC to add a \$10 mailing fee to the obligation form, rather than placing it under mandatory obligations, or suggest increasing the postage budget as a business expense.

Currently, about 50 units have not paid any obligations, raising questions about enforcement and financial accountability—especially when membership cards must be mailed out, often covered by the general fund due to a lack of policy. National guidelines require units to be in good standing to hold officer positions, but definitions and standards vary; some departments use annual checklists to track obligations, proof of filing, and participation.

Units lacking officers or regular meetings still maintain members but don't fulfill obligations, leading to financial strain on the Department. There is a clear need for stronger policies and unit accountability. For example, adding a note requesting voluntary postage contributions resulted in many units sending funds to help cover costs when membership cards were mailed.

With rising mailing costs, evaluating whether monthly mailings are necessary or if online access suffices is important to reduce waste. It is suggested to revisit online communication and assess actual mailing expenses per member. These issues should be

discussed further at the Mid-Winter meeting, after gathering relevant facts and input from all members.

Other Discussions:

Rose had several discussions with Jill Lamer, her colleagues, and a consulting lawyer about updating our secretaries' wages. There are talks about a standardized base wage increase, not a raise, but secretaries still get paid a 2014 rate, which is inadequate. We plan to address this at Mid-Winter with the finance committee and later with the DEC.

We also discussed comp time regulations for our nonprofit. Comp time must fall within the same week, so we need to define our workweek (e.g., Sunday–Saturday) and update the employee handbook accordingly. When Amy started, expectations were unclear—no contract or tax support—and although it was intended as part-time, it has become a full-time role exceeding 40 hours. Jill's job includes travel and overtime options, which we could add to the policy, possibly including a time limit on comp time.

Regarding pay, we should consider a salary between \$29,000 and \$31,000 or move to hourly, allowing flexible hours based on workload. This is not a raise but a base wage adjustment for new hires as well. Despite concerns about funding, costs have risen, making current wages unsustainable; starting January 1, 2026, South Dakota's minimum wage increases to \$11.87, while our secretary earns only \$0.26 above minimum wage at this time. Our secretary effectively serves as an executive director, handling vital tasks beyond clerical work. Although higher salaries like \$35,000–\$40,000 aren't feasible, reallocating funds from discontinued positions and accounting changes could help reach a \$30,000 baseline. We may need to raise dues or use savings/CDs to address compensation issues.

Dues Increase:

The Constitution Bylaws Committee plans to propose a dues increase, which will be discussed at every spring meeting with members. The Finance Committee will also suggest a raise and amendment; we need to determine the amount to request. Last year's proposal wasn't discussed by delegates, so we should clearly explain the cost per member, showing that current dues do not cover expenses. Effective communication about units failing to pay obligations is necessary; listing non-paying units may ensure accountability.

***Questions** have arisen about whether members from units not in good standing can run for office. Amendments are being drafted to clarify that members must belong to units in good standing to be eligible. While enforcing participation in department or district meetings, caution is needed to avoid discouraging units that contribute positively to their

communities and veterans but are less active at higher organizational levels. Imposing strict consequences may not be practical or beneficial.

***Suggestion:** We need to put a deadline on when obligations need to be paid. And the membership obligation is December 31st should be the same as the membership.

Motion to Adjourn: I'll make a motion to Adjourn by Dawn, second by AnnaMae.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:09 pm CST

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Howard
Department of SD Secretary

Unapproved